



JENNIFER HUTT

*Bruce Stewart at Tapu te Ranga.*

I brought a pack, sleeping bag, boots, woollen bush gear, and as much food as I could carry. I took off to the Tararua mountains.

For years I'd been looking at those mountains. It was as if there was something there, I don't know what it was, the snow, the bush, the bigness: it was that, and more.

I kept off the roads so as I wouldn't be seen. I kept thinking the cops and Mr Bull would be looking for me everywhere. My pack was heavy. A lot had happened in one day, I was tired and I lay down for a while in some shivery grass. I felt good though, like you must feel when you climb out of a wrecked car. As I lay there looking at the sky, the skylark

came again. Keep going, she said, keep going, and then she just seemed to fade out of sight.

I made it over the foothills by night. I camped beside a river under some totara. I lit a big fire, because I was a bit scared, a bit lonely too. I sat on a log and swung my tea billy. I swung the billy lots of times, that night. Night time was the worst because I kept getting lonely as lonely. Sitting out there away from everybody. I was a bit frightened too. Frightened because I felt too young.

I thought about Mr Bull and the cops, about school, about our home, and father, and what it would be like if we were all together again. It was as though the whole world was against