

# ONDORONDO

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A Papua New Guinea literary magazine

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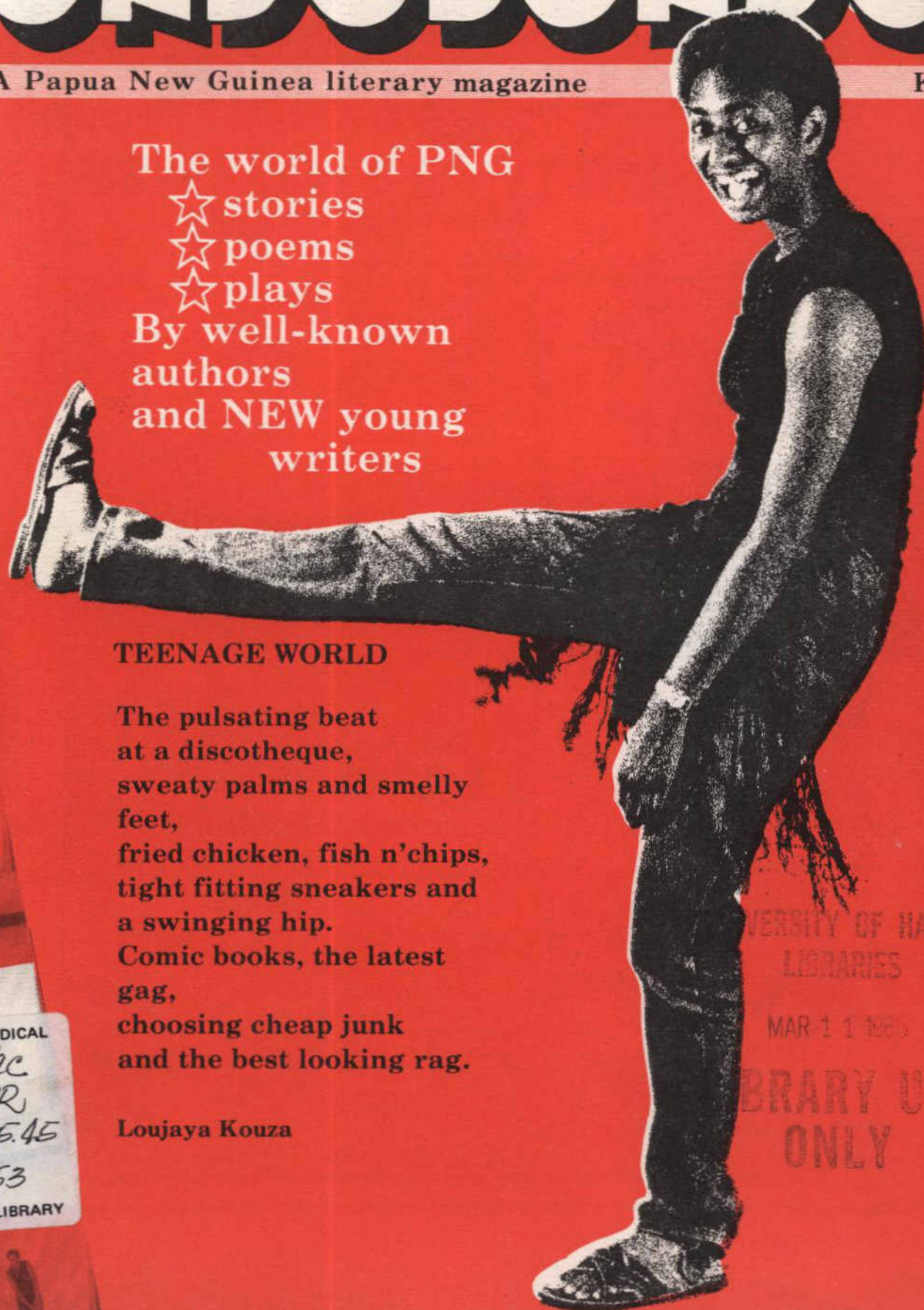
The world of PNG

☆ stories

☆ poems

☆ plays

By well-known  
authors  
and NEW young  
writers



## TEENAGE WORLD

The pulsating beat  
at a discotheque,  
sweaty palms and smelly  
feet,  
fried chicken, fish n' chips,  
tight fitting sneakers and  
a swinging hip.  
Comic books, the latest  
gag,  
choosing cheap junk  
and the best looking rag.

Loujaya Kouza

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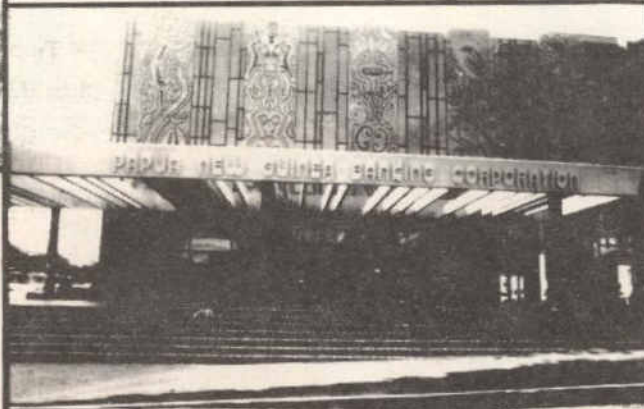
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# Ondobondo

A magazine of new writing from Papua New Guinea

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## Editorial

This is the first issue of Ondobondo, a forum for young writers published by Ondobondo Buk Haus, the publication wing of the Literature Department at the University of Papua New Guinea.

It contains poetry, stories and plays. It is hoped that subsequent issues will include excerpts from bigger works, interviews, reviews and articles of literary interest representative of writers from all parts of Papua New Guinea. It will appear twice a year.

The editors seek to make it fresh without being light-

weight, original without being clever, and Melanesian without looking like every other literary magazine in this part of the world. Contributions of every form of creative writing and literary discourse are welcome.

Ondobondo is a Binandere word for festival or singsing. It embraces all the performing arts. The name was first used for the series of poster poems published by the Literature Department during the third South Pacific Festival of the Arts in 1980.

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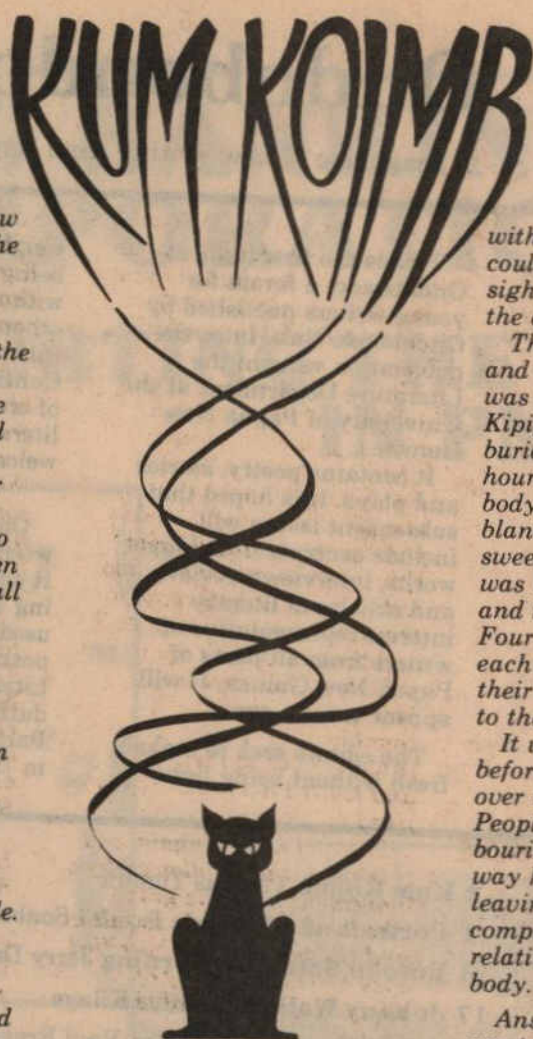
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There was a great sorrow and loud wailing among the people of Dondua village. Dark shadows settled like sediments in every heart. Kipiye, a great warrior in the dark days, a luluai and leader of the Kunga people had died. It was the second day of mourning and Kipiye's corpse was due for burial that afternoon.

Kipiye had been a man to be remembered. He had been a man who was feared by all the hostile tribes. The very mention of his name sent cold shivers through anybody who heard it.

Now he lay lifeless in a bed of blankets. People from far and near, both enemies and friends, came to mourn over the death of a tribal leader. This was one of the rare occasions when all tribal barriers were put aside.

All the fierceness had abandoned his face. What were once powerful hands now lay by his side, stiff and cold. His head rested on two pillows which were coated with talcum powder. Covered in mud, his three wives and the other women of Dondua village sat around the body, weeping loudly, while the men stood weeping silently.

In a house some distance away, a group of ten young men, all relatives of the late Kipiye sat quietly, ears cocked in the direction of the wailing. They were the night guards. They were to guard the grave of Kipiye, lest evil Sangumas came to steal the body.

It was a rule not to go out of the house as there may be some Sangumas among the crowd who, by some evil powers, may take the sense of sight away from them in the night, thus enabling the Sangumas to steal the body

without being seen. They could not afford to lose their sight if they were to catch the evil doers.

The wailing grew louder and the ten knew that dusk was around the corner and Kipiye's body was ready for burial. It was a couple of hours before sunset. Kipiye's body, wrapped up in thick blankets covered with sweet-scented talcum powder, was laid in a wooden box and the lid closed tightly. Four young men, two on each end, lifted the box onto their shoulders to be carried to the graveyard.

It was now about an hour before the sun went down over the western horizon. People from far and neighbouring tribes made their way home heavy-hearted, leaving the procession, comprised of his close relatives, bearing Kipiye's body.

Ans, one of the ten guards, went on tip-toe to the door and peeped out. Satisfied that no one was in the immediate area, he went out to scout the surrounding area. He came back some minutes later and armed himself with bow and arrows.

The nine others did likewise, as they knew all was clear of any intruder. Each had an axe tucked into his belt as they moved out into the grey twilight of dusk to take their post.

They placed themselves quietly under the cover of some bushes, equi-distant from each other, surrounding the grave about 25 metres away. With their axes laid in front of them for immediate action, they fitted arrows to their bows and waited at the ready, eyes and ears peering

This traditional story by THOMAS TUMUN is from Kup in the Simbu province. It tells of a man of evil, a Kum Koimb, whose powers involve taking possession of an animal. The Kum Koimb has the power to kill, the ability to invoke Kipe Kangi, or the Devil, and a desire to eat the dead. The Tok Pisin word used for such a person in the story is Sanguma. The Tok Ples text is from mid-Wahgi. Drawings are by AKINU SAHANUBE and RON WALKER.



in the direction of the grave.

In the fading light, not knowing where, but conscious of the hidden guards, the relatives watched sadly as the coffin bearers finished covering the grave. So was the end of Kipiye, one-time warrior and leader of the Kumga people.

The relatives stood with bowed heads for a few moments to pay their last respects before they made their way home. The last to leave, Kipiye's wife, lit up a kerosene lamp and left it burning by the graveyard before she also departed.

Except for a few camp fires glowing in the distance and the lamp at the graveyard, complete darkness once again claimed the earth. The silence still remained. The ten guards waited patiently, each busy with his own thoughts in his own location.

It was one of those dark nights when the moon wasn't in the sky. A silent breeze started to blow and the leaves rustled as if singing a soft farewell hymn. The breeze brought with it cold, and the men began to feel the bitterness entering their system, almost freezing their blood.

The small flame in the lamp was dancing to the breeze, casting huge monstrous shadows on the bushes near the grave. In the very early hours of dawn, the men's eyes were heavy laden with sleep, but the bitterness of the cold kept them awake. The tension that grew within the ten when they took their post was now fully released. They threw down their weapons and relaxed.

Then from a tree near the grave, an owl hooted loudly. As if this was a signal, the

earth sent a small tremor and then the world became alive, with the slight breeze developing into a strong wind hollering through the leaves.

Both creatures of the air and the earth seemed to come out of their sleep making ghostly noises. Every single hair on the guards stood on end. Cold shivers ran through their spines. Each man knew too well. The hour had come for the sons of man to turn evil and try to eat their own kind.

Each in his own little hiding spot, the men trembled like leaves. They fitted arrows to their bows and waited nervously, eyes fixed on the graveyard.

The owl hooted again and this time it was followed by a movement near the grave. The loose soil began to fall in and the ten pairs of horrified eyes beheld the body of Kipiye coming out of the grave.

Voices could be heard around the grave, but they could see no one. There were sounds of footsteps but nothing was visible except the body of Kipiye. It came.

Both of his hands were now out of the grave. It kept coming out, stripped naked of its covering of clothing and blankets in which it had been wrapped.

Then he was there, standing upright on his grave, the lifeless magnitude of Kipiye's body. The ten men were now useless and shaking heaps of boneless flesh, soaking in their own urine.

Then a commanding voice shattered the night, although the owner was invisible.

"All you men of the mountain tribes. You Doms, Bandis, Kambugls, Kewas;

you men from the valley tribes, you Dagles, Numans, Kumais and all from far and near. Far, as far as the eye can see, and near, as near as the hand can reach.

"Tonight is a moment of history for our secret lives. A great feast shall we have and feast to be remembered. Hark thee to my words, all you comrades of the secret life I live; for the hour has come for us to destroy and devour the body of Kipiye!

"The body that once was a fear to us and our fathers. The body that once molested us and sent terror through every living soul. Ha! Ha! It is now ours. Am I not right, all you fellow comrades of Kipe Kangi?"

"Siu-u-u-u Sip-u-u-u Ha!" they cheered. A loud roar bellowed from a thousand voices, shaking every leaf and shrub in the vicinity. The earth underneath shook.

As there are earthquakes, there was a body quake within the ten men. Then there was complete silence for a while and the ten could still hear the roar of the multitude of invisible Sangumas ringing in their ears.

They were the guards, to protect the body of Kipiye from Sangumas, but how could they fight people they couldn't see?

Despite their precautions, and although no one saw them in the house preparing or hiding in the bushes, there was a leak somewhere in their proceedings that caused the theft to go unchallenged. Added to that, the happenings were horrifying, more than enough to freeze the blood and knock out the wits.

Then there came a sudden burst of rain and thick fog



## ★ Stories

dominated the graveyard. Amidst the fog, they could see Kipiye's body ascend and then stand in the air, a few feet off the ground.

The bewildered men could hear voices as Kipiye's body, now lying on his back in mid-air, moved across the bushes. It was too obvious. Kipiye's body was being carried away by invisible hands.

The men had lost all sense of bravery. They were too scared to follow in pursuit as they watched the body float away into the darkness. The faint voices of the Sangumas, the wind and the rustling of leaves settled like sediments of sorrow on the earth, bringing complete quietness.

For a while, the men sat in silence, a thousand thoughts forming in their minds. There was only one who grinned to himself and sat at ease. Then Ans disturbed the stillness.

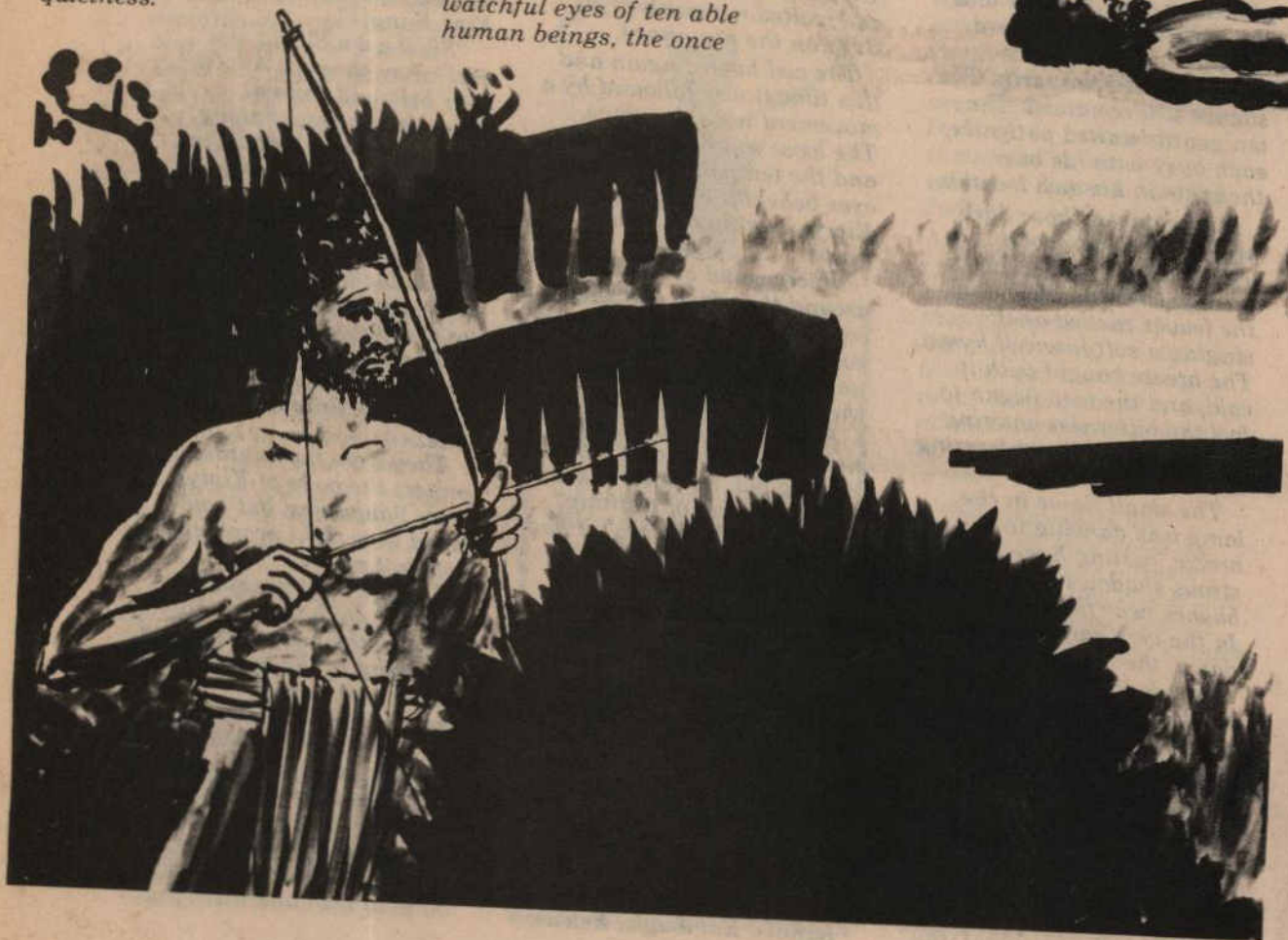
"Yekomba, woia woia," he called nervously as he walked towards the empty grave. "Come out, comrades." He stood looking at the hole while large beads of tears rolled down his cheeks. The other nine were soon by his side. All swallowed lumps in their throats and found it hard to talk as tears streamed down their cheeks.

The magic of evil had outwitted them. It had outfired the weapons of their fore-fathers. Under the watchful eyes of ten able human beings, the once

honoured body of Kipiye the great, was stolen without challenge, to be devoured by lawless creatures of Kipe Kangi.

Despite their precautions and despite their careful planning, there was a leak somewhere, someone had betrayed them, yet whoever it could be they couldn't tell.

They stood in silent concentration for a while and then moved off into the darkness in single file. In the darkness one man smiled to himself as a cock announced the coming of dawn.





The morning was bright and the promise of a good day hung in the air. Taie, the old tultul or messenger of the Kunga tribe stood alone in the meeting ground. Soon people of Dondua village began to pour in.

They had been wondering why the meeting had been called so abruptly during their sleep. Stirring restlessly, they had been pondering over the sudden announcement of a meeting.

Taie, his face revealing nothing, stood meditating for a while and looked up at the people. The women had taken to one corner and were silent while the men talked in low murmurs.

The sorrow at the death of Kipiye was still around the corner of their hearts. Seated at the back of the conversing men were the ten guards of the night, looking very grave and very much shaken after their experience.

Taie looked up and all held their breath. His eyes, glassy with tears but fierce underneath, betrayed the purpose of the meeting. Then pointing towards the ten guards of the night, he boomed, "All you sons and daughters of Kipe Kangi: a great injustice has been done and it must be avenged!"

"Last night the body of Kipiye was removed by

lawless heartless followers of Kipe Kangi."

It seemed as if the fury of a demon had suddenly seized him and he knew himself no longer. Shaking his head he continued, "Under the very watchful eyes of ten guards last night, Kipiye's body was removed without challenge.

"Do you know why? Do you know how? They were invisible. Now, that has only one conclusion.

"One of us here, in this very congregation, is a Sanguma, a heartless Kum Koimb, who has spied on the guards and by the power acquired from the evil Kipe Kangi has upset their vision."

There was a sigh of disbelief. Heated arguments followed. Some young men







wanted to seek out the lawless Sanguma and avenge the theft of Kipiye's body, while other disagreed. Then Ans spoke out.

"Before it is too late, a search party must be organized and the body recovered." There was general agreement and the men prepared themselves.

A group of 20 young men were picked. They armed themselves with bows and arrows and tucked axes under their bark belts. The women went to their houses and came back a few minutes later with what food they could find. These they gave to the 20.

The men having eaten, made their way out of Dondua. The great search had started. Those remaining watched the column until it disappeared into the bushes and then made their way to their houses.

Taie stood for a while longer and then uttering a curse on the Sangumas, the Kum Koimbs, he too left for his hut, leaving the meeting place quiet and deserted.

The sun was overhead now and the people went about their normal routine, the women to their gardens while the men went about collecting firewood and fetching water. Some of the younger men, who were employed by the Administrative Station went to work.

Taie sat in his tent, making arrow heads for his arrows. He had just completed sharpening his axe. He was an old man who had lived during the dark days and he still had a strong belief in superstition, sorcery and the pay back system. No white man was going to make him change.

The search party had split themselves up into ten

groups of two. Each group took a small creek, and starting at its mouth where it joins up with the mighty Waghi River, searched upwards towards the mountains.

It is a belief that Sangumas always ate their prey near a creek so as to drown the juicy flesh with water. The search continued all day and the men became weary.

It was late afternoon now and dusk was around the corner. They were now about the same distance from the Waghi River as Dondua village and they could see it in the distance, about a mile or two away.

Ans and his comrade, Wagl, were just about to quit when Wagl noticed some footprints around the area. He placed his foot on one but found that it did not fit. Surveying the area, he noticed more prints. Following them, he came to a dark spot where the canopy of the leaves and vines overhead concealed the sunlight.

The search was getting hot. He could see the remnants of a feast. He scanned the area for a while and then, brushing aside a hump of leaves, he exclaimed, "Ans! Ans! Come over here."

Ans ran over and stood motionless at what he saw. It was an arm cut off from the shoulder. The fingers had been gnawed off. It was hidden under the leaves which Wagl had brushed aside. Kipiye's arm! The two men stood silent for a short while and then Wagl broke the silence as he called for the other groups.

In the quiet, early stages of dusk, the other groups distinctly heard Wagl's voice. They were at the scene in a



wink. They surveyed the area for more remnants but found to their disappointment only dying grass from the flow of fat and a few bits of flesh strewn here and there.

They collected what they could find and finally, with heavy hearts and forcing their voices through lumps in their throats, cheered aloud at the finding.

Taie, who had just finished his meal, was reaching for his bamboo pipe and some "brus" when he heard the cheering in the distance. He walked out into the twilight and called for the people to gather at the meeting place. With difficulty, he rolled a stone stool into the middle where he sat smoking his pipe and waited for the people to gather.

The search party, carrying the remnants of Kipiye's body, slowly made their way home, followed by a multitude of flies. The cicadas had ceased and night met them halfway. There was a gentle breeze and the night air was cool.

Nearing the village, they could see camp fires blazing, revealing the crowd around them. They walked forward at a slow and quiet pace.

They entered the meeting ground from the entrance and placed their findings in front of Taie.

"Ah! Woia woia," he shouted, jumping up. "What! Come, come."

The people stood horror stricken at the sight. It thrilled every fibre of their frames. Some of elders, age-mates of the late Kipiye, started weeping.

Taie's aged frame was rocking violently as he straightened to address the congregation. "Good people of Dondua, the white man hasn't taken away all our tribal customs. Our old judiciary system still remains.

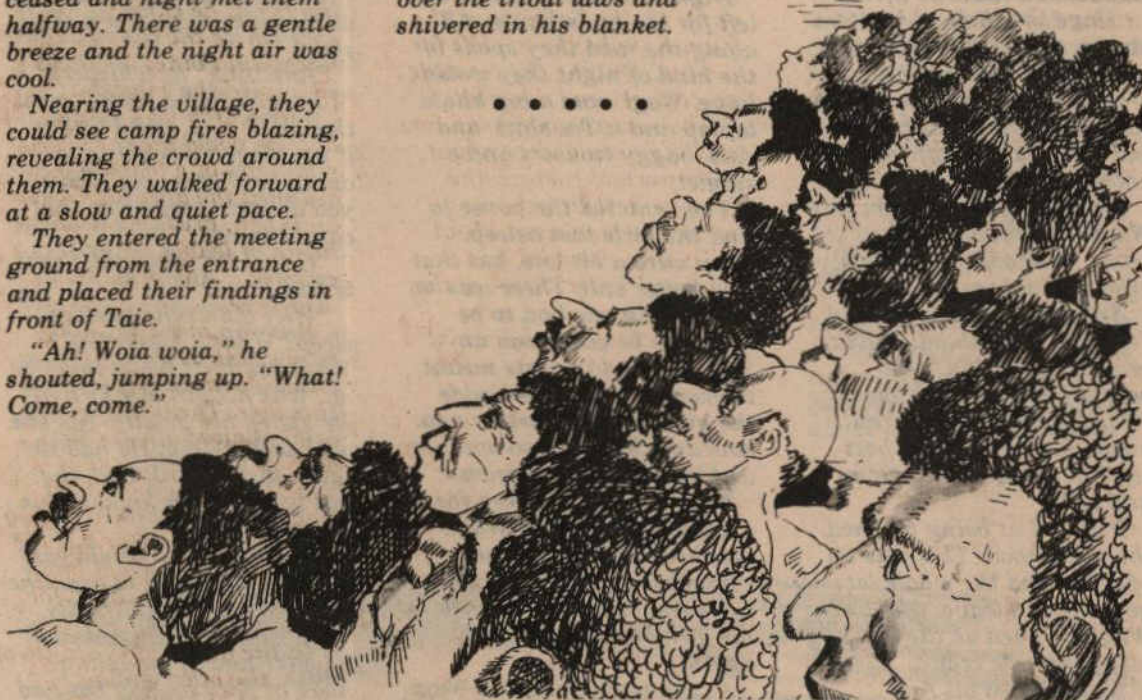
"Hark thee, my people! From tonight onwards, keep your eyes and ears open at all times. The thieves must be sought and dealt with according to our tribal by-laws. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. My good people, go now and rest your tired frames."

In the quiet moonless night, their hearts burdened with sorrow, the people made their way home. There was only one man who pondered over the tribal laws and shivered in his blanket.

The morning was bright. The sun's rays broke through the partitions of leaves and tree barks, waking the Dondua villagers. The first thought that hit them was their assignment, to have both ears and eyes opened.

It was a market day and the women folk were already on their way. The elders, who had had their share of the pleasures life offers, slept long on their wooden beds.

It was a special occasion for the young men, a time of social pleasure. This was a day when they met all the young girls from the neighbouring tribes, the day of mating after their long hibernation.





## ★ Stories

It was one of the special days when a girl could invite a girlfriend to her house for a social evening. A chance not to miss. They young men washed and put on their Sunday best.

Along all the roads around the Kup administrative centre, the people were coming towards the market. Some women led a pig or a piglet by a cord. Their sons, walking behind the animal, whipped its haunches with a leafy branch to hasten its progress.

At the market there was a throng of human beings, animals and food mixed together. Ans and Wagl had just arrived at the market and were directing their steps towards some of their age-mates from neighbouring tribes when they saw some young girls sitting in one corner all by themselves. They changed their course and walked towards them.

"Hot day today, eh! Do you reckon so girls?" began Ans, always good at beating around the bush, "On such a day as this, it's glorious to end it by pairing off. Am I not right, Wagl?"

A grinning shrug from Wagl brought an angry retort from one of the girls, "Get out, old rascals!"

Ans was quick to respond "Apa'ah, Pi amb kawi, Enz kembigl nond Wa." He patted her on the bottom. "Come on good girls. You know you possess the best stuff in the world - bottom and all!"

Irritated at being touched, the girls stood. This was an opening and the whole lot got ready to leave. Ans and Wagl watched as they melted away into the crowd.

Wagl turned on Ans fiercely and was just going to

let him have it for his behaviour when a small boy interrupted them. The boy looked timidly about him and then with a few words in a shaky voice said, "Come to the house over there tonight" pointing towards the direction of the house.

Before they could ask questions, the child left as quietly as he had come, walking delicately as though his feet would do harm to the innocent grass. Ans called after him, but the boy took to his heels and disappeared among the crowd.

They had come to the market with one aim and that aim was achieved. Lack of sleep and sorrow had deepened their sexual frustrations and tonight was a time they didn't want to miss. The thought of having an artificial mattress was still burning in their minds as they left.

Night came. Ans and Wagl left for the girl's house. All along the road they spoke of the kind of night they would have. Wagl wore a big khaki laplap and a Tee shirt, and Ans, baggy trousers and a singlet.

They entered the house to find the girls fast asleep. They were a bit late, but that was better still. There was no rule saying one had to be early. To be early was an honour, but to be late meant throwing yourselves beside the girls without further ado. Ans and Wagl did so without waking the sleeping girls.

They had been asleep for about an hour when Wagl detected a strange noise coming from Ans. Taking it to be Ans on business with his girl, Wagl dozed off again.

In the pitch darkness Wagl came awake again to the

same noise. This time Wagl, sitting on his sleeping mat, listened attentively. The sound was more distinct now. Teeth rubbing bone and tough flesh being torn off and chewed. He listened for some time when he heard Ans whispering in low murmurs.

"Kum Koimb, we have fooled the stupid people of Dondua. Who now would know that I am a Kum Koimb? I, Ans, am the one who betrayed them. There is no man, not even the stupid Wagl and the two girls sleeping here like logs who would know I am a Kum Koimb.

"What do you say, my little pussy cat, my Kum Kiomb?" There was a small meow. A sign of contentedness. The evil possessors had to be in their Kum Kiomb's favour at all times, lest it took their lives away.

Wagl let out a loud yawn, as if awakening from a deep sleep.

"Ans! Ans!" he whispered. "I haven't had a proper meal the whole day, and I feel as if my stomach is going to dump out bitter acid. Have you anything with you that can help me?"

"Oo'o," Ans thought, "that is bad."

"Why didn't the bastard sleep? What a mess. Had Wagl heard it? No, it must be no. Was his girl awake too? He shook her quietly. No, she was dead asleep. He had to think fast. Thank God, the girl would never know of his possession.

Thinking Wagl would eat without bothering to examine the food, he said hurriedly, "You couldn't have asked at a better time. I brought a piece of pork for you but had quite forgotten about it until



just a while ago.

"Curse my deep pockets. I am halfway through it, but if you want to help ..." Ans tried to sound normal as he handed something cold and soft over to Wagl.

Wagl's hand trembled a little as he received the cold, tough and jelly-like flesh. Human flesh! Cold shivers ran through his body. So Ans was the double-crossing Kum Koimb who had a pussy cat. The heartless traitor who upset their vision and took an active part in the theft.

Wagl sat for a long while, allowing Ans to fall fast asleep. He then woke up his girl quietly and whispered to her all that had happened. He told her to remain quiet and not reveal anything until he met her again. Top secret.

Then as the cock announced the coming of dawn, Wagl slipped out quietly with the flesh still in his hands and made at breakneck speed for Dondua. Twice he stumbled and fell, hurting his foot, but he kept on running.

He raced into the men's house with the fury of a charging bull. "Wake up, all you sleepy heads of Dondua. The traitor has been found."

With the past still fresh in their minds, the mention of it was enough to set the brains awake and soon a crowd of naked men surrounded Wagl.



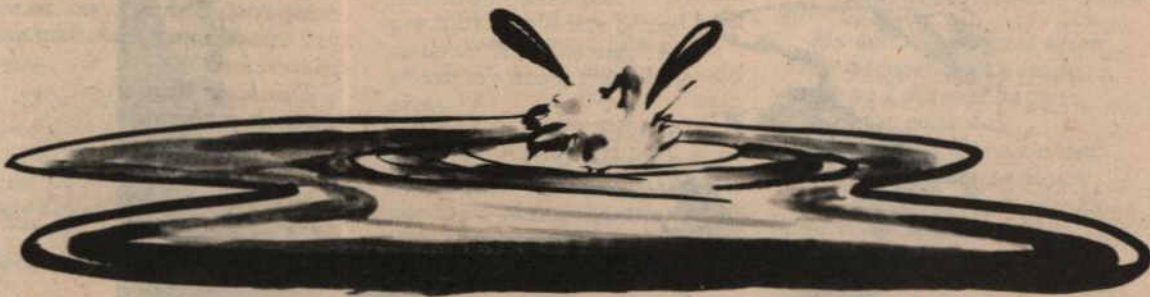
"Make the fire," he bellowed. In the bright firelight, the men beheld the human flesh, the torn bit from what had once been a magnificent body.

"Who is the culprit? Who is this Kum Koimb?" A volley of questions were thrown at Wagl.

"None other than Ans" came the hot reply. A silence followed in which the men prepared a "welcome" for Ans. A council was held.

"Ans shall die. The yetom's son shall be killed and thrown into the bush. Let us bury this low class villager," Taie began.

"But we can't kill him. The white Kiap at the station will be angry with us for killing him and put us in the kalabus. And if we tell him about the theft, his white





## ★ Stories

head won't believe us," one objected.

"Yes, yes, that's true. We cannot kill him because we'll also end up in the kalabus."

"The white man has a thick skull. He is a longlong, insane. We cannot convince him. Therefore, we'll denounce Ans from the Junga tribe and make him a bomblam. An outcast," Taie concluded. The men nodded in general agreement.

Ans woke up early to find Wagl gone. He woke Wagl's girl and asked where Wagl had gone. She stared at him for a short while. The early mist in her eyes concealed the sheer hate she had for Ans.

She answered, "He left very early as he said he had to go somewhere."

Ans hastened home, thinking he could catch up with him on the way. Entering the gates of Dondua village, he called for Wagl.

"Come here and have a puff, Ans," came the cool

reply from the men's house.

"You were fast asleep all curled up and wrapped like a cocoon around your girl's huge breasts so I decided to leave you alone."

Ans hastened to the men's house but never entered it. A mighty blow from old Taie's club took him on his back and felled him. He knew no more. It was the rule. When enough evidence was found against a man, action came first and any explaining came later.

The women and others of Dondua heard the commotion and rushed out to find what had happened, some of them still wrapped in their blankets. Taie told all what had happened and the punishment decided upon. Some of the women broke through the crowd and into Ans's house. They threw all his belongings out and set his house on fire.

The people were gathered in the meeting ground when Ans came to. Taie stood up and addressed the crowd.

"A great injustice has been done and the punishment shall be bitter. Ans! You would be a head man now. But thank your white man friend we can't kill you.

I, therefore, denounce Ans from our tribe and announce that from now on, he is a bomblam, an outcast."

Then turning to Ans, "Go therefore, you Kipe Kangi's son, to wander to the four corners of the earth, until you come to rest your body somewhere.

You will see no more of your inheritance. Your property and land will be shared among us. You shall no more steal our people. Get out of here with your little Kum Koimb and if you show your face here again, kiap or no kiap, "Peng - nim kule geu nal," - I'll shave your head with an axe."

The people cheered and pushed Ans forward to hasten his wandering. In the late afternoon, a miserable Ans left Dondua village forever.





# Portrait of a Parable

## Russell Soaba

I carried the carton of beer, Sheila carried her bilum of dimdim food, and we came out of the supermarket and walked into the late evening sun.

I suggested that we should catch a cab since it was going to be a long walk for us to the house. Sheila tried to remind me about the amount of money we had lost that week through such fancy extravagances, but I insisted and would not give in.

She was afraid of that persistence and determination in me. I wished things and even willed them to be and there was nothing she could do about them.

If I wanted a cab, she would be most unwise to say no. If I wanted time to stand still, it would; and if it didn't, I would violently attack anyone who would dare argue that not even time would obey my orders.

Sheila broke into a sweat, sighed, then reluctantly waved a cab over.

When I was six years old I dug an okapi knife into the soil and stood back admiring it. The sharp blade was pointing towards me.

Someone asked what I was doing with the knife and I replied that I was preparing to kick it with my bare feet.

The person asking me the question looked at me for a long time then shook his head. I waited for him to speak again, for he was an adult, but he only stared at me with his mouth wide open.

Then, as if aware of what I was going to do, the whole of the village populace came and surrounded me. Everyone stood still and watched.

"I bet you, you wouldn't kick the knife," teased a boy

older than I. "I will kick it," was my calm reply. "You will do no such thing," bellowed someone in front of me.

"You will get hurt," pleaded someone else from behind me. "I am going to kick the knife," was my final reply.

A moment of great silence descended upon the village. I waited.

When no one else spoke I ran and kicked the knife with my right foot. The women screamed, some of them burying their faces in their palms and turning away. The men rushed over to see if I would faint, or drop dead on the spot. I remained on my feet, calm as ever.



"He's mad," screeched a girl, a teenager, and fainted at the sight of blood. "Quick, get a bucket of water," ordered a man. "Get some clean bandage," said a woman.

"Boil the water before washing his wound." "You are hurt," said one of my sisters. "Not I'm not," I shook my head, folded my arms.

"You are sick," said my brothers. "Something's got inside you." "I am not sick nor am I possessed, thank you, Gregory and Arthur."

My mother came and

slapped me hard on both cheeks. "Cry!" she ordered. I disobeyed her command and smiled.

She fled, screaming and tearing at her hair. My father caught her before she could throw herself to the ground or begin rolling in the pig ponds.

Afterwards, my father marched up to me, waving a strong fist in the air. "I will kill you, I will murder you, you little devil," he shouted.

"O shame, shame be upon my household," I heard my mother wailing in the distance.

My brothers and sisters, armed with a towel, a first-aid kit, and a bucket of hot water, came and tended the wounds of the son.

When I was nine years old and walking home from school one evening I stopped by Herr Steppenwolf's trade store, which was not far from the village compound, to play with Hermine and Hans.

Hermine and Hans were older and went to an international high school in the city across the bay from the village. Herr Steppenwolf took them there every morning on his speed boat, and they cycled or caught PMVs home with the other students in the afternoon.

Sometimes they travelled to and from the city with Gregory and Arthur, one of my sisters, and many more students of that and other schools, in our village PMVs and buses.

My school was just after Herr Steppenwolf's trade store so I did not have to travel far each day. Hermine and Hans invited me into their house where they offered me soft drinks and some biscuits.

Later, Hans taught me



## ★ Stories

how to ride his bicycle and Hermine sprayed me all over with her hair spray. We had enjoyed ourselves so much that evening that when I left, Hermine and Hans were laughing joyously.

"Is that you, Hans?" called Gregory from within the house. "No, it's me," I said.

"Come off it," laughed Gregory from inside. "You are too good at imitating our accent, Hans. Welcome to the household, anyhow. High time Herr Steppenwolf himself and Fraulein Hermine came visiting us too ia."

"Greg, it's me," I insisted, calmly and without emphasis to my voice. Curious, Gregory came out of the house. "Dear oh dear oh dear," he said, planting his hands on his hips. "Whatever have you done with yourself this time?"

"What do you mean, please?" I asked. "What do you mean - what do you mean, please? You are painted all over in gold, boy. Wherever did you get the paint from? You haven't gone stealing in Herr Steppenwolf's trade store, have you now?"

"You mean all this? It's from Hermine's hair spray."

"Hair spray? It's spray paint, you nut. The ones people use for spray painting their cars and boats and houses and things. Look at you. Just look at you. Who do you think you are?"

Arthur came out. Then my sisters. And my parents.

"God, not again," they all sighed.

I noticed Arthur holding a wooden bowl full of baked breadfruit nuts. "I'm hungry," I announced, throwing my bag of books on the floor.

Arthur gave me a few of the nuts and we both cracked and ate them while the others watched, looking either annoyed or fatigued with too much worry over me.

I saw one of my sisters pull a face and walk out to spit. Gregory looked away, scratching his head.

"How long will it take for that evil thing to some off?" shouted my father and pointed at me. "Well? How long will it take? Come one, stop looking at me as if you were born that way and answer me."

"It takes time, Papa," explained Arthur. "Things like this ia, you wait for time to wash them off."

"Hermine and Hans were there," I said simply. "I happened to be there with them and the paint came on. That's all."

"Buy some kerosene, Papa, and we'll wash it off," suggested Arthur. "I'm not wasting any more money on your brother's evil activities," thundered my father.

"All the money that I earn from the copra and from working in Herr Steppenwolf's plantation seems to be going to this useless brat here. He ought to be killed and buried under the ground. He's an accident in the family, of that I can truly swear."

My mother broke into tears and Arthur took me down to the beach to show me a full moon rising over the ocean and the city.

"So Arthur was your favourite brother," said Sheila, turning towards me in the cab. "What other things do you remember from childhood? I love listening to your stories."

I noticed that Sheila was

busily scribbling away on a note-pad as she spoke.

"Well, I said, 'when I was 14, 15 or thereabouts, I read Shakespeare's sonnets. I have been a great admirer of Shakespeare ever since.'"

"Did you fall in love then?" "Yes. How - how did you know?" "Most adolescents throughout the world who read Shakespeare's sonnets during their summer holidays go through that particular experience," said Sheila with a laugh.

"But how lucky you are to have read Shakespeare at that age. I must confess I had never heard of Shakespeare until my university years. But please, do go on."

"Well, I fell in love with the girl." "And then? Was she nice? Where was she from?" "She was a remarkably handsome little creature, a non-aryan brown native girl by birth. I forget what country she came from."

"Yet dare one say it, immediately after I had fallen in love with her, I often thought of her in terms of salad bowls, bacon slices, ham and egg sandwiches, manila folders, Bahasa silhouettes, Indian saris and curries, and even hot razor blades and primitive native cooking pots."

Sheila whistled and quickly wrote something down on her note-pad. "You wicked thing," she laughed pleasantly. "You do have some imagination, though."

When I stole a glance at her note pad I noticed some numerical figures and diagrams which did not make any sense to me. I am told Sheila had majored in psychology at the University of Papua New Guinea.

The one thing I had not discovered about Sheila until



very late was that each time we conversed she had her ears tuned to me but her concentration devoted to something else.

When exchanging dialogues she would look past me and stare at something behind me. I would see doubt in her eyes then. But then she would smile or laugh pleasantly and playfully twist my nose with her fingers.

In the house I always asked her to make me coffee or bring me a beer from the fridge and she did so without hesitation.

The cab pulled up at Sheila's house and we had only K1.50 to pay. When we reached the door, Pharoah, Sheila's huge labrador, ran out to greet me.

Sheila's son from her previous marriage came out with the baby-sitter and she picked up the boy. I gave the baby-sitter a carton of beer and asked her to load them all into the fridge.

Later in the evening, as I settled down to my beer, I turned the radio on and began listening to the news. Sheila came out of the kitchen and asked if I wanted some dinner. I shook my head and went on drinking and listening to the news.

"Please have something to eat," insisted Sheila. "The boy and the baby-sitter have already eaten and are fast asleep." "I do not want to eat," I said firmly. She sighed and went back to the kitchen.

There was a lot of news being read over the radio. Violence at the border, for one. It seemed to me, after listening to that particular news item, that there was more violence going on at



Drawing: Ignatius Ilake Tionike

this side of the border than on the other side.

One other news item puzzled me. I could not believe such incidents were suitable for broadcast through the National Broadcasting Commission of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby.

It was about a man gunning down a chap by the name Dasaid, then driving a four-wheel truck over the corpse two or three times.

"They say the man is still at large in Port Moresby," Sheila called out from the dining room after listening to the news item. "My boss, Felix - you know Felix, don't you? He's a psychologist. You must meet him sometime - says he has a fair idea who the suspect is."

"Does your boss suspect the killer to be a foreigner or native?" I asked. "I don't know. But Felix thinks the suspect is a non-aryan brown native - whatever that is."

"Oh."

"My only guess is that the man in question might be the same one who ran over that poor woman at Boroko. Felix thinks along the same lines too. That reminds me. Boss mentioned something about someone writing an anonymous note to the poor woman. I think it was the note that did it." "How can you be sure about that?"

Sheila came out. She tapped the back of her head with a finger and said, "It all happens behind closed doors, sweetheart."

Thinking about her remark a bit, I said, "I'm sure the woman's and Dasaid's killer isn't at all a aryan foreigner."

"I don't know," said Sheila, thoughtfully. "But whoever the suspect is Felix tells me that he will be found out soon."

"How will you useless psychologists succeed in tracking down the killer?" I asked, irritably.

"Oh, we'll know all right, in good time," said Sheila, rather distantly. Then looking me straight in the eye, Sheila smiled sadly and said, "Please, let us not quarrel over these matters. They are bound to give each one of us a terrible headache."

Then much later, and pulling up a chair to join me, Sheila said, "Are you happy?" "Yes," I answered.

I then asked her to bring a beer over for me. She nodded, rose, but instead of going immediately to the fridge, she stood still and listened. We both listened. In the distance we could hear the police sirens.

"I think they found the man," said Sheila, and strolled over to the fridge.



# Boroko Saturday Morning

## Jerry Daniels



You can never see so many people as on Saturday morning at Boroko. Some people, they go to buy food, some go to shop, some go to meet friends, some go to, well, just go raun.

I tell you, all sorts of people, fat ones and thin ones, teachers and students, yellow ones and white ones and so on.

I'll tell you a story, the story about one Saturday morning when I went to Boroko just for a raun.

That morning when I woke up I thought to myself, shall I go raun at Boroko or not? I remember my cousin who works in a bank, he said if I go today I meet him in Boroko hotel.

Well, I went to wash in the shower room and when that finished I put on my open leg trousers and my green army shirt, comb my hair and went to have breakfast.

I went to the bus-stop to wait for the bus. I saw John and he ask me where I want

to go. I told him, "I'm going fishing, what?"

"Good hunting," he said, "but don't rough too much." "I'm a good man ya," I said.

We waited and many PMVs and buses they came but always full and they did not stop. When one empty one comes all the people rush to get in. Those who are slow will have to wait again. I was waiting for a long time and I was tired already. I was thinking of giving up.

Then one PMV came stop and I said, "Draiva, Boroko." He said, "Four Mile, Boroko," and I jumped into the back with a lot of boys and girls, men and women, baby boys and baby girls and pigs and dogs.

Well, not pigs and dogs but you know that's a PMV expression for many things. They probably came with their houses, haoo - another expression for carrying many things. I was very cross, what for too many people in one truck. Why not some go

down and wait for other PMV or bus.

Anyway the driver he start the engine and we ran to Admin College. Some people standing at the bus-stop, they want the PMV to stop but the driver keep going. They become cross and swear, "You bloody pig." We kept going, going until we come to Waigani.

One boy want to go down so he shouted very big and told driver, "Draiva olim." One funny boy, I think he is from Sepik, he said, "Draiva olim, meri bilong kaunsil ilaik pispis." Everybody laugh and laugh very much.

The truck stop and the boy went down and some more people came up. The driver gave it sixty and we pass Gordons junction. He want to stop but the passengers they shouted, "Fullup, fullup, no space," so we went straight to Four Mile. At Four Mile I went down and pay the PMV 20 toea. Then I start to walk to Boroko.





I tell you, shit, you cannot walk straight. You have to walk sideways. You bump one girl, you run into a pikinini, you crash into a hurrying boy, you have to look careful. I cross the road and I heard someone say, "Smell tinfish no?"

I look up and saw John and Tom laughing at me. They ask me what I was doing and I said, "I make my style, what?"

Tom laughed at me and said, "O look at him, like good one." I said, "You Jay" and he said, "You S O you." I say, "Up yours," and we make this kind of fun and we walk together.

That time me, John, Joe and Tom were going together, four of us. Tom said "Maiau" to one Tolai girl and she said, "Eei, nogat sem bilong you." Joe and

John and me were really laughing.

I saw Kote coming so I said, "Ai, Kote, Kote." Joe called out, "Hey coonman, how's your fuse?" "Better than yours," Kote said and we all laughed.

At the same time, one girl she is very, very pretty. She walk past us. She was wearing blue dress and put lipstick on her mouth and painted her fingernails.

She also pull some hair from her eye and was wearing high heeled shoe. Who knows she probably turns her voice when she speaks?

Anyway, Kote whistled at her and said "Bulu favour." She kept on walking and he called again "You orait o?" The other boys pretend coughing and clearing up their neck.

Joe said, "That kind of girl is what I call a black European." John said "No, she is giving it sixty, conforming or changing ahead of PNG pace. Adapting that's the right word."

Now we come close to Boroko Hotel. Tom said, "Eyes right. Shall we go in for lecture or not." I said, "Me I'm sevende ya, I don't know how to drink."

The other boys suggested we go around Boroko and then we'll come back and go in. So we cut across to Chows corner. We saw some girls standing in the store and Joe wave to one he knows. John said "Ei tru ah?" "That's me," Joe said.

The girl came and said, "Hello Joe boy, long taim no see, how are you?" Joe said "O fifty-fifty and you?" She said she was okay and she





# ★ Stories



and her friends were going to look for some kai at the market.

Kote said, "We are having a dance tonight, you wanna come?" Oh that girl, her name is Kathy, she said she would come. "Bring other girls with you," Kote said, "orait a?" She said "Okay," and "look see you behind," and went back to her friends.

We saw one nice car, you know, these Range Rovers. I said "Boys, you wanna lift, that's my car." Joe said, "Oh I'm sorry boys I put my car in the garage yesterday that's why you people have to walk on your legs."

"Nothing," said Tom, "people like you go in helicopters made of sago leaf." Kote said, "Shit! pilot o."

We came to the Post Office and there were so many people. Lots and lots of them. Some were talking on telephones, some were waiting, some were waiting to buy stamps and others were doing other Post Office things, who knows.

"Ya I'm hungry," I heard one fellow say. We decided to go to the milk bar at Tabari Place and eat something. Tabari Place, I tell you, that's the only place. You will go five yards in five minutes.

You will not hear anything because so many people talking and laughing, stereos singing loudly, people shouting, horns tooting and also engines of the cars. It's just one big piece of noise.

One funny thing happen. Joe bumped into a big fat woman and nearly kissed her. We wanted to laugh but the woman looked at us so we turn our face away and pretend to look at the shop window.

"Next time, you," she said. Joe scratched his head one side and said, "Oh sorri o."

We sat down at one table and were greasing about some of the girls sitting near the door. "That red one is mine," Joe declared. "That's my ex ya," Kote said. "Aste yet sign dai, she said she got like for me, what."

I said, "Stop claiming girls, you think her father and mother born her and call your name for her." "Yeah," Joe said.

We meet my cousin in the street and he said it's time for our language drill at the language lab. So we march down to Boroko Hotel.

Man, Boroko Hotel, Saturday, is just like Tabari Place. You see so many people drinking and talking and laughing and playing snooker and doing other things. Some people they sit on benches, others they sit on the ground.

Good place for drinking too ya. But the toilet is rubbish. Drinkers they spoil the place. The boys bought a lot of beer and they brought them to our table.

I said, "What, taro o, like you people plant it in the garden." They said, "No worry, drink up, S.P. capsait."

Have you seen those people at Boroko Hotel? After one hour the tone goes down, the pace goes slow but the volume becomes louder. Voices! That's what I'm talking about, not that you will hear anything. I think you know.

That time you must be careful of what you say. Another fellow might think you are crossing him. This way many fights come up in hotels.

Sorry, I talk too much about the hotel. You look at some of those cars. Some are painted with many colours and some have so many aerals that you think they have radio and telephone and television inside o.

Others they stick all kinds of stickers everywhere and they make a lot of noise and make big smoke. But they go very fast, man.

Yeah, I did not finish yet. I came to the bus-stop and heard many people calling, "Draiva, Gerehu," "Draiva Waigani." I ask one driver, "Uni?" He nod his head, I climb up and sat down.

I forgot everything, did not want to listen to anybody. I shut my mind altogether until the PMV stop at Uni. I saw the mess open and I say, "Lunch-time, 12 o'clock."



# Johnny Walker

## Ignatius Kilage

Children call him Johnny Walker, since nobody knows his real name. I, by chance, in a market place saw a child comfortably sleeping on his mother's lap.

Looking up at his mother's smiling face the child said "Mother, why does Uncle Johnny Walker walk every day?"

Mother, finding the seriousness in her child's face, said, "Your uncle has plenty of time in this big city, therefore he goes for a walk to see if he can find anybody that can talk to him."

Unfortunately nobody talks to him. Poor Uncle Walker, when he takes his daily walks from Kone to Seven Mile and back, he passes people of all races on the road.

Most walk, some drive in cars and buses. He respectfully walks on the side, head down, his bundle of worldly possessions he carries, an ice cream container is his hat to keep off the heat of the sun or the rain.

Step by step he walks, oblivious to his surroundings. Parliament could be in session making momentous decisions that could affect him.

Visiting foreign dignitaries could be escorted by mounted police with flying colours. There could be street demonstrations.

There could be children or old people run over by speedy drivers, there could be street blocks that annoy frustrated drivers.

Come rain, come shine, Johnny walks his merry way.

Of late I have not seen him. Actually I miss him. Many of us may be doing wonders. I wonder if we are



Drawing: Henao Gau

makers of our destiny.

Johnny, like Cowboy before him and many others, was the soil and soul of Port Moresby. They own this land, however barren!

They will come to haunt this land yet, as their ancestors hunted and roamed this fair hilly Moresby, without the sky scrapers.

In a place of sickly hurry, where everybody's movements are regulated by the all-powerful time, Johnny walks his slow measured walk. He has no master, he has no watch.

A free man, master of his own will. He walks and sees all. In his dreams he sees his brothers and sisters swept away from their roots of tranquility and a simple life into the turbulent black waves of materialism.

He groans, and turns over, but he must get his rest for tomorrow's walk.



★ Plays

# Black Market Buai

## Nora Vagi Brash

### CHARACTERS:

First buai seller  
 Second seller  
 Gardener  
 White Supervisor  
 Science Lecturer, Prof Save  
 Kambang, science student  
 Búai, science student  
 Daka, science student  
 Silin, economics student  
 Kina, economics student  
 Toea, economics student  
 Tourist  
 Economics Lecturer, Prof Bucks.

*The scene is the University Gardens. Two buai sellers arrive and settle down to sell betelnuts.*

#### 1st seller:

Iniseni ita eda buatau ita hoidia. Oi diba tura hari be Paraide namona. Sikuli memero bona kekeni be buatau ania momo. Sedira moni taina do ita veria.

(Let's sell our betelnuts here, you know today is Good Friday my friend and these school boys and girls really like chewing. We're sure to pull a lot of money in you know)

#### 2nd seller:

Em nau yu tok stret. Nai bai me selem buai, nau long tete nait bai mi danis wantain tupela meri, husat i gat sotpela nek, wampela emigat grinpela sikin na narapela i gat braunpela sikin.

#### 1st seller:

Oh yea - oli stap we?

#### 2nd seller:

Yu save pinis, oli stap long Kols Klab, na Boroko hotel na bilak maket.

#### 1st seller:

Mi a ting bai me go painim long Tabari, sapos nogat bai mi baim PMV na wokabaut long ples.

#### 2nd seller:

Man dispela em hat wok ia, na yu mas wokim laik bilong yu pastaim behain yu ken ting long ples.

*(As they talk, they display their betelnuts into groups of two's and three's according to size. A gardener nearby sees and comes running to them pulling a garden hose)*

#### Gardener:

Hey yupela! Husat i tokim yu long selem buai long hia a? Yu no save ah! Dispela ples oli i bin tambuin long dispela kain pasin. Goan, raus, nogut mi putim wara long yu. *(He threatens them with the hose)* Sapos masta i lukim yupela em bai bel hat nogut tru.

#### 2nd seller:

Ah tura! What for you get cross? Here. *(Hands him a couple of betelnuts)* Come chew with us. We not mekin rabis, we just sellin only and you are giving yourself hard time for nothing.

#### Gardener:

*(Getting irritated)* Lukim mi no save kaikai buai. Dispela ino maket, em univesti em ples bilong sikul orait! Planti bik man long we we i save kam long hia. Na mi no laik oli lap long yumi long ol pipia na spet long buai. Kam on, yupela raus kwik taim.

#### 1st seller:

He tura, oi badu lasi, inai buatau oi ania vada mai goada danu oi gaukara. Oi diba buatau be ita ena mauri gauna. *(Come on, stop your unnecessary anger and chew this, it'll give you energy for work. You know, betelnut is our life)*

*(The gardener cools down, accepts the betelnuts and sits down)*

#### Gardener:

Ha! ha! ha! sanigiue! Nau yu tok tru, buai em wampela kain samting. Sapos yu no kaikaim em, het bilong ye bai kranki nogut tru.

#### 2nd seller:

Now you tok sense. Buai is something else. In my home village, they say "betelnut kills people."

#### Gardener:

Yea, mi save long ples bilong mi i olsem. Long sampela hap long Papua Nugini ol save tok, sapos yu no save givim buai long wampela wantok, ol bai bel hat na paitim yu stret. *(He chews as he talks. He starts to fan himself vigorously)* Ah! buai yu samting tru!

#### Supervisor:

*(Suddenly appears)* Hey you, What the bloody hell you doing filling your mouth with that disgusting stuff? Public Service regulations says no chewing of betelnuts in working hours. I don't care what you do after work but not during bloody working hours.

Go on, get your bloody arse off the ground and raus them too. If I come back here and this place is in a mess, I'll bloody sack you, hear!

*(The supervisor storms off and the sellers*



*hurriedly put their goods in their bags and scramble off)*

**Gardener:**

*(Calls out after them)* Yupela mas sidaun ananit long ol plaua long klostu long rot, em i nap long lukim long dispela hap, planti diwai i stap.

**2nd seller:**

No worries mate, when he goes we'll come back.

**Gardener:**

*(Rolls his sleeve up and shows his muscles)* Blari sit nating. Nex taim bai me paitim em stret. *(to audience)* Yu ting bun nating, ah man, me save hamarim ol long Klab. Mi strong moa yet. *(He starts to hose all over the stage and exits)*

*(Enter 2nd seller cautiously. He looks around and then signals to his friend. The first seller enters. They both look around, spread their cardboard mats and sit down)*

**1st seller:**

Inai tauna be kavakava momokani. Ia ena gabu bamona. Papua be inau negai indepensi ia abia vadaini. *(This man is really stupid. This is not even his place. Papua is already independent)*

**2nd seller:**

Ye, laik gud wan, maski we sit here first and see. He comes back again, that one am gonna spit on his beautiful shiny white shirt with betelnut, you wait. You know boy only anytime.

*(As they talk, they go through the same ritual of spreading their wares. A group of science students enter left, to study the reaction of lime and betelnut and pepper)*

**Prof. Save:**

Well, as I was saying in lectures, the reaction of the lime has been proven to cause the linings of one's stomach to be lined with asbestos.

However today we just want to see what it does to the human mind under the influence of the buai. Perhaps Kambang, you can get the ball rolling by explaining to these people why we are here.

**Kambang:**

Tura, inai kava tauna ia ura, ahu, buatau, popo oi henimai ai itaia guna. *(Friend, this idiot here wants us to study lime, betelnut and pepper)*

**2nd seller:**

Ha! ha! ha! You can see them here, and if you want to look at them properly you must buy it, only 20 toea. We don't go to B.P. and say we want to study bully meat, give us one tin.

**Prof. Save:**

Here's 20 toea. I can get a refund from the department. This research has been approved. Just ask him for a receipt.

**1st seller:**

Risid be dahaka? *(What's a receipt?)*

**2nd seller:**

Em liklik hap pepe bilong rabim as. *(They laugh)*

**Prof. Save:**

What's the joke Kambang?

**Kambang:**

Nothing, I didn't hear what they said.

**2nd seller:**

Look here mate, I got no docket book, we not school boys. You want me to write on betelnut skin?

**Kambang:**

*(Hands over 20 toea and picks up the betelnuts)* Here boys go to it. We want reaction man!

**Buai:**

Man you think we're going to achieve any reaction. I think, we should do the test on Prof. Save himself.

**Daka:**

Prof, why don't you have some. It won't kill you.

**Prof. Save:**

I tell you what, next time we have a formal dinner, I'll buy some and then you can show me how to chew it. You know what I mean. I'll try it under relaxing circumstances. Right now thanks all the same. *(He waits for the reaction but in vain)*

**Buai:**

This is nice buai, I think I'll buy some more before the rush is on. You know these days you have to travel to the markets to buy them. This bloody city council is making it hard for the rural people.

**Prof. Save:**

Are you feeling anything yet Daka?

**Daka:**

No, I feel fine, no difference whatsoever.

**Prof. Save:**

*(Writes in his book)* The betelnut itself I'm told, does not give a red colouring. However, if you chew the pepper seed with it, it gives a slight orange colour. When you add lime, the whole thing flares up. You become hot and sweaty.



## ★ Plays

When swallowed it hits you in the chest. *(Smiles as he remembers his drink from last night)* Just like straight whisky. *(Smacks his lips)* Try it sometime yourself. The lime itself is made up of burning shells or coral over red hot embers and crushed into fine white powder. Thus we have lime calcium. *(Jokingly)* I say you got to be strong to stomach it. Like all drugs it is a stimulant.

*(At this point the students are having a ball, joking and laughing with the sellers. This convinces the Professor about the effects of betelnut chewing)* Daka, Buai and Kambang I think are really affected. *(To them)* Don't forget I want this assignment completed and handed in at 8 o'clock sharp tomorrow morning.

**2nd seller:**

Hey yupela, tisa bilong yu raitim wanem long buk.

**Buai:**

Mipela ino save. Ating em raitim giaman samting.

**Prof. Save:**

Ah well, I guess that's the end of the lecture. *(He looks at his students, looks at the audience and sighs)* Betelnut is really a menace. *(He exits to right)*

**Kambang:**

These foreigners will never understand the finer points of the true Melanesian way.

*(A tourist enters from the audience taking pictures as he comes along, and throwing one toea pieces to the audience. He comes up to the stage and halts and then takes pictures of the sellers and the students.)*

**Tourist:**

*(Picks up a nut and looks at it)* What is this fruit?

**Daka:**

It's betelnut.

**Tourist:**

So this is betelnut. Ya know back home in the States we have them growing in the hot houses.

**Buai:**

Well here it grows anywhere.

**Tourist:**

A didn't see none on ma wey dan here.

**Daka:**

Well now, they don't exactly grow around here. It's far too hot.

**Tourist:**

*(Fans himself and wipes his brow with a handkerchief)* You can bet ya bottom dollar. What's the white stuff, is that acid?

**Kambang:**

That's not acid, it's lime.

**Tourist:**

You know it sure looks like heroin to me. What's it made of?

**Daka:**

It's made out of burnt coral and shells.

**Tourist:**

Mind if I have a taste of it? *(He puts his finger in the white powder then starts to put his finger to his mouth)*

**2nd seller:**

Hey! you don't put your finger in your mouth, it will burn you.

**Tourist:**

*(To Buai)* Say what's he saying?

**Buai:**

Well that stuff can't be taken by itself. It goes with betelnuts and the pepper.

**Tourist:**

Oh I see. What a super idea? What does it taste like?

**Kambang:**

It's a taste you have to acquire yourself. Why don't you try it?

**Tourist:**

A don't mind if I do. *(He gives his camera to Buai)* Say, can you use one of these?

**Buai:**

Well, I could have a go.

**Tourist:**

Why don't you take a picture of me while I'm trying some native stuff huh? I wanna show it to ma family when I go back to the States.

**Buai:**

Right, say when you're ready.

**Tourist:**

I'll just sit here in between ma friends here. *(He sits in between the sellers)* Now what do you do?

**Daka:**

*(Handing over a peeled betelnut)* Now you chew this first.

**1st seller:**

O nogut bai em spak long buai. Buai bai kilim em stret.



**Tourist:**

*(Hears the word kilim, jumps up with a fright, takes the buai out)* A say what's he talkin about killin for? A er .... mean .... A have read about cannibalism. A thought the practice was abolished by Christianity before Independence.

**Buai:**

*(Laughing)* No, what he means is, that the betelnut might make you a little tipsy.

**Tourist:**

Hey, does it make you high like dope?

**Buai:**

*(Innocently)* What is dope?

**Tourist:**

Don't you know what dope is? Marijuana, it should grow wild here in the tropics.

**Buai:**

Don't know what it looks like. Well now do you want to try or not?

**Tourist:**

Why yes! A'd love to try. They say you can't say anything less you've tried. Here goes. *(He puts the betelnut back in his mouth.)*

**Buai:**

Now you dip this pepper seed in the lime, like this and you place it on the betelnut in your mouth and chew. *(The tourist chews gingerly, then points to his mouth)*

**Tourist:**

Wh....at do a do ne....xt?

**Buai:**

You may spit it out if you like. *(The tourist swallows down the betelnut hesitantly and shuts his eyes tightly and draws a big breath. Then slowly he breathes out)*

**2nd seller:**

Luk aut! nogut bai em dai ah!

**Tourist:**

*(Sheepishly smiling)* Whew! ....A thought A'd never recover. Say you think a could have a glass of water, my mouth sure feels dry. *(Buai exits)*

**Daka:**

Maybe you need fire extinguisher more than a glass of water.

**Buai:**

*(Entering from left with a glass of water and pulling along a hose)* I though you might need this.

**Tourist:**

Well, a can't say a like it but am sure glad a've tried it. A think a'll let Melanesia alone to its pretty habits. Thanks a million buddy. Nice meeting ya. *(He exits, right, with the students, fanning himself madly with a straw hat)*

*(Enter, left, a group of students with an economics lecturer, Prof. Bucks, carrying a text book. Silin carries a board for writing)*

**Prof. Bucks:**

Well now, if you can just put this board here. *(Places the board away from the buai sellers facing the audience but not masking the sellers. The Prof. puts his hand in his pocket, hitches his trousers up)* Now then, this morning we have brought a class out here for practice. We want to see the importance of rural economy. Here we have two buai sellers.

*(He moves to the sellers and uses them as live models.)* Both have come a long way from the village. Tonight they will have sold all these betelnuts. The important thing is they'll not be going back with the money but taking home products that are not readily available in the village. We call this supply and demand.

*(He writes it down on the board. While the Prof. is busy giving the lecture, the students are bored to tears so they sit down and buy betelnuts and start chewing with the sellers, paying no attention whatsoever to what's being said)*

**Prof. Bucks:**

These guys are very cunning. *(Shakes his head)* Oh no, they're not stupid either. You see they keep up with inflation. Now statistics show thus. *(He writes on the board)* "Average annual buai consumption. Period 1950-60: 12 betelnuts to 12 pence." Now this was in the days of L.S.D.

*(He writes again)* "1960-70: ten betelnuts to ten cents."

This is in the good old days. *(Nostalgically)* Yes I remember going to Koki market. Very well organised. The market was kept clean and the fresh fish, my word you could buy a string of fish for five shillings. Those days have been kissed goodbye.

Yeah, back to the statistics. With the introduction of the new currency, kina, and handing over of powers the prices have ridiculously soared sky high.

*(He writes again)* "1970-1979: three betelnuts for 20 toea."



## ★ Plays

There was a time when people would riot over a bag of betelnuts. There wasn't enough to go around. In fact my informants tell me that because of the scarcity of the damn things, sellers would often sell small plants for consumption. Thank goodness for highways. These sellers are making enormous profits on their produce. With inflation, the quantity decreases.

*(He turns to the students)* Now what I want is for each of you to bring back some data no later than 10 o'clock on Friday. *(He observes his watch)* Oh dear, I'm late for the Academic Board Meeting. *(Exits right with board)*

**Silin:**  
Well, did you hear all that rubbish?

**Toea:**  
Well, I'm going to write anything down and give it to him. He wouldn't know anyway. *(The Supervisor enters thundering)*

**Supervisor:**  
What the bloody hell is going on in my garden?

**Kina:**  
*(Laughing)* Black market, what else.

**Supervisor:**  
What do you mean! I'll file a report to the city council. Now listen to me, you cheeky bugger. I work here all day long trying to get this bloody campus clean while you sit on your arse all day long chewing the bloody gunk and spewing it all over my campus. I mean our campus.

**Toea:**  
Come on, what part of the university statutes states no chewing of betelnuts heh?

**Supervisor:**  
It's your campus as well as mine. I think you should appreciate that fact.

**Silin:**  
*(Coolly)* Wait a minute, what do you mean appreciation when you don't even appreciate our Melanesian way ah?

**Supervisor:**  
*(Irritated)* This is an institution made out of foreign currency, not bloody betelnut skins, mate! As far as the city council and I'm concerned this is a black market.

**Silin:**  
Oh now come on, have a heart. These people have come a long way. Why don't you let them finish off the bag and let them off.

**Supervisor:**  
Have it your way. Don't start blaming us when you're sitting deep in the buai spit lake my boy. I'm only doing my duty.

**2nd seller:**  
You like to try it? You try it before or no?

**Supervisor:**  
Never! never! I don't mind the betelnut but I can't stand that lime. I'm sure it's not very good for your system.

**2nd seller:**  
Come here I show you, is good for your teeth. It make it strong.

**Supervisor:**  
*(Calming down)* As a matter of fact I never had the full works.

**Students:**  
Okay let's see the full works.

**2nd seller:**  
*(Cuts open a soft betelnut, hands it to the supervisor)* Put it in your mouth and chew. *(The supervisor tries to chew and then spits out the juice, clumsily)* Now chew this daka with it.

**Supervisor:**  
Oh it tastes different.

**2nd seller:**  
Now I give you lime. *(He brings out a tin of Sunshine Milk and takes a teaspoon full of powder and puts it in the supervisor's mouth)*

**Students:**  
That's not enough, give him some more.

**2nd seller:**  
Yes, that's not enough I give you some more. *(He spoons another into his mouth. The supervisor cannot hold it so he spits it all out coughing and carrying on)*

**Supervisor:**  
Get out of my garden or I'll call the police. Gardener, where's that hose, bring it here and wash this damn place down.

*(The gardener enters with the water and sprays it over everybody. The sellers scramble off stage carrying what they can and leaving some betelnuts on the ground. The gardener helps himself to these and sings as he hoses down. Two city councillors arrive, look right and left, nod approvingly to the gardener as he exits. They unfurl a banner for display)*

**"KEEP MOSBI CLEAN. KEEP BUAI SELLERS OUT."**



## LOVER'S DREAM

*Valerian Bauai*

Reluctantly the September sun was strolling  
above the horizon.  
The glistening glass of water was shimmering  
in the heat.  
The slow easterlies forced small waves to  
glimmer like billions of pieces of glass.  
A lonely sea-gull was diving lazily, perfectly,  
on the horizon.

Perched high on a coconut palm, a lonely heart  
straddled a horde of flowering nuts.  
Motionless in deep contemplation, he sat gazing  
at the sinking sun  
while he journeyed with his lost lover  
everywhere.  
From the universal hide-and-seek days to  
the moments of the Pastor's confirmation of:  
"Do you love her as your life-time wife?"  
"Do you love him as your life-time husband?"  
But he was hesitant to recall the moments when  
the same Pastor proclaimed:  
"Let our sister enjoy happiness in Heaven  
with God!"  
His neck became dry and he sat stunned as if  
his heart was pierced by an arrow.

He turned his back.  
The savannah wilderness stretched right up to  
the undulating Stanley Ranges.  
He got interested in an oval-shaped green spot.  
He stared at it, then started up the meandering  
stream.  
At the summit, a thin white column was  
waving at him.  
He thought, could that be my lover?

Then an unexpected disturbance made him  
turn,  
Only to see the scarlet-gold circular object  
just about to slip down.

Drawing: Jim Tanket



Its emitted early-twilight was being obscured by  
the banks of a huge cumulus.  
The sky immediately above the horizon was  
stained flamboyantly.  
As the sun retired.

Then he began to weep.

## OH DALIN BILONG MI!

*Melio Masen*

He:  
O dalin bilong mi!

If you are really bagarap for me.  
Please do raitim pas na tokim mi.

Mi kisim poto bilong yu pinis  
I don't get gut slip long nait  
Because I driman everynight for you.

O dalin bilong mi  
You shine like moon antap  
And glisten like solwara ananit.

She:  
O dalin bilong mi!

I am more than bagarap for you  
Please do come kwiktaim tru.

Taim mi kisim pas bilong yu,  
I get up upside down sleep long nait  
Because I driman for you.

O dalin you hurt like a fishing spear  
And pour like Sepik wara.



## ★ Poems

### MORNING CRIES

*David Las*

Kuku-ruku crows the kakaruk  
Ah! oli kirap, I can see the sun on his  
way from the east,  
And I can see the moon in her light to the  
west.  
Oloman why is everybody still sleeping?  
Samting olsem na mi tok, don't sleep in pairs  
Kuku-ruku crows the kakaruk.

Ohe-aa-gaioo shout the boys  
Ol brata - where are your arrows, where are  
your bows  
Em tulait nau, don't hold on to your pillows  
too long.  
Traim na stretim lek and rub your sleepy eyes  
Noken larim ol purpur bilong ol poromeri hide  
the sun from you  
Ohe-aa-gaioo shout the boys.

Ayaeeee-Aya Aya-Ayae sing the girls  
Ah ol susa, mi les long kirap, I want to  
go on sleeping forever  
Ol poroman bilong yupela must have satisfied  
your physical needs  
Tasol traim na kisim ol bilum, let's go  
gardenin'  
Nogut ol poroman bilong yupela will go  
hunting with empty stomachs  
Ayae-Aya Aya-Ayae sing the girls.

### ANGER THEN SORROW

*Suki S.S. Geberi*

Led by my dog in darkness  
Without knowing where I was led  
I found myself sitting in front of  
A heap of bones.  
With anger I belted my dog to death  
And with sorrow I buried him  
Six feet underground.

### YOU FEAR?

*Kubura Basu*

You fear?  
Don't run off  
Curl around your fear  
And cuddle it  
You'll find consolation.



Drawing: Michael Ayula

Don't shove it  
Into your innocent throats,  
For feedback never mends  
And it's alien to your way  
And it's too demanding.



## I OUGHT TO BE WRITING

Nora Vagi Brash

Drawing: Takus David



Today someone asked me  
 "How's your writing going?"  
 "Fine, except it's washing day."  
 I sit near the tub  
 Each piece of cloth I wring bears every word  
 that's meant to be on paper  
 The multitudes of bubbles blow and scatter in  
 the breeze.  
 Oops! There goes another sentence  
 Popped by a sudden burst of wind  
 Leaving my mind sterile  
 Like my washing on the line.

## MASS MEDIA, MASS MANIA

Nora Vagi Brash

Yummy, sweet marie, tea cake  
 K.O. kraka, P.K., K.K.  
 Tic tac Fanta tango  
 Toothache, decoy, decay  
 Koikoi anyway  
 Fall out, pull em out  
 Strong teeth? No way!

Talking about lime fresh  
 Blue Omo for brightness  
 Palmolive, brighter soap, whitey soap  
 Soft soap, dope soap  
 Whiter wash, wash wash, brain wash  
 Brain blank, blank cheque, blank bank  
 Check out!

Buy now, buy new, buy big, buy bulk  
 Buy more, buy me, buy now, Dinau  
 Buy! Buy! Goodbye self-reliance  
 Sell! Sell! sell-self, sell soil  
 Sell soul, sell out, sell bottles,  
 Sell empty promises,  
 SOLD OUT.

## TOTAL ECLIPSE

Nora Vagi Brash

Grandmother and the old people  
 All agree how it happens.  
 They know they say that  
 The much desired moon woman  
 Elopes with an earth man lover  
 Swallowed by a jealous angry god.

The scientists and astronomers  
 All agree, how it happens.  
 They know they say  
 The precise movements of Earth, Sun  
 and Moon  
 And how the shadow of one masks  
 the other.  
 Telescopes and cameras ready  
 They wait at their predicted time  
 To prove what they say they know.



## ★ Poems

But a thick curtain of black clouds  
Obscures their view  
And the drama is hidden from their eyes.  
But not grandmother, she and the old people  
Know about clouds too.  
It's very clear to them,  
The moon embarrassed by too much staring  
Hides her face in shame.

### OLD MAN

*Loujaya Kousa*

Unaware of his date of birth  
no concept of time,  
he has no fear of death for he does  
not understand,  
to him nobody is old and time walks  
slowly to its' end like a turtle on its paunch.

He is the last of his kind, unaware  
of the changes which have occurred  
he lives on in his own backward way.

He doesn't see nor does he realize.  
To him death is his last decision on earth,  
he is not afraid of the unknown  
for he is too old for that.  
For him believing in reincarnation,  
death is just another step  
into life with his ancestors.

### THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

*Loujaya Kousa*

I sit and I sat in a classroom  
I thought and I thought  
I feel and I felt  
Hot, tired, sticky, sweaty  
I tried, try, tries to tell, to told  
teacher that I, me want, wanted  
wants to go. To, to the TOILET!!!

### SHE JUST LEFT HOME

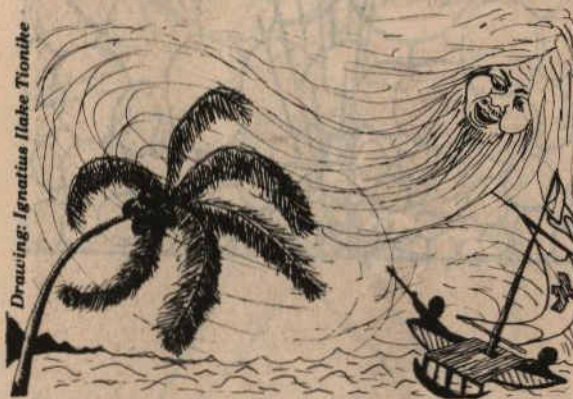
*Loujaya Kousa*

She just left home  
never said a word  
I doubt the neighbours ever heard  
the door slam.  
Never said a word to good old Sam  
the dog  
Probably because of the heavy fog  
She opened the gate and out she went  
leaving the latch all twisted and bent.

She just left home, didn't leave a thing  
a note perhaps  
or a diamond ring.  
But I don't mind  
You know I'm not the kind  
who weep or moan  
over girls like Joan.  
She just left home.

### WIND

*Zak Tiamon*



Wind yawning  
through leaves  
roaming through clifftops  
ripping through sails.

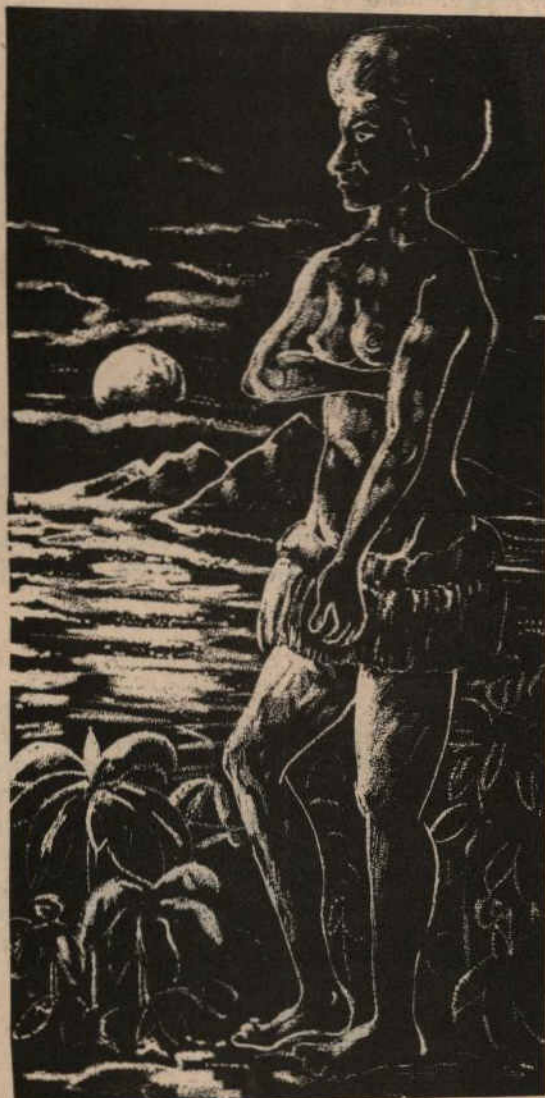
I know you  
as Kaia  
gentle and harsh.

A Kaia is a spirit that was created with  
the world.



## WOMAN

*Zak Tiamon*



Drawing: Godfrey Misale

Woman, bronze in moonlight  
not for rape  
but for stroking  
as I, with my guitar  
to the tide's music  
rising and falling  
Woman, your future luminous.

## WELCOME HOME

*Joe Mangi*

The village swells as inhabitants move in.  
Grins are a bit wider, smiles a bit broader.  
Tiny weeny bits of teeth glint  
under the glow of the fluorescent  
Lighting up the village  
like fireflies in the moonlight.

Hushed whispers from the newly-found,  
make the brickwalls lining the numerous  
corridors  
feel wanted.  
More intimate action emerges from the darker  
spots  
inhabited by long parted lovers.  
Well-meant catcalls follow the new chicks  
like chicks following mummy hen.

Big smiles from the Big Shots.  
"Welcome back, nice to see you."  
Some genuine, some stereotyped,  
others in crocodile fashion.

Over-confidence spills the brim of  
the Seniors among the Small Shots.  
"How's yu, mite?" brims one.  
"No probs, jest a mite hom'sik" spills the other.  
The Junior Small Shot looks on in awe.

I roll down the bus  
suitcase in one hand, bilum in the other.  
"Welcome home."  
Grunts the Gunther Building.

## LOVE POEM

*Joe Mangi*

I am a poor man.  
I cannot give you money to spend.  
I cannot give you presents to have.  
I cannot give you rings to wear.  
I can only give you  
Myself.



## ★ Poems

I have a shoulder for you to cry on.  
I have an arm for you to sleep in.  
I have a lap for you to sit on.  
All these I have, plus more,  
Myself.

Forget me, Oh dear one  
Should money bring you a smile  
Should presents gain access to your lips  
Should cars and grog turn you on  
Should jewels relax your thighs.  
For these, I cannot give.  
I am a poor man.

### PARTY CONVERSATIONS

*Russell Soaba*

upon our transition from wet to dry, dry  
to wet, we met in mid seas  
tempted even to swap canoes  
someone blew a conch, blasted the shell  
on the beer counter, was pushed out into  
a solitary evening, the door locked behind him

another laughed, biblefolds rippling forth  
from a parliamentary potbelly, the laughter  
smothering the nearest waitress: "Please sir,  
your drink. It is spilling." the night  
was a riddle of secret wounds, heady  
perfumes and other conversations

*"Ah, monsieur l'ambassadeur, aimez-vous  
nos champignons? Ils sont bons."*

cocktail hours lay heaped in a barrow  
to be carted away into a morning  
of cold green apples

anonymous centuries  
fizzling in a glass of  
islands, treasure, and death

### TOWARDS DUSK

*Russell Soaba*

"I accept living in exile as a permanent  
condition of my life: a lot of it even in my

own country. Most artists are like that," -  
Albert Wendt

a thousand footprints  
on dried up mud ponds  
time leaps from weir to weir  
bridging islands, wholing circles

something stirred, traced  
velvet skies and island  
existentialists

devoured rich adjectives

reality slipped eel fingers  
told tall coconut stories of morning  
seeing night in a rain  
of swallows in migration: how

being was  
forgotten towards  
dusk, uncleared

### LEAVING HOME

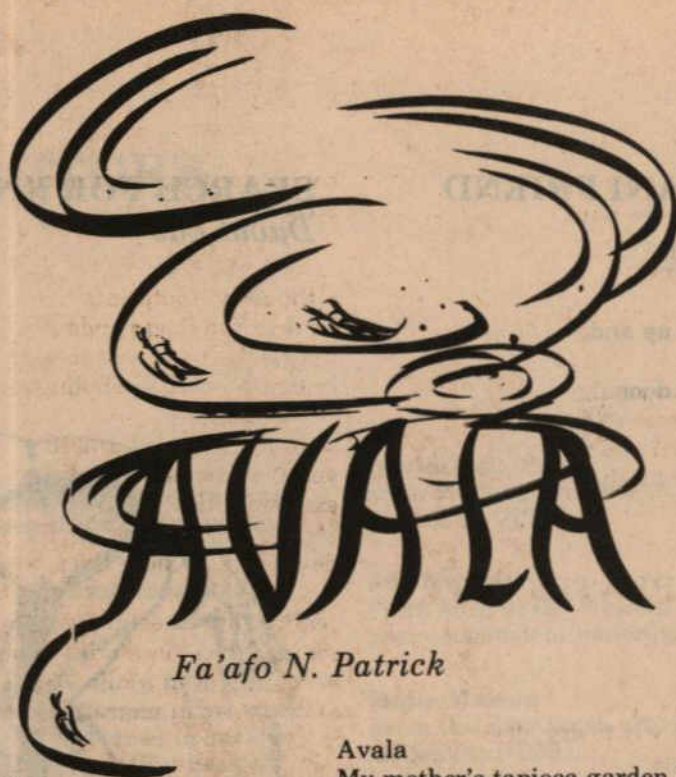
*Fa'afo N. Patrick*



Drawing: Jim Tanket

Friends shaking my hand  
wish me luck  
Father smiles handing me  
a buck  
Mother hands me a bottle of home-made oil  
tears streaming down her cheeks  
Everyone shouts - Emau o o o  
as the boats sails away  
I look back until I see the village  
no more.





*Fa'afo N. Patrick*

Months pass  
It's only October  
I know you're almost home,  
I know you're just outside my doorstep.  
There's only a matter of moments to go  
But already you've started roaring.

Avala  
You are the strongest of all winds  
I can hear you blowing against my pandanus  
house.  
I can feel you cooling me after a day's work.  
I can see the lids of pots blown off and my  
grandfather's coconut hat blown into the bush.  
Because of many things I hate your visits  
But I know you will never end there.

**Avala is the name given by the Hula  
people of the Central province to the  
south-east wind that blows from  
November to February in that area.**

Avala  
My mother's tapioca garden looks lifeless  
because you've uprooted all the plants.  
My father's coconut plantation is languishing  
because you've blown down a good number.  
My grandmother is blind  
because you've blown sand into her eyes.  
My baby can't sleep  
because you're so noisy.

Avala  
It's February again  
The village is peaceful  
The children swim and play on the beaches  
I can hear grandfather calling from the garden  
The baby is asleep in the bilum  
Everyone is replanting  
Fishermen are after the favourite Mugiu  
Avala has left us again  
Singing  
Until next November.

Drawing: Pauline Ponifasio



★ Poems

MY FRANGIPANI FRIEND

*Fa'afo N. Patrick*

Each morning I wake up and  
Open my eyes  
I look out my balcony door.

I see you smiling me  
A good morning  
Silently.

I laugh to myself  
Smiling back a  
Good morning to  
My frangipani  
Friend.

MY SON, OH HORNBILL MY SON

*Alex Dawia*

This poem is translated from Mutone, the  
language spoken by the Siwais of the  
North Solomons province.

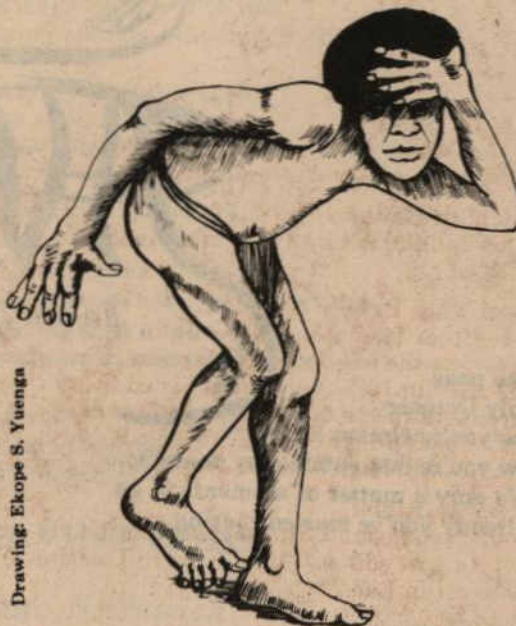
My son, oh hornbill my son  
Many were the times when you and I clambered  
about the steep paths  
near our home, and never did you fall.  
How often we used to climb over the mountains  
mishap.

Then came that day when you fell and died  
just because your father had a longing to eat  
baked meat, and took you along to  
hunt opossums;  
now instead of feasting on opossums your  
father eats your rotting flesh  
Oh hornbill, my son.

If the living could follow the dead  
I would follow you  
I would leave the life of the living to be with  
you  
Oh hornbill, my son.

SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE

*David Las*



It's so great and endless  
Like the empty space above me  
No matter how far I reach out to it  
Like a man lost in the desert  
I keep going because it's a fight for survival  
Like a spoilt child I keep crying  
Because I want to have more than others  
The search for knowledge is so endless a task  
That to me it's like climbing a hill  
Just to find at the top  
That there is another hill to climb.



## CONTRIBUTORS

### **Kubura Basu:**

The pen-name of Doreen Soaba. Lives in Ainsai, in the Ioma sub-province of the Oro province.

### **Valerian Bauai:**

From Goilala. A third year arts student at UPNG.

### **Nora Vagi Brash:**

Came from Tubusereia, grew up in Kila Kila village on the edge of Port Moresby. First work published in 1977. Poems published in various journals. Expects to publish her first book of poetry soon. Plays include "Which Way Big Man?" and "High Cost of Living Differently".

### **Jerry Daniels:**

From Siassi island. Graduated from UPNG in 1981, is now editor of the "Niugini Lutheran" and lives in Lae.

### **Alex Dawia:**

From the North Solomons. A third year student at UPNG, majoring in literature.

### **Suki S. Geberi:**

From Central province. Works as a Port Moresby secretary.

### **Ignatius Kilage:**

From Simbu province. Graduated from Holy Spirit Seminary, Madang. Is Chief Ombudsman of Papua New Guinea. His fictional account of the changes in Simbu and PNG through the eyes of a middle-aged man, "My Mother Called Me Yaltep" appeared in 1981.

### **Loujaya Kousa:**

Born in Lae. Published her first book of poems "A Sense of Interest" in 1978 when she was 15. Currently a journalism student at UPNG.

### **David Las:**

From Madang province. A third year arts student in UPNG.

### **Joe Mangi:**

From Minj in the Western Highlands. A fourth year arts student majoring in archaeology.

### **Melio Masen:**

From the East Sepik province. A third year arts student at UPNG.

### **Fa'afo Patrick:**

From Hula in the Central province. A third year student, majoring in language from UPNG, but is on an exchange at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji.

### **Russell Soaba:**

From Milne Bay province. Numerous poems and short stories published in local and overseas literary journals. The author of the novel "Wanpis" and a book of poems, "Naked Thoughts". A new novel is to be published this year. A teaching fellow in literature at UPNG who will start a masters degree in creative writing at Brown University, Rhode Island, U.S.A. this year.

### **Zak Tiamon:**

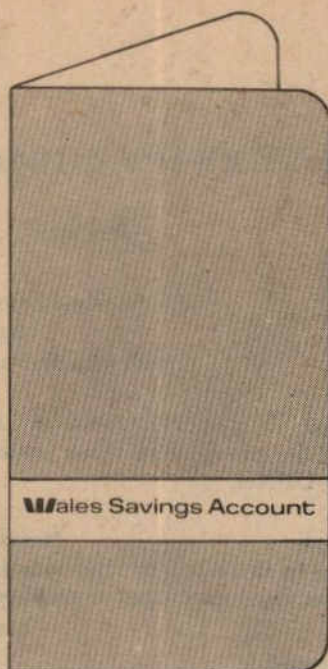
From East New Britain. Studied at UPNG and now works for San Miguel (PNG) Ltd.

### **Thomas Tumun:**

From Kup in the Simbu province. He studied at UPNG and the University of Queensland, Brisbane. Taught for a time in the language department at UPNG.




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