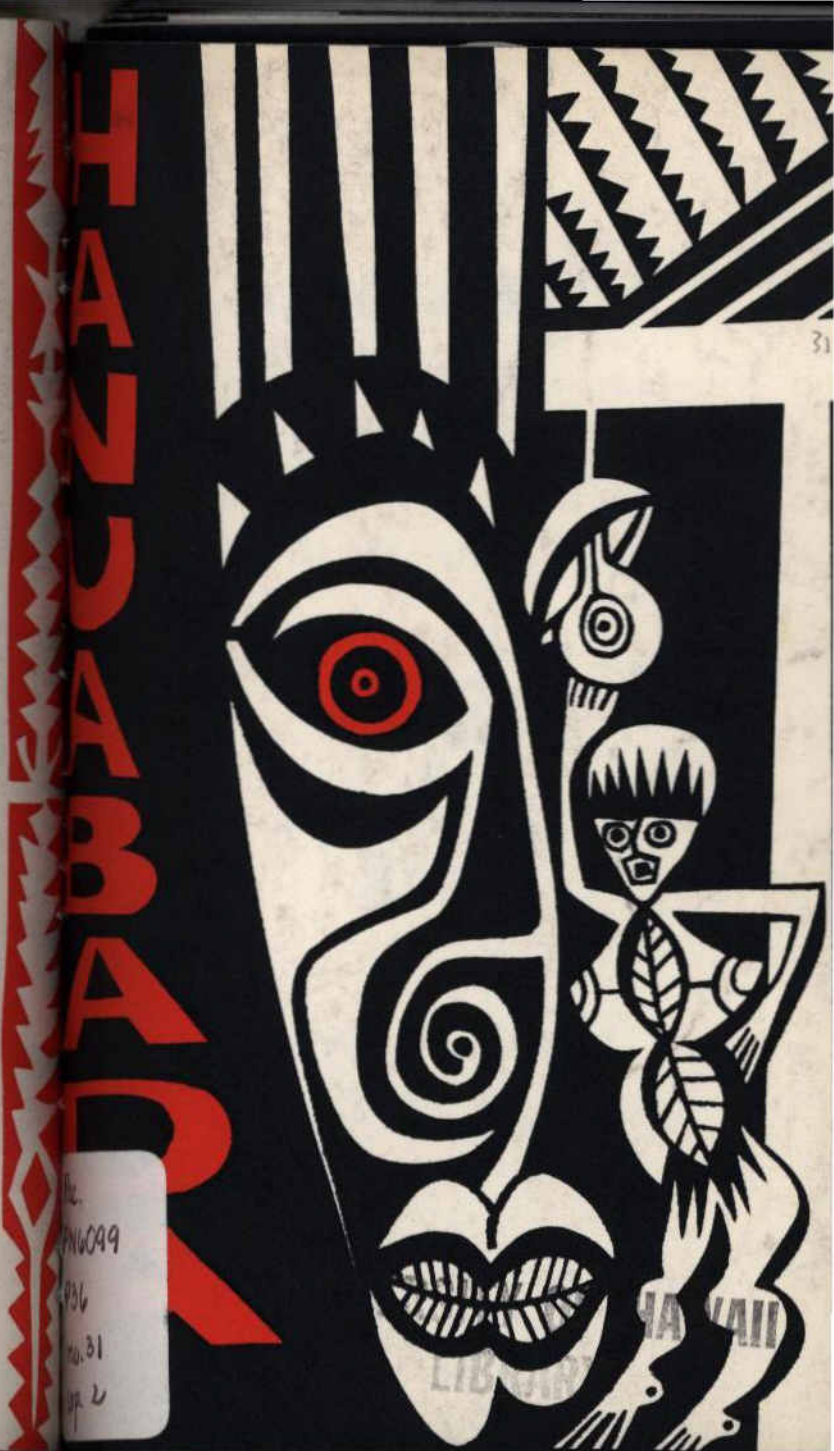




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HANUABADA

POEMS

by

John Kasaipwalova



PAPUA POCKET POETS

Port Moresby 1972



John Kasaipwalova

HAMUABADA

Cover Design: Kambau Namaleu Lamang



Papua Pocket Poets vol. 31
Published by University Bookshop
P. O. Box 5728, Boroko
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

For GRACE, LINDA, TRISH, LEO and TONY
the lovely people with whom I share, create
and live love.

PARTING WORDS

We sat three of us in our house
Our kerosene lamp burning long
Blackened glass around the top
My nine brothers and sisters heavily dreaming
On their mats in our one room
The baby had cried its wetting
But had gone back to its hazy floating world
In the hollow of my father's lap and elbow.

Tomorrow the 'morning star' must come
To take me to a distant land
The distant land of learning, the distant land of sadness
We sat the three of us our last night, my mother
Sadly folding my ramis into the red wooden box
Only three ramis and it is half full
Then she loaded the rest with my betelnut lime and mustard.

He had woven the basket for my yams
She had packed and repacked my tiny wooden box
Outside stars began to show sleep in their eyes
Our rooster flapped its wings
For its second hoarse cry
Tears streamed down my mother's cheeks
Tears ran down my father's face
Together we cried silently

Between her tears my mother begged me
To keep away from crocodile waters
To keep away from shark waters
In the flood waters do not swim
Stay clear from trouble
She tight my head to her sobbing breasts
And washed me with her tears
"Please my son, my egg
I want to touch you alive in the end"

In the night
We poured our tears
Then my mother told me a funny story
I laughed like a bubble
We stopped our first cry
She husked my betelnut
We chewed and talked calmly
My mother had her say
My father knew she had said one side
Before he started so softly warm and slow

"your eye your eye
Your arms your arms
Your uncles will give you riches
They will show you ways of fame
I know few words and these I give to you:
The world will shape you, it will come at you like an attacking boar
Do not turn to climb a tree, do not run
Look not at its standing bristles
Do not size its size nor its goring tusks
Let your eyes catch the light of its eyes
Go deep, deep inside it with your searching eyes
You will see its fright, its hunger
Its pain, its happiness, its anger
Plant your feet firm, the boar will not give you fear
Then can you ride the attacker boar by its tusks."

SUNSET TEARS

The dancing wavetops poke their tongues
Laughing to cry their sadness
They swell to catch the painted sky
They bend to summon the blackness of the ocean depths
Always dancing, turning, crisping fall and slide
The rainbow sea moving moving
Hasting to catch its passing sugar moments
The cockatoo plumes of the sliding wavy crests
Below the high noon sun are white
Yet in this sunseting fall and cry
Tears of red and orange
Tears of colour.

The evening ocean breeze whispers softly
Between the spirited waters
And the extasied sky
Pulsing warm smiles from within itself
Caressing and making love by its felt unseen
To both the sky and the sea
Giving freely, invited freely knowing
Between the sea between the sky they love
The soft ocean breeze dissolving their separateness
Yet maybe the glowing sun ball
Distant and watching
Sinks unwilling to end its sunset tears.

In the breeze between the sky and the sea
Along the line of their meet
Across the blooded face of half sunk sun
One lonely ocean fisher bird flies
Toward the outer islands
My mother cried
My father cried
My uncles cried
Their wives cried
Their children cried
We cried our sunset tears
To see the bird spirit of our dead
Flying home to rest and dance.

HANUABADA

Hanuabada badana!

Big village, thick village, rusty and grey
Your crowded houses pushing one another
Sit unconcerned on crooked fingers pinching out of mud and water
O Hanuabada! Wan Pis Tru!

Hanuabada, I saw and dreamt you long before my eyes felt you
They told me you were civilized; your iron roofs, timber floors,
electricity and all

Where the laugh of your girls in their flowing straight pinned hair
Will make my penis water in desperate stiffness
And my eyes turn red from wishful envy
To see your men boasting their lightness
So smartly dressed in trousers, long socks and shoes
So clean, so educated, so rich, so civilized, so new and white
Yes, I saw you and them in my dreams.

O Hanuabada! bada hanua!

Once not so long ago before my skin learnt the shame of nakedness
My heart flamed its desire, my ears lost their sleep
To sit up nakedly listening to the wonders
While the sainsi bois told me all about you
Yes Hanuabada, my big and beautiful dream village
When the heavy rains broke our rotten grass roof
And made me cold and wetted my sleeping mats
When mud and pigshit smells nearly broke my nose
When mosquitoes bit me and I hit myself for nothing
When robber flies danced aside the swipe of my palm and fingers
To steal again the taste of my two dripping cigarettes from the nose
That's when I wished and dreamt that
One day I will make our grassroofed village like Hanuabada
Iron roofs for grass, timber floors and all.

Yet what have they done to you, O Hanuabada!

What have they done to you?

When first my eyes saw you I cried the disappointment of my dreams
One hundred days of waiting expectancy to see the come of nothing!
O Hanuabada, so exciting and elegant in my dreams
What the bloody hell have they done to you!

I heard so big, I wished to see you so much

Now I must turn my head in shame and fear

To see you tucked away beyond the sight of your invaders.

You stand there bulky and imprisoned on that cornered shore

Your houses on their tree posts line up from that tiny beach

Like crowding scavenger sand crabs poised in fear and silence

Lacing their tiny crawling legs for an irate comfort and dignity.

Hanuabada what have they done to you!

Who are these white devils that trample you and use you like a prostitute

Then curse you and forget you as another slummy, dirty native village?

Hanuabada what have they done to you!

When my awkward feet first walked the streets of Moresby

My eyes did not see you in your tight corner

My eyes, my mind and my body counted and followed every car instead
Like a sea gull capsizing up and down in the whirlwind.

How can they be so countless like a flowing stream?

Why the palefaced drivers so stone faced and blind

To the pleading eyes and bare toes of my brother natives covered in dust

As we sullenly walk past Chinese shops toward Koki in the burning sun?

Yes Hanuabada, I did not see you then

My primitive village did not warn me of this new giddiness.

I glued my eyes instead on the long bitumen roads so solid and tearless

I admired the big houses, their water tanks and heaters on top

I stared at the neat green lawns and planted trees

All of them so straight, so huge, so neat and trimmed

Yet somehow my eye felt a strange harshness everywhere

Everywhere I saw a cold silent violence staring hungrily at my flesh and blood

Yes Hanuabada, the big village, I did not see you then
What I saw in this whirlwind is not a village
But Moresby the whiteman's town!
"Itambu" signs and "No Natives Allowed" snarled at me as if I'm
a leper
And savage dogs chained stand ready to strip my flesh.
What can be the meaning of this watchful violence in the midst of
this giddiness?
Wire fences around the green lawns to cage the hungry dogs
Wire fences around the windows of these huge houses to shut them in
Like neurotic thieves crazy to protect their stolen loots.
Hanuabada, where are you? Where is that village softness I know?
Even the night brings no sleep and silence in this giddiness
The pale neon lights pulls the night insects to their deaths
While my nose kisses the cool clear glass front
To stare enviously at the lighted wealths inside
All of them opening their legs to tease my dry throat
While they mock my empty pockets from the safety of their shelves.

Hanuabada answer me! : Make your black throat veins swell out
their answer!

Why are you not what I had always believed you to be
Who has painted you darkgrey and sadly silent
Why do you huddle in shame and keep your black tears covered
Who are these slick invaders whose houses steely and towering
Perch the hills above you like nesting white pigeons on a rocky cliff
While they spit and shit their wastes down to you below
Is this why the colour of your houses from across the harbour
Look like the black clouds of approaching rainy storms
Bada hanua answer me ! !
Who can name the sad song that runs through your heart and mine
The song of killed yesterday
When Lakatois owned this you harbour
And the voice of Hiri conch shell danced in your vivid sunsets
To make your people walk in dignified pride and to laugh from their hearts .

Hanuabada I mourn with you now --- your waters is taken!
You and I must crawl and beg in our own 'claimed' land.

Open tears like the open raindrops of storms
Beat their fury loud warm and clear
To drench the jungled mountains make a crawling mist along their
floors

And river drains clack their rocks in awesome fear
As the brown flood jumps and sings its liveliness.
Yes, the open fury of the open raindrops
Carries life in its waking falling speed
Penetrating the cracked dusty soil to flourish green
And make the browning leaves know again the joy
Of twinkling back to the sun from their soft oiled buds.
But Hanuabada, your tears and mine are not like the open raindrops
Our tears are caged and silenced; turned back into ourselves as beasts
Tearing and eating away our insides in their hateful hunger
Sucking the redness from our blood streams
To leave behind coagulated whitish smelly pus.
Hanuabada, our inward caged tears is our enemy.

I see sad silent women sitting with their beads, pots and baskets
 Beside the solid walls of the thief's loot dens
 Where counted monies and labelled goods hide behind bars
 While the cracked cement pavements outside shake the sound of shod feet
 The women look up a beggars face to the passing ones
 They look down, sneer and walk on to their offices and stores
 Leaving the women robbed of pride and blessed with shame
 To wait and hope for the next greedy, arrogant passing eye
 Hanuabada, SPEAK TO ME ! !
 Are these not my black mothers and sisters
 Whose veined hands lump around our bony limbs like dry sugar canes
 Folded cheeks and foreheads disshaping the tatoos of parched skins
 Hanuabada SPEAK TO ME ! !
 Why should my black mothers and sisters
 Line the pavements like beggars to sell their beads and pots
 How long must I endure the bloody hunger of these beastly tears
 That drags and flogs the paining skins of my mothers and sisters
 To throw them for display on the cold hard cement outside the thief's den.

Hanuabada, the world speaks many tongues
 Your silent flesh and blood
 Is no sign for your happiness
 Now you do not ripple and shriek
 Like your angry oceans
 Locking your birthing violence
 Into pious sentimental goodness
 Searching blindly in darkness
 Always always hiding your misery in your role playing

Crying only brings me many pains of emptiness
 A grey statue with a fixed sad smile
 Unmoving lifeless to keep constancy
 To avoid hurting grows new shoots
 Of poisonous pretences only to weld of steel
 Four grey walls of solitary confinement
 I have felt the softness of your eyes
 Glimpses of moments without words
 My fingers poised to embrace and laugh
 Turn quickly into nails of crucifixion
 Warning guilty to make me the statue.

Pretentious Death
 Is more paralysing than the wounds of honest pains
 I have ripped apart the house of my soul
 To drag before my mirror my naked self
 Bloody and shining
 Leaping and flowing like a spring
 From the depths of misery to the ecstatic heights
 There is no stagnant neutrality
 To take the unknown jump across the dividing barbed fences
 No jeering faces to please
 But the pure creation of our naked selves
 Beyond the immediate sorrows of good pretences.

HANUABADA your sorrowful begging music
 Is not sufficient to tear your pretences apart
 Let your sorrows and pains
 Run the streets like smashing thunder
 Out of whose depths you will find yourself
 A River flowing flowing flowing.

COW BOI

They call him Cow Boi
Nobody knows his name
His faded blood red guitar
He carries like his baby on his back
His feathered flowered hat hides his head
No one knows his hair or his baldness
He wears two trousers on top of each other
His blumers one always too long
His legs proudly peel out from his long socks
Brown dust make their home on his shoes.

They call him Cow Boi
They see him, they call out him
But nobody knows his lonely name
He pushes lawn mower along the bitumen streets
He tunes his guitar at middday
In the grinding crowded Moresby buses
He dances on the back of moving passenger trucks
He makes his concert at Koki Market
He never spark
But strums his guitar in and out of every pub
Like the coloured trout in its reef

They call him Cow Boi
Neither good nor bad cow boy
They see and they know him as Cow Boi
Yet nobody knows his name
No words and no melody to his voice
The strings of his guitar make no chords
They buzz like wasps to his fingers command
There is no song, there is no tune
But his voice, his guitar and his rippling hips
Make music.

People will call out him Cow Boi!
And no one knows his name
The spear of his eyes know where he will go
His parched black face sees not his audience
He flows along his audience
The rigid expression of his cheeks
Who will not feel the
 laugh
 the sorrow
 the guilt
 the praise
 the wonder

The river of his presence?

The short lived flicker on sad faces
Call out him Cow Boi! Cow Boi!
The wretched drunkard laughs to see his friend
Sagbreasted mother smiles her sorrows
The trimmed lady will feel the guilt of his hips
The children stare their amaze
He breaks the heavy silent monotony
Voices around him yelling the laugh
O Cow Boi! O Cow Boi! !

They call you Cow Boi
But no one knows your lonely name
Those who feel you
Will give you their smiles and their tears
Those who despise and curse you
Will know you as the
Madman of the town.

PUBLIC SERVANT

Five days a week I stare and stare
at printed forms
Five days a week I talk and talk
of People's needs and People's problems
Five days a week I sit and sit
pushed between the chair and the fan
Five days a week I hurry and hurry
on time to smile the director
Five days a week I dream and scheme
for the next rudder on Promotion
Five days a week I blame and blame
the people's ignorance
Five days a week I hope and hope
for the executive rule of the gods
Five days a week I get and get
money asking letters from village relatives
Five days a week my brains sleep and sleep
praying for Resurrection out of the files
Every five days the same wait wait
But then on the
Two days of the week I stand in Kone Tavern
And clasp the green and brown in adoration
That's when my stomach grows new size
And my wife and children cry.

MASTA I TOK, I DAI PINIS

I learned to be good for
FEAR
MONEY
TIN MEAT
RICE
TIN FISH
CALICO
BLACK TOBACCO
BEER
NEWNESS

My hanging tongue licked at them
Froth and water showing my satisfaction
Like the abandoned hunting dog
Yet I followed the scented trail on and on
Mouth watering but never seeing the pig
I was good.

The kiap came, he had rifle
I had spear
His rifle fought my spear
He won
My shout fought his shout
He won
I bowed my head, my pride stuck my throat
I learned to be good, he smiled and said
MASTA I TOK, I DAI PINIS.

God's messenger came, he had Bible
I had the bones of my ancestors
He saw my spirits, he wanted to give me God
I laughed so funny
He burnt my gods
My magic fought his God
He won
He gave me calico lap lap, I felt new
Then he say "Pray!"
I smiled and prayed hard in my stuck throat
He gave thanks to God saying
MASTA I TOK, I DAI PINIS.

The money man came, he carried promises
On his fishing line he tied
Rice, tin fish, black tobacco and sugar tea
My throat was tired of sago
My mouth was dry of yams and taro
I said yes and bit his fishing hook
He pulled me for labour boi
Three years I did not see my village
My wife and children left me
I sad and I sick
He take my pay, I sick more
He take new labour boi, I sack
Then he warns my stuck throat pointing
MASTA I TOK, I DAI PINIS.

The New Kiap came again
Pumped up by the money man
And blessed by God's messenger
He came with his blue bully ants
They carried shields, batons, rifles and tear gas
I sat in my village with my stuck throat
Nursing my hunted wounds
They brought bulldozers hungry for trees
"Move off this piece, we're taking your land!"
"What for?" I say "This land is land of my fathers"
"For economic development, so move!"
"Economic for who?" I ask
"For business enterprise, shut up and move!"
"But this land is mine!" I cried
Their hearts were made of cement
Their ears filled with rocks
I cried and cried, they did not hear
"Get off this land, you kanakas!"
MASTA I TOK
I pulled out one japanese bayonet
I DAI PINIS

TOWN SUNDAY

Town Sunday is my show day
New trousers, new shoes
I catch the bus
Ten cents in my pocket
Fellow pasindia bow their heads in meditation
The holiness of my white shirt
Ironed trousers shining shoes
I a Christian look at me! Look!
Faithful and humble to my service
They care? I care? Hypocrite?
No. I like it
Sunday Church for God.

Cathedral bell not yet
Fellow Christians madly smiling
On the lawn they watch and judge
Long trousers, shoes, white dresses
I know they know
They know I know
We show off very very humbly
To God for God
Town Sunday
Solemn before mass
Divine, beautiful, fluid like
Pus.

The organ sucks out
Hesitant singers
Mixed, afraid, unsexy pure
One voice too loud
They turn their heads to see
One side whites one side blacks
One side men one side women
One side rich one side poor
One side clergy one side lay
Christian unity let it behold
Let the hymnal words sing
Let the voice die
Beautiful fucked up music
But that's my Town Sunday
Let us pray.

The bishop swears on the pulpit
Bloody Jesus Christ
The Faithful like it, it's Faith
"God lives in this world
We are equal brethren
But pass the plates around please"
Collection time I'm holiest
Bowed head, closed eyes praying the Virgin
Along the aisle for communion
Joined hands down cast eyes
In perfect humility holiness
Beautiful poised elegant
No worries! I show off my Town Sunday.

God has blessed me - empty stomach
 Ten cents only that's for bus
 But no worries!
 Something nothing!
 My new clothes
 So my strong comes up
 I walk proudly to the Milk Bar
 My bad lucky
 I cannot glimpse their thighs
 No loose women on the streets
 They cannot see my Town Sunday dress
 But I try my luck again
 "Eee hemarai lasi! Shame on you!"
 Flies back to hit my holy face
 On this poor poor Town Sunday

I go to Ela beach by the grace of God
 To sit and think and my empty stomach
 But uuuuuhh! uuuuhhh! Look look Town Sunday
 On the sand in bikinis
 White breasts pointing tense
 Big swelling between their thighs
 My good trousers nearly breaks
 I pray hard I pray hard
 But my mind's stick has raped and raped
 Like a good Christian on
 My Town Sunday.

MY SOUL MUSIC

My faniasy desires
 like chained anchor round my neck
 plunged me down down deep
 dark recklessness wild wild pains
 delirious silence cannot talk
 'bout thos' sweet bitter moments
 fleeting laughing meeting of our eyes
 fresh softness of ocean dawn mist
 wetting alive nerve tendrils of my desires
 ten nights sleepless sweaty tossing
 ten days ragged tramp unmoving trance
 plunging down down deep down low
 burning flames frozen fears heavy blindness
 dark dark hopelessness
 flashing flashing turning spot lights
 enclosing depths down down nowhere
 suddenly exploding weird
 WHAA-AAA-WHAAA - AAAA.....
 chris! I donno what I'm talkin' bout
 my body trembling dances
 naked sweating swaying in the flood
 shaking shaking swaying weightless
 shivering shivering sounds sounds
 so many fierce uncontrolled

drunken piano keys stagger unbalanced fall smashing
up alive pulsing drum beats
holding firm the tight rope
for bass guitar to swirl jump and tu
sliding the colorful acrobat
the surprising cry of the sax
warning with a laugh
to embrace the entry of human voice
soul soul soul music soul soul music
hands tightened spacing one circle
my trembling flesh danced
the leaping ghosts of
saxapiano drumguitar
till frenzy heat floated us
way way nowhere
down down back to explosive cave silence
man man unboxed music soul of human voices
in naked pain and joy
ye man ye man
my uncovered desires soul soul
leaping staggering
like bass guitar

then two ghosts of
Sam Cooke and Otis Redding like
sitar music vaporising out of
swishing ocean foam
touched my twenty sleepless body shaking
'ye man ye man we know we know!!!
oiled running desires is bigger than you
no shutting no hiding man
in one wave
spears of joys and pains like no nothing
man ye man ye '
twilight flashing dimness
my soul soul musicin' with
the groaning spirits of
Franklin Pickett Cropper Kenner
rising moon garamut kundu bass guitar singing to me
my soul soul music
kissing my unfilled desires
'cry alittle sigh alittle laugh alittle
des no hidin' like no nothing'
forty sleepless nights I wake
my tinglin nerve eyes feeling feeling feeling
my soul soul music.

the fantasy I know is stage curtain
hiding hiding the voice of my
soul soul music desires
not wanting to hurt others
'cause I know what is pain
yet demands to hold up the curtain
asks me to hate
I know I know it impossible
one hundred sleepless anguished tossing nights
crying crying to make you love
hatred and hiding cannot
cave no longer
the frenzy frenzy madness
of my soul soul music
that knows what is to love
like mountain spring

there's no words to my soul
soul desire for you
so naked daring unlanguage
invisible
like smoke in the wind
the soft glimmer of your eyes
and warm touches
do not use words
to say their warmth
soul soul music the openness
of human joys and pains
the false language of words
is shabby coat for my feel
language
undefined by cause or hatred
I tremble my flesh the music
of soul soul desires
fountaining loving
beyond gains and power
daring daring to live love
against barriers of pretentious death
my soul soul music
des no hidin' like no thing.

STRANGERS NO STRANGERS

Strangers we met

not like strangers at all
no stupid handshake
no stifling words to greet
an ember smile of jolted surprise
unsure glint of your soft penetrating eyes
said we knew each other
one thousand years before
yet strange strange memory recollecting where

BY GODS!!!

the tangled embraces of our eyes
blasted invisible all defensive shields
i have felt you a thousand times
born apart yet never strangers at all

Unuttered words need not say

our strangers common search
against the bloody messes
of their wasteful wars
their vain ticketed names
and their hypocritical virtues
all these we feel our refusal to follow
and on them the soil we grow
our beautiful warm touches
and the soft unspoken burning language of our eyes

Every touch of our sensual flesh

blows away the misty strangeness
of waited thousand years born apart
now the electric clasp we kiss
quickly and tremor rising waves
beyond the minutes before we part
the midnight moon is thickly bearded
with grey palish clouds
yet surprised we felt your words
"gosh! look! it's beautiful!"
dance between our soft hug

today we meet like strangers feverish
remembering at last the thousand years
of blinded departure
now must separate our entwined fingers
and like the faded deception of our dreams
you disappeared into the wells
of my desirous thoughts
I feel the tomorrow when we shall meet
there will be no questions asked
no glints of uncertain shields
we know each other a thousand years
that once

Strangers

now no more

Strangers.

John Kasaipwalova was born in Yalumwa village in the Trobriand Islands 23 years ago as third eldest in a family of eleven children. He began his primary education in a convent at Gusaweta and at the age of ten was sent away to the District Catholic Mission boarding school at Sideia. In 1963 he completed his primary education and was awarded a scholarship to study at St. Brendan's College in Australia. John studied for one year at Queensland University and returned in 1970 to enrol at the University of Papua New Guinea when he started to write.

PAPUA POCKET POETS 1967-1971

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