KOVAVE

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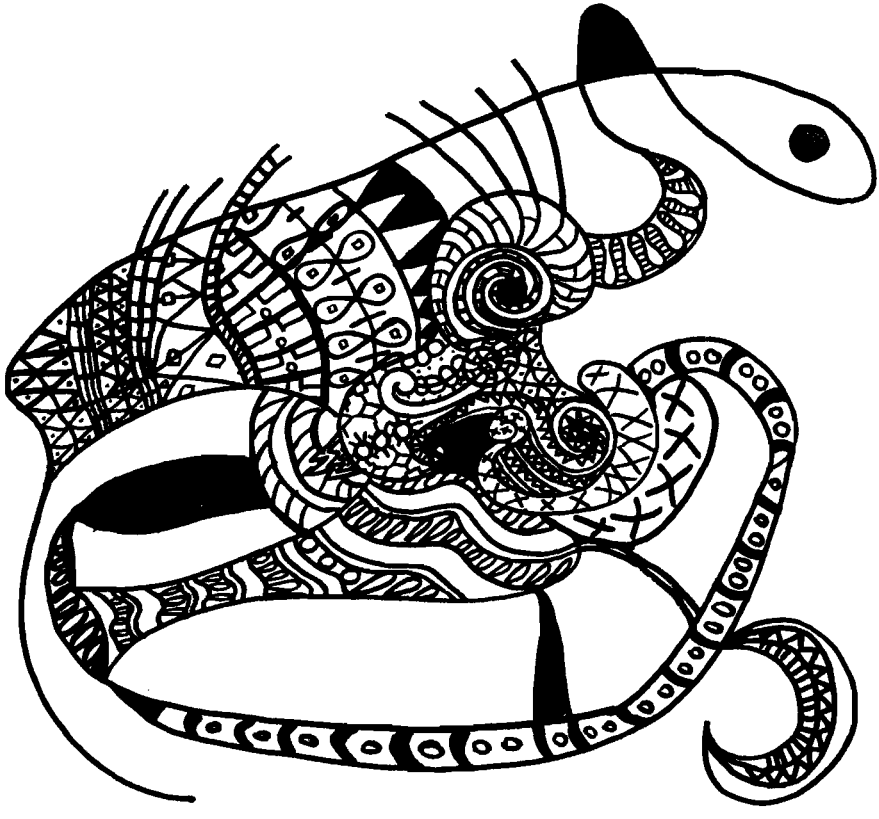

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* Award winning entries in the Second Annual Literature Bureau Poetry Contest.

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THREE POEMS

by Meakoro Opa

WEEK OF PLENTY
WEEK OF WANT

The Sunday of
plenty and laughter
betelnuts mustard and beer
sugar and sweet potatoes
in the enclosure of
tin shacks

Then the Sunday of
emptiness
little or zero
long faces
nothing to chew
dry throats
half empty
stomach

MY AGONY

On the
hill top
I stand in agony
tears dripping
from my eyes
as I watch the sea
red
like killer's
hand stained with blood

On the
hill top
stand I in agony
my heart burning with
hate, like the man
whose wife is raped before him
as I see the steel
cutting deep
into the belly of the hills
and trees uprooted
in the name of
progress

BE SIMPLE, MAN!

It was a moonlight night,
Quiet, peaceful and bright.
There I sat by the sandy beach;
The tropical waters were unruffled.
It was dear to me, this sight.

As I sat thinking, my head bent low,
The sea breeze blew so slow,
Gentle, friendly and cool.
He whispered a tune,
A lovely, serious tune.

After some drowsy moments,
He said: "Man, you are changing so much,
Man, be simple!" As he stopped,
Tears fell like rain.
And I, unaware of his sadness, asked:

"In what ways, oh dear breeze?"
"Your ways of dressing, your beliefs, your whole self!
Our ancestors did not know these ways —
So, brother man, why not be simple?
You'll be sad, when all is gone!"

A GLIMPSE OF THE ABYSS

by Russell Soaba

'WHERE TO, MAN?' I called out to a young man who was hitch-hiking on my side of the road to town. I stopped the car and looked back at the young man. He came running with haste, as if I was Noah waiting for the last, partner-less creature of the world.

'Where to, man?' I called out again.

'To—to heaven, dad!' shouted back the young man, between gasps for air. He was sweating a lot, and the smile on his face suddenly disappeared, as if it was soaked up by his sweat. He sensed that I was in my Sunday best and he must have thought I was on my way to church in town. I realized, too, that I was staring at him with an unpleasant attitude.

'I'm sorry, sir,' said the fellow respectfully, 'but can you help me?'

'Sure, man,' I returned, hating him a bit. 'Where to?'

'Told you! To heaven, dad!' said he, smiling.

'Are you feeling all right?' I tried to hide my anger with sheer pretence of being alarmed.

'A good person should at least pretend to enjoy the sense of humour the devil's angels have,' returned the young man. Perhaps he was hurt by my question. Either that or he hated me for being what I was. He turned his head away with a smile on his face, presumably looking out for other cars for refuge in friendliness. The bloody derelict! I had the temptation of spitting in his face and driving off. But some writings at the back of his T-shirt made me think twice: 'Love is the only refuge and consolation for those rejected by the world'; then lower down, 'You hate another human being only because you are ignorant of the fact that he is human.' I wondered if the writings were thought out by the fellow standing next to my clean, bourgeois-looking car. Perhaps I can find out, I thought, by giving the peasant a lift.

'Coming?' I asked in a tone of good-shepherdness.

'Thanks,' he responded, and shut the door of the car.

'Are you sure you are going to heaven?' I asked, trying to conform to his sense of humour.

'Sure, baby—positive!' he returned.

'OK. Where is it?—I mean heaven.'

'Town—where else? Tough life, isn't it?' added the young man, without looking at me. The smile never left his face.

'I'd say it is,' I agreed. 'But not very tough once you know what you are doing.'

'That's what a Uni. student would say,' he said, with near-indifference.

'Some take life as such, some don't,' I said, trying to sound educated. 'Do you go to Uni. too?'

'I was.'

'Oh? Working now?'

'Sort of.'

'What do you mean "sort of"?'

'Well, I work in the afternoons—free in the mornings.'

'What do you do in the mornings when you are free?'

'I think.'

'You mean you just bum around on your bed in your place and indulge.'

'No. I think.'

'Yea, OK. You think about what?'

'About me and myself and the stinking community I have to put up with.'

'I see. Passed your exams last year? Or whenever you happened to be at Uni.?'

'Yes.'

'Huh? How come you are not at Uni. any more?'

'Couldn't be bothered. Sheer waste of time!'

'Do you think so?'

'Bloody oath yes!'

'Um. Strange guy aren't you?'

'That's what everybody says.'

'What do you think of them?'

'Whom?'

'You know, those "everybody" who say "strange guy, aren't you"?'

'Blind conformists.'

'Yeah? I'm not—I mean, I haven't given it a thought.'

'You should, man.'

'Why?'

'That's the question you fail to ask yourself.'

'Shit! Why should I?'

'Why should you be a dumb idiot and a blind conformist all your life?'

'I never thought I was that!'

'All because you are happy as you are.'

'Aren't you?'

'Not when I don't think for myself. But you don't seem to do that, do you? You are happy as you are—a blind conformist just because you want to stay alive.'

'Blind conformity to what?'

'Social conscience—the establishment—ownership of nice luxurious things which the white man has brought like this car—what else?'

'Shit, man! How do you want us to live then?'

'I'm not trying to suggest a substitute to your way of living with something else, you must understand that. Er—that's what Christianity is, by the way—to have one human being pushing his ideas down the throats of other humans. Rather I'm trying to make you recognize lucidly what there is to be recognized.'

'Shit, man! I know that! Ha! ha! ha! Look man, you can't be a non-conformist in a place like this, you know that. I mean there is no trouble in this place as far as I can see. There is nothing wrong with the society, the establishment, the government or whatever. The individual is free, you hear. He's getting what he wants—all the privileges, dignity, prestige and any luck the world offers. Why don't you go and start worrying about the problems of you and yourself in a more complex society than this—gees, man, you must be—you must be—*tura oi be oi kavakava*, no?' I stopped suddenly and looked at the outcast sitting next to me. For a while I thought my words would have forced him to jump out of the car. But the smile was still there, on his face. I felt uncomfortable.

'That's right, baby,' said he. 'Call me *kavakava* if you wish. And as for you, you just do what the society tells you and you'll be right—have privileges, liberty to live as well as to victimize.'

'Ha! God no! Every man has the liberty to do what he wants—'

'That's what I mean — liberty to victimize.'

'Victimize what or who?'

'Other humans.'

'God! How, man? Ha! ha! ha! Man, you just take everything easy, ah? Then you'll be all right. Trouble with you, though, is that you think too much. You think too much about a lot of nothing—even the impossible.'

'There is no impossible for the intellectual explorer—you think there is, only because you fail to, or you are unable to, explore.'

'Explore what?'

'Explore the abyss—start from the evanescence of, well, say, morality (which we see now in our society) and make this evanescence a starting point of the journey into the abyss of what is taken to be nothingness or the unknown—the exotic exotical . . .'

'There are no other moralities undiscovered as far as I know. I know only those created by man, and that's where I want to be—the reality and truth.'

'There are exotic ones if you give this a bit of thought, my good man—foreign ones—sometimes the exact opposite to what we believe. Man, they are abso-bloody-lutely bizarre and they could lure your reality and truth into nothingness.'

'Such as . . .'

'To the Eskimos, there is no such thing as stealing; to the hippies, sex is sane; to other primitive societies, besides our own here, sex is religion; to the Yoruba of Africa, the concept of belief and disbelief is not mentioned, and so forth . . .'

'They are low in their moral standards.'

'Oh, I wouldn't say that. Man could be the lowest creature even in his stamina or dilemma of superiority or high moral standards. He could be the lowest form of being in his own complexities.'

'Hey, you are not bad—I mean, I can't understand why you left Uni. when you can think like that.'

'Told you already. Couldn't be bothered. Sheer waste of time.' The young man smiled and looked at me in the face—the first time he had done so that day. He turned his face away again, still smiling, as if he was mocking me.

'Victims caught
in the man-made nets of time,
and the loop-holes
in the nets
the people called injustice . . .'

'Hey, I didn't know you could sing,' said I, surprised.

'Didn't you? Well, I sing because I believe that to love music is to feel you have a soul. I love music:

'Buses goin' to the place
where you don' wanna go.
No anythin' goin' to the place
where you wanna go.
Ah! Mama! what a world
to live in, yeah,
what a world to live in!

'Actually, I composed these songs myself,' said the young man, and laughed carelessly.

'A glimpse o' the abyss,
yeah, a glimpse o' the abyss
means you only
'ad to die
not having what
other humans got.
Yeah, not having what
other humans got.'

'No, come on,' I said, after being moved by the young man's songs, 'give us a better reason than that.'

'Better reason than what?'

'You know. About you not being at Uni. any more. You said you couldn't be bothered and it was a sheer waste of time. I want a better reason than that.'

'That is the better reason, as far as I'm concerned.'

'OK. What is the best reason then?'

'I'm a non-conformist, I live in the abyss—hey! could you drop me here, please?'

'Sure, man. Er—when do I see you again? I mean how do I contact you for future discussions?'

There was silence. The young man did not answer.

'Thanks for the lift,' he said instead. He was gone. I can still remember the smile he gave me. Rather, it was a grin showing his mere discontentment of being alive. A strange man.

A few people passed by as I sat in my car, biting my fingernails with wonder. I looked at their faces one at a time, but the young man whom I had met, did not resemble anybody or anything anywhere.

You say I'm bad
I say you're bad—
they say you're good
they say I'm good
who's right
what's right
who's wrong
what's wrong
where to, man
nothingness
as was . . .

THE MAGISTRATE AND MY GRANDFATHER'S TESTICLES

by John Kasaipwalova

Where and where you talk in my place and you ask people, 'Ei, do you know Mr Whitehouse?' people will shake their hairs like one big strong wind and then they will tell you,

'Ei, maybe you new to here? Come to this old man here, he will tell you one story about him. Everybody knows about Waitausi!!!!'

Yes everyones they knows about this big Taubada. Old men will tell you histories, mothers they tell it to their childrens and young men talk plenty and laugh about him. His polisimani they will always call him 'Sir Taubada' or 'Taubada Mr Whitehouse.' But sometimes they forget to call him properly and he really make them remember something. No pilai!! They carry their heavy rifles and stand up straight like dead sticks in burning sun for good teacher. No pilai. They didn't forget very quickly for next times.

When Waitausi comes to one village, men, women and children they must keep very quiet and answer 'Yes Taubada!' for everythings he say. If anybody make some humbug, he tell his polisimani and sometimes hisself also, and they take big belts and hit the men very hard. After he teacher our peoples like that way, he say, 'This is to teach you not to be afraid of the government!'

He talk like that many times because some peoples they hear his come and quickly they afraid, so they run bush and they hide. But not much good lucky that way. Because when he comes and he find out, he order everybodies to hunt these our peoples who run away. They hunt and catch them like wild pigs, like kanakas no nothing and then really afterwards the polisimani they make some very big marks on their skins. No pilai. Because this way, everybodies in the village they call Mr Whitehouse 'Waitausi' (white banana). Children one look to his face and finish. Water runs down from their small bananas.

Many times I hear people they tell me Waitausi has red hair and face and he come from Australia to make gabemani (government) on our land. We donno who call this white gabemani Waitausi to come to our land. He bringed many polisimani and rifles. They hit our peoples around any kind and make them very frighten. Maski who! Everybodies they must do what somethings gabemani say, otherwise Waitausi comes and he burn down their house like something nothing. He didn't gave no respect for nobodies. Like one day he went to our big chief from Omarakana and also he belted him there. And that one is not small something. Many our people they want his blood because he make this kind trouble to our King, but how can? Waitausi already tell polisimani for katalesi inside rifles and they make ready to shoot our peoples if they make humbug. No chance Waitausi and he want make all our peoples afraid for gabemani. And he say this ways for 'law and order'.

One old man he remember Waitausi very well. That one is my father's cousin's uncle's father. So that way he is one of my many, many grandfathers. Anyways Waitausi didn't gave my grandfather any chance. Bloody bastard!

Because when Waitausi finished belting our peoples to make them afraid his name, he make one big law to pay monies to him for nothing. Every man they must pay him ten silling and nobodies knows for what somethings. This law not something easy, because if you go inside one village you see one silling, two silling and

three silling was really big money for many peoples. But ten sillings, HAH! That one is really very, very big money. Ten sillings can buy one pig and only chiefs and big men have pigs not ordinary peoples. For ten sillings takis all important men, chiefs and magic men they catch their fat pigs, dig big yams and carry big, big betelnuts to the bois who work for white man at station or mission. For ordinary men this one is not something for nothing. Maski they work very hard many months asking their peoples from other villages. If no ten silling and Waitausi comes, he still capture them and take them to Losuia and red their eyes as prisoners inside gabemani jail.

So my grandfather he was only a very good man. He had good gardens and always make big sagali for our dead peoples. People they always see everyday betelnuts rubbish outside his house and that one is sign for not nobody. But only one something he didn't have any monies. Not his fashion to go waste his foods for free gifts to mission, trade, and gabemani bois. Because sometimes bois will give their little money only to important mens and many times they only throw one stick or two sticks black tobacco to unimportant peoples.

Anyways, my grandfather his troubles start that one day when he heard big talk from village councillor. That man was making real big talk and everybody can saw his neck strings jumping up and down. No matter big chiefs, when Friday come, that one day is gabemani day and you cannot hear other people their voices only fat mouth of councillor. Waitausi make him councillor because big mouth and also he know how to make good salute for gabemani. But on that one trouble Friday councillor was talking with his anus afraid.

'People, big Taubada come for next Friday. You must clean your houses. You must scoop away pig shits. You must clean this village. You must cut roads because already grass too long. You must wash babies and yourselves. You must stop crying for your dead peoples because that kind noise bad for Taubada. You must build rest house and also one for polisimani.'

Everybodies was very quiet and they was giving their ears to him, because they knows when that voice talk, Waitausi is behind and he will make some belt work if they cannot listen. So councillor he blow whistle again. Already his words was making fear inside many stomachs but that gabemani whistle only make more people more afraid. After the terrible whistle, councillor he opened up mouth gate again.

'And if you no obey what I say, Taubada will come and you will know him. He will burn your houses and take you jail. You already hear what happen to Kulumata peoples!'

Nobody open their mouths. Even childrens was already very frightened for cry. But councillor blow his devil whistle again and this time it is gabemani permission for ordinary peoples to ask some things what councillor say. Very very long time for quiet, then my grandfather he hear one other man open his mouth to councillor.

'True or only people they make lies, big Taubada Waitausi will come to take takis from us on Friday in front?'

Councillor he didn't waste many time to answer back. All people already know why Waitausi will come, because news about his laws already come out from places he go to. But councillor he want people to think that big Taubada already talk his orders straight to him and nobody must disobey.

'Yes, Big Taubada spoke me and he say you must ready your ten silling for gabemani takis. When he call your name, you must hold money inside left fingers and make salute in right one and you say 'yes Taubada' or 'yes Sir Taubada'. No money people they must go jail or maybe they don't want that way their sons can take place!'

When my grandfather he hear that talk, it nearly finished him. His mind was already lost inside bush. Then he hear some womens already crying for their mens because they too didn't have monies and they know their sons and husbands must go jail for nothing. Inside his head my grandfather was already swearing Waitausi and councillor too. He think councillor should go smell Waitausi his shitting anus.

That night my grandfather didn't sleep straight on his mat. From darkness to new day his body

twisted like bad snake too full up for sleep. His mind didn't gave him sleep. He has no monies for tax and also he didn't wanted to go jail or any our relatives to take place for nothing. But how can? He cannot ask Waitausi for free, because Waitausi will talk 'rubbish, that's another kanaka lie!' And that one will finish him quickly. So all kinds of thinking ran around inside his head, but each one time ended very quickly the same. My grandfather always made same swearing for both of them, Waitausi and councillor.

One week passed very quickly and next gabemani day came. Waitausi and his polisimani came to my grandfather's village. Everything happened like what councillor want to see and when gabemani came, the peoples also they see Waitausi didn't red very big. Clean roads, shitless village, washed babies, no cryings and the pigs chased into bush that day. The men and women dragged themselves up for roll call. They call out 'yes Taubada', salute very loud their right ones and give money with their left hands. Some old peoples they didn't knew how to make good salute and so councillor told them to make again for Waitausi. Those people who didn't pay ten silling was quickly captured and handcuffed for prisoner. Everything O.K. and very very clean straight for Waitausi and for councillor too. Polisimani was standing behind Waitausi and their rifles already has katalesi inside. Our peoples didn't gave any troubles for gabemani.

Suddenly time for my grandfather's name. Waitausi call out his name but no 'yes Taubada'. Again two more times white gabemani call out, but no yes. That's it! It was finish for any peace. All the village peoples they see one big trouble coming up. The councillor he try hard to stop shaking his two legs.

Waitausi threw back his chair and jumped to his feet. His face already redded. At same quick time he hit his fists on the wooden table like big thunder storm and everybodies and everythings was shaking up and down.

'Where is that man!' he call with all his throat.

That kind of voice was really too much for anybody. The women shrilled their frighten, the men tried very hard for cover up, the children start crying, the councillor jumped up six inches like he stood on hot fire and polisimani was hit by that voice so frightened they nearly fall backwards for hurry to make attention. They didn't wasted many times to make ready for shoot.

Waitausi redded his eyes to everybody around the crowd. He want my grandfather to up from among them and quickly forward to get polis belting for making gabemani angry. But nothing like that way happen. His angry looking only bended our peoples' heads very close to the ground and their noses was already smelling dusts. The white man broke his voice again.

'Councillor!' he call out.

The councillor ran up to the voice like one beaten dog. He salute very noisily and quickly he tried his best to grease up Waitausi.

'Yes, Sir Taubada!'

'Councillor, I want to know where this man is!'

'Yes Sir Taubada, er . . . er . . . er . . . truly Taubada it is not my fault . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . . er . . . er . . . er . . . Taubada already I tell people all your words . . . er . . . er . . . er . . . sir you already see everybodies they clean their places and also they all come to listen your good words . . . I . . . I . . . er . . . er . . . !'

The councillor want to make more grease talk but Waitausi cut him off.

'Councillor, what I want to know is where the hell this man is!'

'Er . . . er . . . er . . . I . . . I . . . er . . . Taubada today in this morning I seen him working in front his house . . . but . . . er . . . I dunno his face not here . . .'

'And why don't you know where he is before I came to this village?'

'Please Taubada, sometimes the snakes they run very, very fast for one councillor his small eyes.'

The councillor's grease talk was working little bit. Because Waitausi now held his head and thought little bit. But everybodies they can see his anger building up inside his throat for times in front. He order his polisimani and they come forward. Then he turn his big body to councillor his little self.

'Councillor, go with the constables! Search

his house and bring him before me at once!'

'Yes Sir Taubada!' and he make salute for the white man.

The councillor and the polisimani they run to my grandfather's house. Their bayonets cut the strings for his entrance shutter and used rifle butts to open the entrance. Then they all jumped inside his house. But he was already too smart for them. They didn't catch him inside his house. They look under mats and they dig up the ashes of his sleeping fire. He was not anywhere. Everybodies they was waiting to hear one very big cry and then see my grandfather thrown out of his house to open ground, but sorry for them, because nothing like that happened. Instead the polisimani and councillor they came back slowly out of his house with disappointed heads. My grandfather truly shamed them with his cleverness.

The raiding party run quickly back to Waitausi's chair showing hard their shortness for air. The councillor his shame face was trying to tell the government that maybe my grandfather had made magic and disappeared his body inside his own house. He start his talk with many short breaks.

'Taubada, we turned everythings inside his house but nothing. He already lost himself somewhere!'

Waitausi bringed his fist slam on his desk again to warn the village people. Then he stood up to show off his anger.

'O.K., the whole lot of you! Listen carefully, because if you don't, heaven help you. I'm gonna have my morning tea now. When the councillor blows his whistle again, I want you to have this man before me. If you don't, by God, I'm gonna see that not one of your betelnut trees will be left standing by this evening, you hear! Not one!'

He didn't wasted any more times because village people they know his words all true. He left them muttering their sorrows and walked over with his marching polisimani behind him to where his carriers were making tea and biscuits for him on one table placed under shade. His cook bois cleared away from the table when he approached for sit down. Everythings ready for big Taubada.

The village they break up to look for my smart grandfather. The councillor was jumping up and down like some black ants was biting his two balls. He couldn't keep his hands and mouth quiet. He sent some men to go to the beach, some to go to my grandfather's gardens, some to go look the water drinking place and the rest to search every yam house in the village. So while the white man full up his mouth with biscuits and poured sweet water inside his throat, the village people they was pouring out many sweats looking for my grandfather. You think they find him? No fear!

After Waitausi finished drinking and resting, he signal to councillor. The councillor blew his whistle. The village people they come back together very quickly and very silently. Waitausi marched with his polisimani back to his chair and table. He sat down, banged his fist on the table and look very hungry to everybodies, but especially to that one councillor.

'Well, don't just stand there like a stupid ass! Where the bloody hell is he?'

The councillor he didn't knew what answer, because he know no matter if they look hard, they cannot find my grandfather anywhere, unless they must burn all bushes down.

'Er . . . er . . . Taubada we look all places for him but he cannot anywheres . . . er . . .'

'Is that so!' Waitausi talk back.

'Yes Taubada, this is so not our fault.'

'Not your bloody fault, my foot!' Then he up straight and he held his hips in usual fashion for all taubadas and sinabadas. 'O.K. councillor, my orders were not carried out, for which we must have some preliminary lessons on how to obey the government . . . Has this man any betelnut trees in this village?'

'Yes Taubada, over there.' The councillor pointed.

'O.K. councillor, take these axes and cut down all his trees.'

'Er . . . er . . . Sir Taubada, all of them?" Councillor want to protest.

'Yes the whole bloody lot of them!'

'But er . . . er . . . Sir Taubada, one betelnut tree is very important to people here . . . .'

'Councillor don't you question my orders!

This man has defied government law. Cut down every one of his betelnut trees and if you hide one of them, the constabulary will be ordered to cut all of yours too. Is that clear?'

'Yes sir!'

The councillor didn't get chance to speak against the government's law. And soon my grandfather's betelnut trees was falling down like ordinary trees. All our relatives they feel pains and fish bones sticking their throats. But what can they do against gabemani law?

When that action for my grandfather's trees was finished, Waitausi decided to fix other men's takis first and come back for my grandfather. He didn't take long for that. He finished taking monies and gathering up those men who must go jail very smartly. Then he closed the book and stood up to give very bad look to everyones.

'O.K. listen the whole lot of you! I'm leaving this village, but I shall leave five armed constables behind. They will live with you day and night until the runaway man is caught and brought before me at Losuia. If you don't deliver him up to me, I shall came back again and burn down every house in this village . . . Is that clear?' He paused to stare like one mad dog to every persons there. Then he turned specially to the councillor. 'This village will see to it that my men get good food and water. They must sleep undisturbed in the rest house. Should any of you give trouble, they have my full orders to shoot! Is that clear?'

Everybodies they lost their tongues. Dead silence and people they look fearfully at how quickly the carriers and polisimani pack up Waitausi his things and his prisoners. Then like one bad dream the government went away from my grandfather's village. When they had gone completely out of hearing and seeing ways, the whole village started their tears. They cried for two sadnesses. One for taking of their young men and two for the fear for next time if my grandfather is not found and taken before Waitausi.

The polisimani they march away to hide inside the rest house and the councillor shut up his mouth and ran to hide inside his house. But from inside he can still feel the people's blame on him. He started crying with his wife and children, very, very sorrowful for becoming Waitausi's councillor. Now he must do many things he don't like and also wrong to his village people and friends. For councillor it was not easy something to live peacefully with his neighbours.

That sorrowful day brought darkness very quickly and because of crying from every house, the polisimani didn't wanted to go search my grandfather's house that night. Next day sun came up and became dark, but still nobody, including councillor and polisimani, heard or saw anything like him. Our close relatives was also very worried, because they too didn't knew his secret hiding, only some tracks in the old gardens, when he came to get some sweet potatoes, bananas and pawpaws.

On night numba three everyone was deeply dreaming. Even gabemani polisimani had tired from standing guard near his house and run away to sleep in their place. It was very dark and the new moon had gone away too. I think it was almost near link time between day and night, when out of the darkness some very soft knocking on the back of my grandfather's sister's house came up. It sounded like some rats scratching on the sago walls. But good thing our relatives was expecting him. So straightaway they woke up to the noise. After he had moved them with his noises, he whispered very, very softly into the sago walls.

'Psst . . . psst . . . ei . . . wake up . . . it is me. Wake up and untie the entrance. . . .'

His sister untied the entrance and he jumped inside the house. They closed the opening very quickly and his brother-in-law sat near it and listened to any noises around. Maybe the moving guards outside. One silent fire was burning them light and even though the whole inside was talking in soft safe silence, they had excitement, fear and sorrow to see his face again. They told about everythings that happened and the ransom threat over their village. . . .

My Grandfather had decided to disappear on that morning of bad arrival. He went to another village and hid in one of our relatives' house day and night. Waitausi had been there. And the people didn't wanted to spread any talks about

him, because Waitausi had brought disaster there too. One man used bad words to a missionary some months past. That missionary reported his insult to Waitausi and now, WHEW!! This poor swearer has many sore stripes on his bottom from Waitausi's polis belts. He told all this news to his sister and her family and this only made them all more frightened. Anyways, he filled his stomach while they made plans.

Many roosters was yelling one another for new day when he crawled out of the village. When day came up, many people began to feel that strange something, like something should happen but didn't. The polisimani ran up to his house and jumped it again but they soon climbed out with open teeths. The peoples' tenseness grew up bigger and bigger during the morning and very, very bad in the afternoon. One coconut had suddenly fallen down and killed one village pig right on its head. It was too much for anybody. The polisimani felt like maybe some magic will get them.

That evening just on the period before stars come out and night is darkest, he crept into his sister's house again. Nobody knew about him yet. So he ate and chewed his betelnut and swore very hard to Waitausi and councillor for cutting down his trees. While his brother-in-law look out on the verandah outside, he found sleep quite easy business before his go away in the morning.

It was morning of fifth day. All kinds of birds was already crying their awake, but still the sun had not taken darkness away. That's when my grandfather picked up his somethings and started for bush. For short time there was complete silence. Then suddenly one terrible scream shook everybodies awake in fear. The polisimani had caught him behind his sister's house. Like one wild pig had entered the village. Some was pulling his legs, some fighting against his wild arms but some polisimani got bad lucks when their arms came near his teeths. He fought very bravely and screamed for everybodies to hear. Very quickly the village people was alive with swearing and crying. The polisimani shot some katalesi into the air for warning no trouble from the people. They fought him until day finished darkness and that was when his strength became weak. Five of them was too many for hisself and he couldn't get any help.

The polisimani dragged him like one big tree with many heavy branches towards his house. Everybodies came out to cry out against polisimani and how they do to my grandfather. But they didn't get any chances against these men and their dreadful rifles. The councillor stayed cleared. After they pulled him to his house, they threw him inside and stood guard around. They yelled out to him to get few somethings for himself and out quickly. They will take him to Losuia for Waitausi. He was already with shame and his mind like fire. He thought of everythings but his ways for escape didn't come up to him.

Then suddenly he walk out to his verandah. His face very hard like stone. He had put on his arm bands and prepared some beautiful decorations for his beautiful hair. His hands was empty of anythings to take to Losuia. Everybodies they look but they didn't knew what. Then slowly in very important voice he start his goodbyes.

'Goodbye my people, goodbye my gardens, my trees and my lands. Goodbye to you all. The waves hit my body weary and very sore. I cannot live any more. Our celebrating ancestors in Tuma call me to join them today for some happiness. I must go. I must go from you because this cruel world is no more for me. Goodbye to you all. I must go now to the land of our spirits.'

Straightaway he fell down very dead on his verandah. Everyone they make one big yell out and then they start crying. The polisimani quickly came to him, but very, very afraid. If they touch him too much his ghosts will revenge on them tonight. They look to his eyes, it was fast asleep. They look to his chest, it was not moving up and down. They put their fingers in front his nose and no wind coming out. They was truly frightened of him more, but soon one of them became brave and quickly put one finger on my grandfather's dead stomach. He pulled away very quickly again. The dead flesh was too cold. The polisimani they turn around and tell our people that he was truly very dead and his spirits was already in Tuma. The noise from crying

became very big. Our relatives wanted to come near and prepare his body for burying, but polisimani stopped them. But they also didn't knew what to do now.

Then big argument amongst them. Some say they should leave him and his ghosts for our relatives to take care behind and go report to Waitausi. Other ones say Waitausi ordered to see his body at Losuia, and maybe he will not believe the story without seeing the body first. My dead grandfather happied himself for that one first argument, but his happiness was not long one because soon he hear the other argument side very strong and his body must go to Losuia. Too much for him because now he must die more properly.

The polisimani ordered some people to make one wooden stretcher and they threw my grandfather's body on it. Then four carriers shouldered him. It was really not nice for anyone especially the dead person. The way from his village to Losuia is maybe something like eight miles, but never mind, they must run all the way. They didn't respected any our relatives following them with wet eyes and burial mats in their hands. They run and they cry. Nobodies stands in the way when Waitausi he want something.

Their mouths was already bubbling when they arrived at Losuia. Waitausi heard the big noise and the approaching speed, so he came out on the verandah of Government House to find out. Polisimani they see him and they quick some orders for salute to the government. The carriers they must salute quickly, so they dropped my dead grandfather in one heap onto the hard grounds. His dead back was by now truly paining from everywhere. Then polisimani they tell the story to Waitausi, but that bastard, he didn't believed. He walked down the ladder to look for hisself. Our relatives stopped crying when they see his red face.

All their eyes was down into that circle very, very curious and very, very afraid for what Waitausi will do to the dead body. The quietness was very big and everybodies they can hear their own noses. They watch. He hold his head and think little bit and then he walk around that body many times. Then he squatted near my grandfather's dead body and he open his fingers over him.

First he touch his head, then his neck, then his chests, then his arms. The white man moved closer and he start on his stomach. My dead grandfather continued lying down very, very still. Then Waitausi moved down and started from the toes again. He felt the toes, then the lower legs. Then the white fingers felt the two thighs. My grandfather he was wearing only yobuwa, so from that position Waitausi can see very clearly the penis and the two testicles. Waitausi then touched my grandfather's penis. It was not alive like a stick. But all the women and the men they was very busy in their curiosity and fear. They watch very, very carefully.

Then Waitausi pulled out the two testicles from my grandfather's small yobuwa. My grandfather he didn't knew what is happening because already he close his eyes very hard for death. But Waitausi squeezed the two testicles very, very hard until the two seeds inside swelled up like two balloons. Then without warning

PWA . . . PWA . . . PWA . . . PWA . . . PWA!!!!!!!!

The white magistrate hit his fingers very, very hard against my grandfather's soft testicles. The pains was bigger than fire!

My grandfather jumped out of his death yelling and screaming his pains like Jesus Christ on the third day, his two biting testicles hanging out from his yobuwa very, very nakedly. Waitausi had found out his weak spots.

Our relatives returned sorrowfully to the village that evening, very shamed and very angry. Waitausi gave my grandfather six big belting with polis leather and one month jail to break rocks at Losuia.

"I SEE, IT DID NOT STRIKE ME"

Linda Kasaipwalova

Grandmother put her head out of the window and looked at the passengers getting off the truck. 'Who is that girl her skirt is red? Wee, she is walking coming to us. Eh, Dolaguva you sweep the room! Children you go out you play with friends quickly. You go you look for shellfish, mangoes!' The children are so curious to know the person walking towards their house that they refuse to go to play, instead they hide behind their house.

As the figure gets closer the first to recognize the person is Dolaguva. 'Wee my sister. My grandmother that is no-one else it is Nagumakesa. O, my sister, my sister already you come o!'

Dolaguva runs and takes her sister's bag from her hands. The children come out of their hiding place. They too run and hold Nagumakesa's hands with excitement.

The grandmother crying, laughing, walks out of the house pulling her underskirt up which is snowing out about four inches below her dress. She hugs her grand-daughter, wipes her tears and says, 'My mind was looking to find out who you! Wee my grand-daughter I thought you somebody. I was looking at the passengers and throwing my mind to you, saying, O what my grand-daughter is doing? Maybe rice is slicing her stomach!'

As they enter the house, grandmother quickly brings a chair for Nagumakesa.

'Sit on the chair. Our mats are too dirty. Your sisters and brothers piss on them, shit on them.' Nagumakesa feels very embarrassed to be treated as "someone".

'Ah what worries your body? What, you think I am dimdim or a visitor but I am us.'

'Ah, but your clean Karekwa (calico). Like you don't know that we don't have any sopu (soap). You sit on the chair and you don't anymore talk. Your words prickle my heart.'

The grandmother goes to the kitchen to bring some food for Nagumakesa. Meanwhile all her little sisters and brothers gather around her and some just stare at her as if she is a stranger. When Nagumakesa looks at them they giggle shyly and look away. Nagumakesa takes some packets of lollies from her bag and she gives each some. The children take their lollies and run away to their usual playing ground.

Dolaguva runs to a group of friends and says, 'Eh, already you see what my sister brought, my lollies. I tell you there are many, plenty of them. I tell you, she pinned her hair very good and she wore white Boota.'

The friends gather around her asking for some of her lollies. 'Hey Dolaguva, you see we going to the lagoon to get some shellfish, ah friends?'

There's a group approval of 'Eh' and their spokeswoman continues, 'And after we come back from the lagoon, we go and cook our shellfish in our little gardens, you see.'

Dolaguva is tempted to join her friends so she gives all her lollies away. 'I give you all but my sister she has plenty. I go get some more.'

'You eat, you eat very good because when you faraway rice only hit your body. You eat you go swim, you come you sleep—when your grandfather he comes from garden in the afternoon, he hit a fowl for you.'

After Nagumakesa has eaten, she washes and goes to sleep. The grandmother takes the dishes to wash them near the beach where she meets other women either peeling vegetables, washing

dishes or themselves. One of them shouts, 'Eh grandmother, your grand-daughter come today? I coming to wash my plates when I heard some people talking about it. They asked me if I already know your grand-daughter come today. I said no, after I go I ask the grandmother. Your grand-daughter I think she is big eh? You're lucky your grand-daughter going to school. Tomorrow and near future, you sit only and harvest. I am scolding myself because I stopped my daughter going to school. Eh I thinking my life coming, you see I wanted her to carry my firesticks and water. Today I say oh what I ate, I stopped my daughter. These days money only bosses the place.'

The grandmother laughs and says, 'Ah no, my grand-daughter she is still at school, she not working yet like our friends' daughters. She's only schooling but when she works, O no, that my joy. I was just thinking when sun is sinking you see everybody feeling our house. They will come to look for money. In my mind I laugh, ah you are the ones, when I was bringing Nagumakesa up no-one brought a plate of food, no fish and today it is turning around, oh people!'

All the rest are listening some laugh, some nod their heads. Another woman says, 'O my friend that is very true. Me I just watching closely at my brothers. Their ears are blocked and their eyes are blind. My son is standard six, you see next year he go to Alotau. After I see, when he go and come back for holiday. That's only little bit when he work those uncles who do not look up will open their big mouths in our house. They will say, my nephew, my nephew. O liars, we people are like that.'

The grandmother after having washed the plates she says, 'Eh my relatives, you stay. I go I see her. I think she is sleeping. Hurry up, her grandfather come from garden and we hit a fowl for her. You stay ke?'

They are answered, 'You go and you see the girl.'

The grandmother quickens her step as soon as she's out of the sight of her friends, however, she is stopped by a young man.

'Old woman, your grand-daughter come today?'

'Eh,' answered the grandmother. 'What you want something?'

'Oh no, I just asking but you go and you tell her, I coming walking about there tonight,' and he giggles.

'O, after I go and I tell her but that's you children's play.' The grandmother smiles and hurries to the house.

Dolaguva comes running into the house puffing away. 'Hey! what you, you have no eyes ah! Nagumakesa is sleeping, what I tell you. You go you play. You people I look after you, I feed you every day. My grand-daughter left me, went flying about like a bird, a bird of the ocean. The waves hit her body, hunger biting her. Now the waves washed her ashore, my heart is very painful. You go away and I cook for her food, I sleep with her, until my mind calms down and is good.'

Dolaguva just stands there. She was not listening to what her grandmother was saying but was wondering where and how to get more lollies. She had promised her friends some more. They are all waiting for her under the chestnut tree. So Dolaguva walks slowly to her sleeping sister. There's her sister's bag and her suitcase. She opens the bag and slowly empties the bag. There's a box of tissues, envelopes, stamps, a writing pad, some pills, hairpins, a brush and a comb but no lollies. What will she say to her friends? Dolaguva tries to open her sister's suitcase, but it was locked. She stands staring at the empty bag. Dolaguva takes some of her sister's pins and the brush, and she throws them out of the window so that the grandmother does not see her taking these things away. Dolaguva goes out, picks up the things and rushes to her friends.

The grandmother comes and sits beside the sleeping grand-daughter, fanning her and at the same time singing a song.

'*Sorry birds of ocean*
where did they come from
Their songs, they start, the sounds
make as like weeping.
Oi Oi sorry birds of ocean
Today they arrive
They come and be like orphans.'

While she sings, she cries and talks to herself.

'Oh very good feeling when we see our heart. Like true, you stay with us but today you are here and tomorrow your face disappears like birds of the ocean. Nagumakesa enough sleep, wake up and talk to me. You have many days to sleep but today my heart has not stopped.' She feels her grand-daughter's hair softly. 'Oh hair, like fairies. Get up, cut your hair. It hides your face. It spoils your beauty!' Nagumakesa feels and hears nothing of what her grandmother was saying.

'Gosh, this sun is hot. Where shall we have a drink? I am rather thirsty you know.'

'Is that all you want Mary? Aren't you hungry? I would like to have a meal. Look I had neither breakfast nor lunch, and it's what, eh 3.30 p.m.! Now what does everybody say shall we have a meal?'

'Why not Joe, but where? Personally I don't know any place where we can go to. I am not very familiar with this part of the world.''

'I fall into your category Bill. I do not come to town often. I almost do all my shopping at Boroko. I reckon Boroko is much better than town, it looks neater, things are less expensive and better still, closer to home.'

'Come off it Rose, I do not think things at Boroko are less expensive. Since when you learned that lie. Look, the shops at Boroko are branches of the shops in town like B.P's and Steamships. Don't be such a damn fool.'

'All right, all right Lily Nagumakesa stop it. I think I know a place, how about Hibiscus Room hey?'

'Oh, Mike that one, eeh, its crowded with whites. I don't want to go and mix around with them.'

'O.K. Lily don't be upset about it, stupid. That was only a suggestion not a decision. How about Papua Hot — — —'

'She — e e t! You think they will let you in, Mike you are joking.'

"Shut up Lily and listen, I mean the Calypso Bar, shall we try that one? Everybody agree? Come on let's go, you all seem very hungry.'

'Mary and Rose, you are all right because you both are white. You will have no difficulties in going in.'

'Come on Lily stop that colour business. I am tired of you talking about black and white.'

'No, no, Rose, Lily could be right. Anyway, don't worry Lily we'll see what happens. They wouldn't dare try to do anything. There are six of us, three big strong men to handle everything.'

'Well what would we all have for a start? Shall we have some drinks first? Now come on everybody tell me what you want. I will do the ordering. Bill what would you like, orange drink good, Mary, tomato juice, Joe pineapple, Rose orange too, Lily passiona. No-one's for alcohol, hey? I'll go for beer.'

'But you're just a bloody piss-pot Mike!'

'O.K. O.K. O.K. Joe, No time to argue.'

'Now, where are the waiters? No-one seems to be about. Oh, here comes one. Excuse me waiter . . .'

'No, no, no.'

'What do you mean no, no. Hello what's this, a note. Just listen everybody . . . "We refuse to serve you because you have not conformed to the regulations of this hotel".'

'Now, Mike just what I expected. What are we going to do? Shall I go and find out more about the regulations?'

'No, no, Lily stay where you are . . . Excuse me sir, would you tell me what regulations we have not complied with?'

'Some of you haven't got shoes.'

'Guess what people, they say they won't serve us because some of us haven't got any shoes on. How ridiculous!! Lily, Joe and I haven't got shoes on. Rose and Mary, you are all right.It does not matter whether you have shoes or not because you're white.'

'Bill has his shoes on.'

'Hey Bill you do the ordering for us because you have your shoes on. Say that we are your guests.'

'Never mind, Mike, let's get out of here.'

'Aha, Mary, why should we? Let's stay and see what further action they take. I would like to know more about these regulations. It's very interesting.'

'Any luck Bill, what did they say?'

"Look Mike, it's no use, they still would not serve us.'

'Ssh, everybody, we are going to have some excitement. Here comes the manager himself. Let's hear what he has to say.'

'Mike let's go. Look we have exams coming up very soon, what if . . .'

'Ssh, Joe!'

'Look according to our regulations you have to wear shoes.'

'What for?'

'This is to prevent dirt getting into the room.'

'What about your waiters? They are not wearing shoes. In any case it does not matter whether you wear shoes or not, you still bring in dirt!'

'Look if you don't get out, I will ring the Police.'

'Go right ahead white man and ring the Police. That's what the Police are for, to protect you and your property. You use our black brothers against us. Your regulation about shoes is nothing more than keeping out blacks, that's all. You know very well that most of the black people do not wear shoes.'

'I am calling the Police right away.'

'Now Mike stop it. Let's get out of here. We will come here next time with all our shoes in a big bilum bag all right. If they start complaining we'll scramble for our shoes and start putting them on in front of them. We will see what further action they take. We will invite the Press to come along with us and publicly expose their so-called regulations as being discriminatory.'

'Good idea Mary, come on Mike I have an exam next Monday.'

'Poor old Joe is still worried about his exams.'

'Shut up Miss Lily Nagumakesa! Come, everybody, the pigs should be here very soon. Hey, Lily where are you going to? Come back, Rose, Mary and the others are going out. Come on try to contain yourself. Listen Lily, these whites will not run away. Tomorrow they will still be here. We will have plenty of time for some excitement after the exams.'

'What's up Joe? Where is Lily? Hurry up.'

'Rose be patient just for a while please. Stupid Lily has gone to the manager again. Here she comes. Well, what did you do?'

'Nothing, I just told them that they are practising discrimination and also passed them the message that Mike jotted down on the ordering pad "Your days are counted whiteman". Now, let's get moving!'

'How did you four get here? Oh by bus. Mary and I came by my car. It's over there. My car can take only four people, so that's, Rose, Lily, Joe and myself. I am sorry Mike and Bill but you'll have to go by bus.'

'Thank you very much Mary. See you Mike and Bill. Hey, Joe I bet those two are jealous, don't you?'

I am glad to see you get out of "the mood" Lily.'

'How wrong you are Joe! This incident will be buried in my heart forever!'

'Rose, I will have to stop at the Highland Vegetable Shop to get some grapes. You are not in a hurry to go home, are you?'

'No, no, not at all Mary. It suits me fine. I think I will get some for myself. I just love them.'

'Hey why have we stopped here, Mary?'

'Oh, Lily we'll be back within a few seconds. It won't take us long!'

'Oooo I wish Mary and Rose would hurry up. Gosh I feel tired and sleepy and yet I can't sleep because I am so hungry, besides I keep thinking about the incident.'

'Same here Lily. What's taking them so long? They said they would only be away for a few seconds, now it has taken hours. I shall go and look for them.'

'Don't be stupid! How do you expect to find them if you haven't got a clue where they have gone to? What if they come back if you go.'

'I wonder where could they be? You think they could be in a pub, cafe or a shop, Lily?'

'I am not quite sure, in any case, it is getting dark. What shall we do, find other transport?'

'But that might take hours Lily. I am dead broke therefore cannot get a taxi. What about your purse?'

'Joe both of us are in the same boat. I only have twenty cents in my purse. We should have asked Mike to lend us some money.'

'But we didn't know that we were going to end up like this. We thought we were going straight home.'

'You're right Joe. Well, shall we try to find a quicker way home? Let's go and wait at the crossroad. That's where many cars pass. We'll see if we can get a lift home.'

'O.K. Let's, or we'll wait here for ages. I wish we could walk home if only it were daylight and closer too!'

'Who were you waving to Joe?'

'Oh just a friend that I used to know.'

'Why didn't you stop him to give us a lift Joe?'

'Because there wasn't any space left, Lily. Haven't you got eyes? He had some people in the car.'

'Oh dear, Joe. I think Bill and Mike are home already. We shouldn't have accepted the lift you know.'

'Stop complaining Lily, it's no use. Now let's see, hey, Jack, Jack! Good he's seen us.'

'Hello there, what are you doing at this time of the night? I did not see you but only heard my name being called.'

'Jack could you give us a lift home? Lily and I have been here for hours. Nobody has a heart in this place.'

'Come on hop in. The bus service is useless isn't it? You stand there for ages. That's why it's always good and handy to have a car. It makes travelling much, much easier especially in a big place like Port Moresby, don't you think?'

'Yes, yes, Jack, I don't know whether I will ever have a car. I still do not have any money. How did you manage to get a car like a white man?'

'That's not true Joe. You will have a car once you have graduated. Look folks, I am turning right here. Is it O.K. with you?'

'Well Jack, we are going left so just drop us here. Thank you very much Jack. You have helped us a lot. Goodbye see you sometime.'

'Well Joe dear, it's getting very late. We cannot afford to waste time waiting for any more transport. We better start walking or better still run home. It does not matter whether it takes us the whole night to run home, the important thing is that we have to get there.'

'Lily I do not mind walking or running home but one thing pulls me back and that's you. I alone cannot protect you if we meet a group of men, you realize that, don't you? No, Lily it is not safe to either walk or run home.'

'Look Joe, I will pin my hair up just like yours, tuck my skirt under my panties. I will take the same length of stride as you do. Only one thing I must remember and that is not to greet or answer any greeting especially from a man because my voice is quite distinctive.'

'Are you ready Joe, let's go, now not too fast not too slow, that's it, that's the step. Right. . . .'

'Nagumakesa, Nagumakesa where are you going?' The grandmother runs after Nagumakesa and stands in front of her.

'Grand-daughter why you stand up quickly and you walk out of the house. I call and I call. I sitting near you, making wind, and you stand, you walk, wee my stomach fly up and my heart go TU TU TU.'

'Grandmother, how I get out of the house? Why I am outside the house? I thought I was sleeping in our house. Did you bring me here?'

'No, my grand-daughter, you sleeping very good and I making wind for you, you stand up quick. Your eyes sleeping, you walk out. My grand-daughter you come you sleep or you want eat something?'

Nagumakesa just stands there wondering how she had come out of the house. Then she remembers. 'Grandmother, I dream about my friends in Port Moresby, a big story. You sit down here I tell you the story.'

Nagumakesa just starts recalling her dream when Grandmother sees Dolaguva on the beach and calls her. Dolaguva comes running up to them.

'Dolaguva you go, you put more firewood sticks on to the fire. Your sister's fowl is cooking.'

Dolaguva runs to the kitchen and Nagumakesa tries to continue with her dream story when Dolaguva's voice could be heard.

'My grandmother you come you see my sister's pot. I think water is dry. You come you put new water. You take the pot from the fire.'

The grandmother runs to the kitchen and

Nagumakesa is left with her thoughts of the dream. She then walks to the beach, looks across the sea and far, far away, she can see the distant mountains of the Normanby and Fergusson Islands.

After the grandmother has fixed the pot she says, 'Dolaguva you go, see what your sister doing. You tell her that her fowl already cook.'

Dolaguva stands at the door and looks out. Nagumakesa is not there. 'My grandmother, Nagumakesa she is not there. My grandmother you hear or not? My grandmother oh you deaf ear.'

Dolaguva runs back to the kitchen and hits the grandmother on the back — 'Eh you, deaf ear, what we call and you no listen ah! Nagumakesa she is not there.'

Grandmother reacts to the pain saying 'Eh what you, you always like that. You hit me to tell me things. You think I am like you with strength. True your sister not there. Wa, it was not long, we sitting in front of the house, under the coconut tree. You go, you go, you find your sister. You bring her to eat.'

'My grandmother I want to eat some fowl before I go. My grandmother pilise you.' Dolaguva holds grandmother by the hand.

'Dolaguva we kill that fowl in the name of your sister. You go, you find her first. Hurry up, you go.'

'Grandmother I want the wings.' Dolaguva runs out of the house.

Dolaguva is only some way from the house when she sees her sister staring across the sea. She starts to call. 'My sister, eh, you come, you eat. Our grandmother, she say you come you eat. You come you eat your fowl.'

Nagumakesa hearing the voice turns around to see Dolaguva who is now shouting back to grandmother. 'My grandmother, my sister she is there. My grandmother, (shouting very loudly) my sister already she coming.'

The grandmother hearing this walks over and puts her head through the window and sees that Dolaguva is standing in between the grandmother and where Nagumakesa is standing. 'Dolaguva your sister already hear you? Very far you standing, no your sister she not hear you You go close to her. The wind is blowing your voice away. You go close you tell your sister.'

'No my grandmother she already hear me. She look, see me and wave her hands.'

'Where the little children, Dolaguva?'

'They playing on the playing ground my grandmother.'

The grandmother goes back to the kitchen and is busy preparing the food. A different plate of food for the grandfather who's gone to tell the parents of Nagumakesa about her arrival, a dish of food for children, on the table she prepares food for Nagumakesa and also puts Dolaguva's plate too. 'Dolaguva wants to eat the wings. I put her plate. Her sister give some fowl. I put their aibika, their eggs.' Then the grandmother looks out again for Dolaguva and Nagumakesa.

Dolaguva is sitting down where grandmother has last seen her standing yelling to her sister. Nagumakesa is walking towards Dolaguva, very slowly, very thoughtfully. Dolaguva seeing her sister walking towards her, stands up and as her sister gets closer, she holds Nagumakesa by the hand and they both walk to the house.

'I waiting. You come, you eat. Dolaguva I put your plate on the table next to your sister.'

Dolaguva feels very happy and proud to sit on the table beside her sister. The grandmother sits opposite to them trying to keep the flies away.

'Dolaguva you eat, you eat our fowl. I take our leg eh, and you eat what you like.'

Dolaguva goes straight for the wings, as she takes her wings she glances to grandmother who only smiles.

After thay have eaten as usual the grandmother brings the water for them to wash their hands. She then gathers all the dishes and leaves them in the kitchen. She comes back to Nagumakesa to give some buwa. Voices of children, crying, fighting over the bones brings back poor grandma into the kitchen.

'Stop fighting, you two — what you don't see hey? What you don't eat? Like you never eat fowls! This not hungry time. You fight for food our friends think we hungry. Our friends say, we not see, eat fowls, we cry. Shame on you!!!!'

When the grandmother goes back to Nagumakesa she is not in the house. Nagumakesa is

sitting outside. She has sent Dolaguva to get a mat, and a pillow.

'Dolaguva, your sister outside?'

'Eh,' Dolaguva answers. 'I come take our mat, pillow. My sister, she tell me stories about Hanuabada; give some buwa, lime, mustard.' Then she runs out very excited.

As Dolaguva runs out, she sees Nagumakesa lying with open eyes staring into the sky.

Yes, Joe and I were running . . .
'My sister you see our mat . . .
my sister our buwa . . .'
what was Joe saying . . .

Dolaguva stands, staring at Nagumakesa.

Nagumakesa does not hear what Dolaguva is saying, forgets that Dolaguva is standing beside her: Nagumakesa is absorbed in thinking of the dream.

TWO BUIN SONGS

THE FRUSTRATED WARRIOR

O all my kinsmen, this young wife spoke sweetly to me
and said "Meet me at the river junction when they've all gone home."
At the river junction I grew tired of waiting;
I smashed the Chinese armband I bought her, and went home.
I smashed it with a stone, so that she'll see it when she comes,
and think I want to sleep with her without payment.
But if she sleeps with me I'll give her an armring;
I was angry at the time, but now I am calm.

O you sorceress, you bitch! Your hole is forbidden me,
like the mouth of the Pakurom river,
where a man is doomed if he sees a frog with a broken leg;
if he sees one, it won't be long before they cremate him.

O you sorceress, you bitch! Your hole is forbidden me,
like the mouth of the Oukom river;
where a man is doomed if he sees a yellow fish.

O you sorceress, you bitch! I call for your crutch to come to Reekoku,
but you walk with a limp because of the mucus dropping from it,
the way I walk, on top of mount Tipuuro, in the early morning,
when the greasy mud sticks to my legs.

O you sorceress, you bitch! You make yourself hard to get,
but the river has it for nothing,
when you squat and it tickles you up.
I say that neither you nor your sister are any good,
so may your holes be blocked with pubic hair!

Translated by Don Laycock

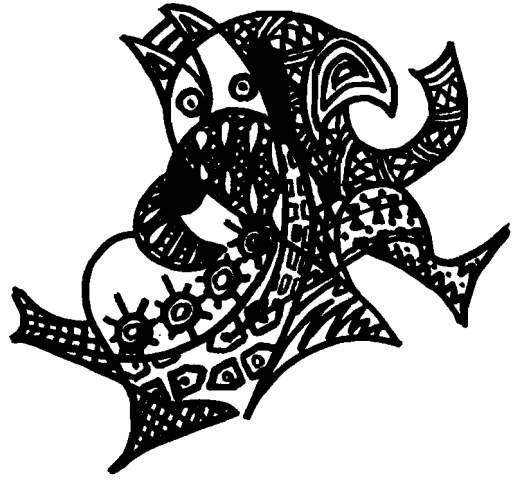
THE FICKLE WOMAN

O all my kinsmen, the fish I brought got dirty
from carrying them in my hand, and she said to me
"Why didn't you give me shell money instead?"
Well, I'm still a sappy bamboo, and I said to her
"I never go to Faisi, where the shells come from,
and the ship *Mercury* takes all the shells when it comes here."

You're an old hag, and can't make up your mind,
like the yam that wanted to be roasted instead of boiled!
I broke off a rope of shells for her, but she asked for a skirt,
to cover up her great mound, that looks like the base of a coconut!
Well, I'm a young cockerel, and I said to her
"I never go to Pungore, where they sell the calico."

O you sorceress, you bitch! Your hole is like that cave in the south
that the spirits always go and make a mess in.
And you, her champion, when you hear this song,
don't go picking a fight with me!
It's not a woman making this song, and I know all about brawls.
I'll stick my two bundles of arrows in the ground,
and I'll stand in the road and wait for you!

Translated by Don Laycock



CREATION STORY FROM BILIBIL (MADANG)

Bernard G. Dalle

Anut made man on Bilibil Island. He created man from clay. The first man was called Ningur and the first woman Gananui. After making Ningur and Gananui, Anut gave the remainder of the clay to Gananui and told her to make pots. Then he left Bilibil Island. He travelled south and he travelled until he reached Europe. For a long time he was hiding there. But recently he appeared in Berlin and declared: 'I am God.'

Anut made people black. But some people left Bilibil Island and followed the road taken by Anut. When they came to Europe, they took off their skins and became white.

The first people lived quietly on Bilibil Island. They were peaceful and discussed their affairs in the *Miriamb Darem* (Haus Tamburan) but they did not know how to make feast.

One day a canoe arrived on Bilibil Island, The strangers were Israelites. They taught the people of Bilibil how to play the bamboo flute, how to dance and make feast. Then they travelled along the coast to the village of Wab. They took Salilon with them from Bilibil Island. They taught the people of Bilibil music and dance. After some time they brought Salilon back to Bilibil. They gave him the chin bone and the thigh bone of Joseph. They also gave him twelve stones, which were the tablets of Moses. Then they went back and settled in Wab.

The people on Bilibil lived a happy life then. They never fought among themselves, they never got ill and they did not die.

But one day another canoe arrived in Bilibil. There were three men in it: Guak was the captain, Sangalai was the helmsman and Kantil was standing in front on the look-out.

They came from the same direction from which the Israelites had come. But these three men brought sorcery with them and they taught the people of Bilibil all kinds of evil charms. The three men went away again in their canoe. But since that day people have been fighting each other on Bilibil. They become ill and they die.

There are four clans on Bilibil.

Dugus clan descends from Ningur himself. They are the people in charge of dancing and feasting. They make the pots and they keep the bones of Joseph.

Gapan clan are descended from Gasare. They are in charge of rain magic and thunder. They keep the calendar by observing the *geres* stars. They keep the slates of Moses.

Murpat clan are in charge of farming, they know how to hunt pigs and birds. They are descended from Gad.

Luan clan are descended from Kapten. They are the builders of houses and of canoes.

During the First World War the Germans burned all the houses on Bilibil Island. The people fled to the bush. After the war they came and settled on the mainland. They built two villages: Bilibil and Yabob.

THE STORY OF SIAR ISLAND

Bernard G. Dalle

The Siar people originally lived on the Banabdamon Peninsula. They traded with the people of Bilibil and Bagbag Islands. They traded canoes for pots with Bilibil Island and they traded some of the Bilibil pots for pigs and galip nuts with Bagbag.

Once the Bagbag people came to visit the Siars to get pots. Their hosts gave them a big feast and they cooked some of the food in pandanus juice. Now this food tasted so sweet to the Bagbag people who had never eaten it before, that they wanted to know how to prepare it before returning to their island. The Siars presented them with a pandanus palm and gave them instructions on how to extract the juice.

But the Bagbag people misunderstood everything. They treated the pandanus like a live animal and when they got home they tied it to a post with a rope and the next morning the warriors gathered round it and speared it. The stem of the tree was reduced to pulp and became completely useless for cooking. Then the Bagbag people became very angry and they decided to pay back the Siars. When the Siars came to visit Bagbag the following year, the Bagbag people gave an enormous feast for them and killed many pigs. When the Siars were about to return home, the Bagbags packed the remaining pig meat into large bags for them to take back. They were hiding a large snake in one of the bags and they instructed the Siars to open the bags and eat some of the meat just before they reached the shore. The meat bags were placed on the platform between the outrigger and the canoe.

When the coast of Banabdamon Peninsula came into sight, the Siars stopped rowing and went to open the bags. They all crowded on to the platform between the outrigger and the canoe. But as soon as the snake appeared, they all got frightened and they ran away to the extreme end of the platform, with the result that the outrigger came right up, and the canoe overturned. They all fell into the water and swam ashore. They did not realize that the snake was also swimming to the land and that it was climbing up a coconut tree.

The Siars decided that their escape from the snake had to be celebrated with a big feast. Immediately they set out to plant many yams and taros. When the time had come to harvest them, they got everything ready for a feast and then they set out to hunt pigs. All day they walked the forest, but they could not get a single pig. In the late afternoon they were resting under a coconut tree. They sent a man up to fetch some nuts to refresh themselves. When the man reached the top, he shouted: 'There is a huge snake sitting in the top of the tree!' 'Good,' said the people below, 'since we could not get a pig, we'll eat the snake!' Then they instructed him to climb towards the snake. 'The snake will start to curl around you, and then you will both fall down to the ground. Then we will come and kill it,' they said. The man did as he was told and they fell down together. The Siars pinned the snake's head to the ground with a cleft stick and then tied it to the stick. Then they carried it back to the village in triumph. They decided to kill it and eat it the next day. They lined up all the pots for the feast and they kept the snake in a large slit gong for the night.

During that night all the old women in the village had a dream. The snake appeared to them and said: 'These people want to kill me and eat me. But this must not be. You must warn them, that if they eat me, the entire village will sink into the water.' The next day all the old women told their families about the dream. But nobody believed in it and they were soon persuaded that it was meaningless. Only one old woman, called Bubuli, insisted that the dream

was true. And when her daughter and son-in-law laughed at her, she grabbed the two grandchildren and walked away.

The others began eating the snake. Suddenly the earth began to crumble around the village and a ditch of water was formed all around it. Then the entire village turned over and fell into the water, with houses, gardens and trees and men, women and children drowned.

Bubuli brought up the two children — a boy and a girl — in the neighbouring village. When they grew up she told them that they were the last survivors of their clan and that to keep the clan alive they must marry each other. So they married and had children. Their eldest son, Boniau, went and founded Riwo village and their second son, Zuai, settled on Siar Island. His children multiplied and peopled the island.

Near Buidub in Sek Harbour lived a woman called Dangpain. Her two sons, Manub and Kilibob, wanted to settle the islands off the coast. they made huge canoes and put all their followers on them. Manub sailed towards Karkar, Kilibob took the opposite direction towards Finschhafen.

Kilibob stopped at every island he saw and put some people ashore. He was going to sail past Siar Island, however, because it was already inhabited. But Miamai the water spirit threw up a coral reef and the canoe ran aground, just off Siar Island. To get the canoe afloat again, Kilibob ordered everybody to disembark and to carry all the cargo ashore. Kilibob's possessions consisted mainly of shell money, pots and magic medicines.

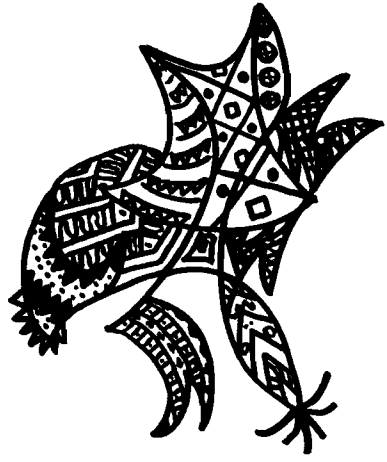
By the time the canoe was cleared it had become dark and Kilibob decided to spend the night on the island. The people of Siar gave him a feast and in return for their hospitality he gave them some magic gifts.

He gave the rain and sun magic to the Lilung clan and he gave the peace magic to the Badalon clan and the art of carving and canoe-making to the Waifun clan.

Kilibob gave the people of Siar a chain with a ring on it, a large pot, and a *Kenken* beetle. He told them that when the beetle cried in the afternoon it is time to stop work in the gardens and go home.

Kilibob also left one of his most valuable possessions behind: the Lingon slate, which is one of the tablets of Moses. He had no intention of leaving this behind, but when he was about to leave at dawn, he found a baby asleep on the slate and he did not want to wake it up.

Kilibob never returned to Siar, but his sacred objects remained in the village until the missionaries came in 1889. The missionaries declared these objects to be heathen and threw them into the sea.



O MERI WANTOK

O meri Papua
O meri Buka
O meri Nugini
O meri Haelen
O meri wantok me sore long yu.

Yu lukim Astralia man i draivim kar
Yu lukim Amerika man i draivim trak
Yu lukim Inglan man i ronim mota baik
Yu lukim Nuzilan man i kikim baisikol
Yu sanap yu lukluk na yu sek.
O meri wantok mi sore long yu.

Yu lukim Papua man i raon long lek
Yu lukim Buka man i ron long lek
Yu lukim Nugini man wokabaot long lek
Yu lukim Haelan man i taitim long lek
Yu harem bilak man i tok "Monin meri wantok"
Yu tanim pes no tok "Hemarai lasi"
Yu taitim bel na tok "Nogat sem bolo yu."
O meri wantok mi sore long yu.

O meri wantok
Bipo maus bilong yu i save braon
Nao maus bilong yu i red
Bipo garas bilong yu i save sanap lus
Nao yu pulim igo tait
Bipo susu bilong yu i sabe selek
Nao i sanap tait olsem yet.
Yu lukluk long galas na tok
"Inap long tuandi dola wan dorop!"
O meri wantok mi sore long yu.

Lapun man bilong Inglan i tok "Nansei!"
Yangpela man bilong Astralia lukim yu na i tok
"My dalen black en beauriful
I'll mek you like kween of heaven above."
Yu harem na yu ting se i turu.
O meri wantok mi sore long yu.

Mi sanap mi lukluk tasol
Mi sidaun mi ting ting tasol
O meri wan sikin mi sore long yu.
O meri wantok mi sore tumas long yu.

Bede Dus Mapun

TWO LOVE POEMS

by Aesop Patel

Excerpt from *Notes in Our Clenched Fists:* we survive, we endure, we live . . . . .

the bloated pass book bulging
the half-past ten curfew,
white authority kicking the empty belly
and its xenophobic truncheons cracking skulls,
sputtering blood, blood, blood,
our blood inscribes the bitter truth
of your weakness and fears.

Lawless jackboots raping our shadows
through ghetto streets,
raking our unarmed bodies
with salted sjamboks and brute force;
in the sun the daily terror.
In the sight of murderous weapons
we endure your wounding intrusions,
depriving our tender privacy,
violating our bodies
with heavy blows and electric shock;
in the sun the daily horror.

Pointed orders and monotonous thuds of rubber stamps
we are cast from the ghettos and locations
onto the cruel and determined dirt tracks
chartering into the wilderness of the veld,
where acid trees grow bearing thorns,
where seeds refuse to germinate
and no water to quench our thirst.
We ask WHY?
WHY are we cast to the wild winds?
We move our eyes to see the landscape
but we see dereliction, hunger and death.

Somehow we survive, we endure, we live
in the sun.

Take My Bruised Hand, My Dark Rose

in the nocturnal eclipse
she walks the uncharted avenues of his mind,
plucking the harp-strings of his heart
and singing: "*take my hand . . .*";
her eyes brightening the night,
her lips whispering desire
and his heart beats catching her song.

he scales the half-past ten curfew
in the thickest of the darkness,
with a measured smile
to a calculated destination.

Then the confronting words: bitter
as the stone of white almonds
in police uniform.
The menacing bangles poised on the belt
sternly intimidate the midnight metallic air,
locking in the arresting darkness of the night
with a humiliating resonance of denigration.

Now behind granite walls, behind iron bars
his torn soul, his wounded heart sings
in the loneliness of the cell, singing,
"*take my bruised hand, my dark rose*".

. . . . in the nocturnal silence,
beyond prison walls,
beyond barbed wire fences,
beyond restrictions,
the wind carries her sighing hope:
"*My love I do, let the rain drops from my eyes*
balm your bruised hand and heart, my love . . . ."

OVER THE CLIFF

by Bede Dus Mapun

It had been raining heavily since dawn that day. Nobody came out of the house and even the pigs refused to leave the house. Meanwhile, in another house somewhere, Awosi also refused to get out of his little house as the maddening rain beat lazily on his roof. The mountains were drowned in the mist and rain. People could do nothing that morning but run out of their houses to urinate and excrete and run back in to continue sleeping.

As the rain eased and the rain clouds began clearing, Kine crawled out of the house with her *bilum* (stringbag) on her bare back and her digging stick in her hand. She stood up, stretched herself and yawned noisily in front of the door, carved low in the equally low eastern wall of the *venda* (woman house). She looked around and up into the clearing sky. It was already midday and the sun, right above her, filtered through the rain clouds. 'Apa! The sun has nearly set!' She sighed, as she was young and unused to talking to herself, like her mother. Quickly turning towards the low door, she went down on her knees and piled the slabs of wood up the doorway and thus closed the door. She stood up quickly again and moved off into the direction of the family *kau-kau* garden (sweet potato). As she hurried along the wet track, clearing the dews on the leaves before her with her *lam* (digging stick), Kine thought: 'I must hurry and collect enough *kau-kau* for the family and pigs before the rain comes back.' As she moved on along that track, Awosi crawled lazily out of his little house, wondering how to spend the rest of that day.

Kine soon reached the garden. She climbed over the fence and looked around the garden very quickly before she began her work. She chose where the *kau-kau* was most ready for harvest and began to dig. The little pools in the hollow of the *kau-kau* leaves glistened as the brightening sun hit her hard on her bare back. She dug carefully, burying the vines and the young, unwanted *kau-kau* in the damp soil. There was enough to carry after digging about four mounds, so Kine decided to go home. She gathered the harvest with eager hands and put them neatly in her strong *bilum*. The load was heavy but Kine was young and strong. Before she left she went around the garden to ensure that everything was still untouched by thieves or pigs.

As Kine continued her inspection, feeling satisfied that everything was normal, a man was walking towards that garden. Along the winding track, through the hills, he moved quickly against the setting sun; feeling quite satisfied that nobody knew where he was going. Nobody could even guess where he was that day for he had no friends or relatives. He had nothing in common with anyone. But he knew something that they knew also — and that was that there were a lot of vegetables ready for harvesting in that big garden where Kine was and he was going there as sure as the sun was about to crown the distant mountains.

Round the *kau-kau* mounds, through rustling sugar cane leaves, past ripening cucumbers, as if counting everything, Kine continued her inspection as that man continued over and round the hills. To complete, Kine was now checking the fence when she stopped, attracted by a man approaching beyond the fence. He stopped also, rather abruptly, but continued and began to whistle a *tanim het* tune. Kine continued to check the fence which was too strong for pigs to break through. She wondered who the man was. It could be her father or brother, Pipi, coming to admire the flourishing garden. 'Then why is he whistling that *tanim het* tune, which is usually done to attract possible lovers?' Kine thought, as the man moved closer and the tune grew louder. She became rather shameful because she had very little on by way of dress, at that moment. She sat down in the *kau-kau* leaves and pretended to do some weeding.

He walked up to the garden gate, from which

she had entered the garden earlier in the day. As he was climbing over the fence, Kine stopped briefly to recognize him. 'That is certainly not my father or Pipi or Uncle Neil,' she was sure, and looked on with surprise. He had already walked past two mounds in a row, about a yard apart. He stopped as Kine sat back and stared at him straight in the face. It was loud enough for her to hear:

'Hei Kine, what are you doing there?' Kine did not respond. He moved closer until he was only a few yards and then a few steps, and stopped in front of her. Kine could not tell who he was, even from that near. She knew almost every local man, but now she was facing a stranger. He had covered his big hair with a new *wanea*, a kind of beaten bark, like tapa cloth. Above this he had a couple of fern leaves in a cross and pinned down to his hair with his long, thin bamboo pin, usually carried around for this purpose. His face he had painted completely with charcoal. In front, down his new bark-belt, he wore a fairly old *bilum* apron and behind he tugged down a couple of leafy *tankets*. He was obviously dressed for a *tanim het* or courting ceremony. Thus, behind this complication stood the *lusman* called Awosi, but bewildered Kine could not tell, although she looked at him straight in the eyes that sparkled with the setting rays against the 'black wall'.

From where he stood: 'Kine I like you, and I come to marry you,' the man said.

Surprised, Kine asked almost continuously: 'Who are you? I do not know whose son you are. Where do you 'stand'? What village do you 'stand' in?'

'It is not necessary for you to know me now. You will know later,' the man replied. 'Just say yes or no. I really like you, so tell me so I will know,' he demanded.

'But when a man wants to marry a woman, he does not seek her out in the garden where she is working, almost naked. Is this what your father taught you to do?' Kine was now cross and her voice grew louder.

'Sh — sh . . . don't sing out like that,' he interrupted. 'I come to ask your answer first.'

By now, as conversation developed, Kine tried to identify the man. 'I think he is Molu, from Kiburu Village.' Kine had met him several times during *tanim het* sessions in the woman's house. She knew fairly well what type of character this man was. He used to play dirty tricks, such as spilling water 'accidentally' in order to pull the girls' breasts during the dark. Kine could tell what he was there for. So poor Molu was being registered for an unknown trouble there in that garden.

'When a man wants to marry a man's daughter he goes publicly to the mother, father, sisters, brothers and relatives first,' Kine continued, emphasizing 'a man's daughter' to mean that her father was not a poor, unimportant man whose daughter could be approached secretly and married without much publicity or ceremony.

'A woman says yes or no after her people know everything. They are the ones who share the *bina* shells, pigs, bamboo oil and everything paid proudly for a man's daughter. A woman also brings *makue* (dowry) to her husband's house. It is not a simple, private transaction. A man does not surprise a woman alone in her garden, like a runaway wife. What is this? Are heaven and earth changing places?' Kine continued more loudly.

'I come to ask whether you like it or not,' 'Molu' interrupted angry Kine, whose voice was beginning to echo in the neighbouring hills. He took a step closer to the trouble he had brewed in his little house during that long rainy morning.

'Then this is not the right place to come and ask,' said Kine, stepping out of his way. 'I am ashamed to talk in private like this. You come and we will talk in front of my fathers and brothers and my people,' she continued.

'No, I want two of us to decide here first,' said 'Molu', moving closer right after her.

'Decide what? I told you to come to my village and talk to my people and then we will decide there. Not here. Are you silly?' Kine insisted and moved quickly away from him.

'Molu' took a second to run his lusty eyes down her flat back, the swaying buttocks, down her thick thighs and her fat legs. A current of shivering lust ran through him. A fiery desire seized 'Molu'. He had to act fast. A couple of

running leaps brought him right before Kine.

'Wait, Kine,' he gasped. 'I will tell you everything, please listen. Kine, you are beautiful. I . . .'

'Wait for what?' Kine leaped out of his way. 'Molu' quickly blocked her way. He came even closer to that pair of smooth breasts. He knew that he would not marry this beautiful girl because he knew that he was Awosi, but Kine did not know. He did not have those precious red *bina* shells and the fat pigs, and the numerous other forms of wealth that a girl of Kine's beauty was worth 'carrying' for her numerous clansmen and women. He was now determined to 'get the feel of it' at least, because, as the saying goes, 'when you are thirsty, you do not block a river with your mouth, but drink from a tiny corner.'

'I will scream out if you don't stop,' Kine warned, looking at him in his lusty eyes.

'Molu', for the first and the last time, looked into those beautiful but angry eyes, those round cheeks, and down on to those smooth, solid breasts. He had pulled some of those types before during *tanim het*. 'Molu's' hands trembled as the leaves shivered in the evening breeze. His trouble began.

Before Kine realized anything, 'Molu' flung his left arm around and grabbed her tight from the back and his right hand struggled to stick on to those solid breasts. Kine knew then that her virginity, worth so much, was in danger. She yelled in her loudest shrill and shattered the evening silence that had slowly covered the valley except the garden. The hills sent back a wave of echoes that had no effect on furious 'Molu' whose right hand had now left the breasts and was tight against her mouth. Kine fought furiously but 'Molu' proved too strong for her. In Mendi, we say: 'A man strangles a wild cassowary but the woman cleans the insides.'

In another moment 'Molu' had Kine on her back, across the soft evening *kau-kau* leaves. With his rough fingers he tore off her short underskirt. 'Molu' knew his prey was almost helpless now, in the garden that had taken other men of his strength so many days to make. He mounted and rode on that reluctantly softening body as Kine struggled and curled beneath his massive weight. He put the last bit of his strength to work which was too much for her to resist. She gave up eventually as his deadly weapon fought breathlessly between her fat thighs. For that moment 'Molu' forgot the world he left behind as he sank deeper and deeper into that 'unforgettable virgin swamp'. He thought neither of axe nor of spear as the last rays of the setting sun beat down on his rythmically rising and falling wide back. Not a sound escaped Kine's mouth for he locked it with his. She did not stare at the sky as she had to protect her eyes from the charcoal dust on his face.

When Kine finally became aware, she found herself running, crying, falling, rising and running along that road she walked before. She ran straight to the men's house, where several men, including her father, had already gathered after their daily engagements. She ran crying into the big sing-sing ground and the men came out of the house in surprise. She told them all that had happened.

Immediately her father ran around the sing-sing ground stamping, stamping the earth, to mean that he wanted nothing but war. 'I am me,' he cried, and the echo faded in the coolness of the evening. 'No man with balls has ever 'touched' me and got away before. I will destroy the homeland of that man who dared to lay his finger on me. I will burn the earth of his sing-sing ground till nothing remains but ashes for weeds. He will then know who I am and my clan. Does he not know that I am Biwi?' He began to stomp the earth again and the crowd of men joined him, chanting a war song, and the mighty cry rang out and warned people that peace in their valley had been disturbed.

That night all the leaders and men of the clan gathered in the men's house to plan and prepare to attack long before dawn, while the unknown Awosi crept in and out of his little hut uneasily and the innocent Molu lay down beside the kindling fire for the last time.

Every man of the tribe went back to his hamlet to prepare for the war, after a long break of peace. He put his bowstring out to soften, dusted his arrows and spear, sharpened his long-handled battle axe, coloured his war shield,

decorated his head gear, and put on a new bark belt to carry his battle axe. Spies were sent out to spy on the enemy's village. They came back saying that the enemy was not prepared. They knew where most of the men slept that night and how to attack, to take them completely by surprise.

Biwi's clansmen slept briefly as they were rather steamed up with revenge. Early, before there was any sign of dawn in the east, the clansmen of Biwi flooded the sing-sing ground with their war plumes and feathers, long bone-tipped spears and bows and arrows. The rows of colourful war shields could scare away the dawn rats crossing the ground from their night's labour; and Molu did not care what was happening across the valley, as he slept on in innocence with his clansmen, but Awosi knew everything.

Biwi divided the men into four groups and destined each to attack from a different angle, as directed by the spies. They drained off quietly, inflated with anger and revenge; Awosi remained the unknown troublemaker.

So the dawn was made useless that morning, for the flames from the burning houses already had the world lit. The men's houses were all surrounded and many men were killed and many escaped the flames. Women screamed and children yelled as those battle axes sank deep into their skulls. Pigs were either killed and roasted or went up in flames and smoke with the rest of the wealth in the houses. Before long, the land ran undeservedly with blood and the air filled with thick smoke as the two tribes were confusingly entangled in a furious battle.

It continued all day, as the sun walked its path, high above in the blue sky. Below, the entangled tribes continued into the night. Before it became too dark, Biwi's tribe retreated. The dead and wounded were sent home earlier. Each leader made sure that all his men were safely with him before going home. When they got home, Biwi thanked and praised his men for their bravery; he expressed his deep sorrow for the dead and wounded. Feeling brave and satisfied, some men went to bed while others stayed up to guard their village, for as sure as Awosi watched the battle from a hilltop, the enemy would come after them. Every man took his turn to guard.

Now Awosi's little house stood somewhere in between the two enemies. He lived in that house on the hill, all by himself. He sympathized with Biwi's tribe because Kine, fortunately, did not identify him.

In the blackness of that night Awosi heard warriors coming from the south, the direction of Biwi's enemies. He ran down quickly and waited on the road for they would pass in a moment. He halted them, 'I am Awosi. I am your friend. Don't kill me. I want to help you.' he said rather hurriedly.

They knew who he was and said: 'We won't kill you but we want to kill Biwi's clan. You help us and show us their secret roads.'

'I will show you,' said Awosi, very pleased. 'If you pass that way, there is a men's house straight ahead and most of the men are there They will kill you so you must take the turn that I will show you. You must follow this track and move very quietly. When you pass the turn you must run.' Awosi stood back, feeling a hero, and laughed to himself.

Now this road led to a very steep cliff. Each man followed one behind the other, groping in the blackness of the night. Not a living sound was audible except whispers and leaves brushing against the musical strings of the tightened bows. Once Awosi thought they had gone near enough to the cliff he called out, 'The men of Biwi are coming after you, run away.' Not knowing that their grave was not far, they began to run, and one by one, they ran over the cliff. One over the other they oozed through the cold night air, as if their victory awaited them down there in the deep darkness.

As they fell they yelled out, but nobody heard them because the cliff was too far from the neighbouring hamlets in which people were asleep or on guard. So the warriors followed one another, rolling and turning to smash themselves on the rocks below and feed the plants. Nobody knew what had become of the warriors but Awosi did, and beautiful Kine lived on to be the mother of many children.

THE DENIAL

I was swollen with loneliness, worry and rage
I felt tired, moody and thirsty
I wanted to quench my thirst mental and physical
Quench my thirst with whiteman's water (beer).

Slowly and carefully I drove my beetle
In my care it was three weeks old.
Slowly and carefully I drove it
To where it had to be parked.
A holden pulled in beside it,
It was twice the size of my beetle.
The driver and the passenger I could hardly tell
But I had some idea who it was.

For an instant its lights were on.
Within the instant, somebody I knew well
I could tell in the light
For I was born to see once and remember forever.

For an instant the lights were on.
My binoculars were focused perfectly on the passenger
But oi! There was no smile,
No expression of friendship warm and true.

Like a thirsty bullock driver by instinct
I dashed into the club.
With two bottles of whiteman's water I returned
To quench my thirst in the beetle.

Somewhere I heard creatures of the night talking warmly to one another,
Talking in a language I knew not.
I could not understand
But this was not a bother to me.

Yet only a few feet away
In the dark of the night sat this frozen packet
His/her breath kept silent and low
And like a lifeless statue sat straight and still.

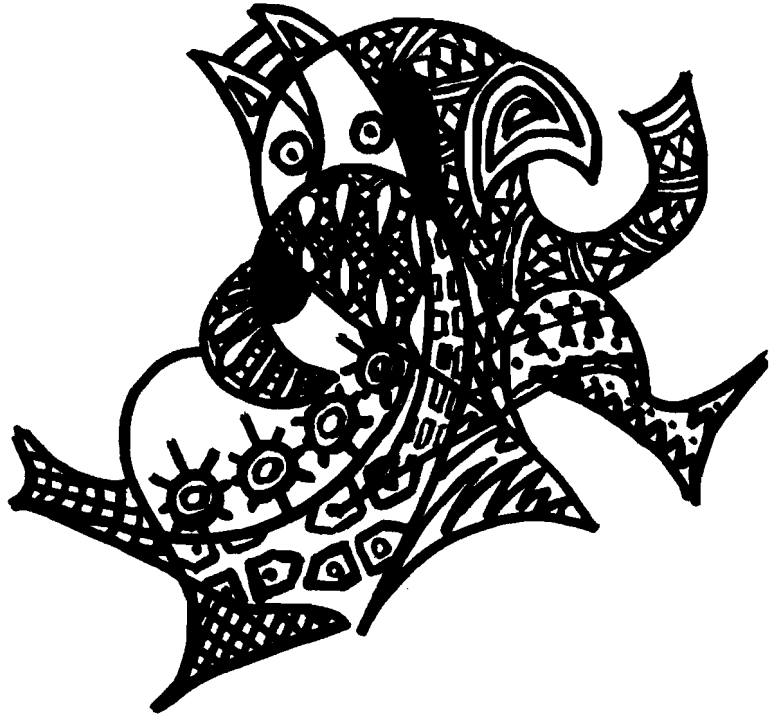
Was I human or was I not?
Did I exist or did I not?
This I found too much to bear
For I could not imagine someone I knew could be so.

It was like a thorn in my flesh, hours after
To think a friend could deny his/her friend
Because of his ideology, race and looks
Or his culture maybe.

Such beliefs I hold low
For all humans born are equal (born once and die once)
Except in power, strength and status
Which last for three score and ten years.

If you are to be my friend
And if this is to be true
Don't deny me, don't deceive me
Don't use me for your ends
And I will be your friend forever.

John Jamenan



KAUAGE

by Georgina Beier

An exercise book full of bad childish drawing is depressing. What could I say to the man who had delivered this book to me on behalf of a friend, who might be dreaming of a career as an artist? The man was also smiling happily, believing he had brought something that would please me. Neither the artist nor his friend could possibly know what was good art or bad. They were both illiterate New Guinea labourers who had not been exposed to any form of art other than commercial advertising, illustrations in school books and the traditional art forms of the cultures they still loosely belonged to. The drawings in the exercise book were attempts at copying from schoolbook illustrations, and they must have looked to the artist tremendously slick, almost identical to the real thing on the overpoweringly prestigious printed page. I returned the book apologetically to the artist's friend, who realized I wasn't impressed and seemed most disappointed. Practically as an afterthought, I asked him to bring the artist to see me.

The artist, Kauage, came armed with more hideous drawings. He was a big man by New Guinea standards and of impressive build. He wore shorts, which are the most common dress for both New Guineans and Europeans here. But Kauage in shorts looked ridiculous, like an overgrown schoolboy, bursting out of last year's clothes. The reason for this was really quite simple: the only shops in which Kauage could afford to buy his clothes were the Chinese trade stores, which sold cheap mass-produced articles from Hong Kong. They didn't cater for Kauage's unusual size and he had no alternative but to buy his clothes too small.

Kauage's personality was totally eclipsed at this time by embarrassment and a painful shyness. He was extremely self-conscious of being nearly a head taller than all his friends. He tried to disguise his height by being inconspicuous. He tried to place himself in situations where he would not be noticed. He didn't walk, but scuttled along in a peculiarly bent fashion, stopping when he felt observed. I realize now that Kauage's embarrassment was not only the result of size. Professor R. H. Bulmer, in his paper 'Victims of Progress', points out that the 'nervous physical movements, the dour impassive manner of some normally vivacious and expressive people' were the result of intimidation, and were regularly displayed in the presence of European administrative personnel.

On this first occasion, when I met Kauage, he sat on a chair in my house, cradling his head in his arms, twisting his body nervously, bending his toes. His discomfort was enormous. Yet there was a soft desperation — the desperation of defeat — and his smile was beautiful, but it ended in a sigh. In spite of his nervousness this man was impressive. I could not believe that the awful drawings matched the man he ought to be. Then, in the corner of one sheet of paper, I noticed a minute scribble. He said it was a spider. That scribble was the only drawing he hadn't copied. I asked him if he couldn't draw some more spiders. He promised. He didn't say much. Only said yes and no when he had to. He didn't have the confidence to converse. For two weeks Kauage brought me drawings every day —but no spiders. Always the same hideous attempts at copying. I could not convince him that his own ideas could be more interesting than the worthless European models he tried to copy. Eventually I told him that I could not bear to look at

his drawings any more; that he was welcome to visit me — but without his drawings. The next evening he appeared with sheets and sheets of drawings of spiders all in rows, like a military march of spiders. These drawings were not good, and they were not interesting, except in the context of his previous work. I bought these drawings for 20 cents a sheet. I could see no other way of influencing his style. It would have been ridiculous to try and discuss 'aesthetics' with an illiterate Highlander in Melanesian Pidgin. Kauage was a labourer living on the minimum wages of $6.50 a week. He didn't need aesthetics, he needed beer, cigarettes and food. During the next two years I was to buy hundreds of bad drawings (at rising prices) that had absolutely no artistic value. But to buy the pictures that led in the right direction — his direction — was the only way in which I could communicate. When I had bought quite a few sheets of military spiders, I could explain that I had enough of those and could not buy any more. Could he perhaps just draw one large insect to cover the whole sheet? (I assumed he wouldn't find another customer for rows of spiders — he didn't.) He began to make large drawings of insects. At first they looked reasonably like existing creatures, but soon they became more and more fantastic. Yet still he insisted that these were true representations of the insects that lived in the bush near Kundiawa, his home. He did not have the confidence to admit that they were creatures of his imagination. Although Kauage had a full-time job as a labourer, he was a most prolific artist. He was floor-mopper and polisher in a government institution. He lived in a labour line, and had a bed in a dormitory. He had no table to work on, nor any place to keep his drawings, without getting them rather scruffy. I offered him a place to work in a studio the university had just provided for cultural activities. He agreed to work there but never did. He did not want to miss the social activity of the labourers and he felt uncomfortable in the affluent white area in which the workshop was situated. (Only many months later, when many more artists and craftsmen worked in the studio, did he accept it as a working place.)

In those early days Europeans often asked me who that morose, ugly, unpleasant looking Chimbu was, around my house. He did look all those things sometimes, particularly in European surroundings. Europeans are suspicious of illiterate Highlanders in Moresby. They regard them as potential housebreakers and rapists. This suspicion, in turn, breeds fear and uneasiness in labourers like Kauage. Even the official garbage collector tends to look furtive, afraid of being mistaken for a thief.

Kauage continued to work in the labourers' compound. He began a series of drawings, depicting horses and riders. He claimed that these were realistic drawings of horses and riders he had seen on a mission station near Kundiawa. He really meant that they were inspired by the horses he had seen. Yet they reminded one much more of circus bareback riders — which, of course, Kauage had never seen. Two years later a circus visited Port Moresby for the first time and Kauage actually saw the acrobatic riders. But they were not nearly as exotic as his own early drawings, where the riders were floating in the air above their horses and where the horses are built up from intricate patterns of faces.

By this time Kauage was making drawings that were technically competent and were bursting with his own ideas. His personality was finding a means of escaping from the depressing existence of town labourer. He was developing his unique imagination. His horses became bird-like. He worked in a series of birds and men, two-headed cassowaries, ten-legged snakes, men riding crocodiles. He was no longer embarassed by his imagination. He allowed it to be free. He was luckier than his friends in the labour line. He was a creative man, and had stumbled on circumstances that allowed him to release his imagination and become a complete person again. Now he became tired of drawing animals and began to depict romance. Boys flirting with girls. None of these figures, though naked, had any sexual organs, but it was quite clear, who was male and who was female. The girls' bodies were rounder and softer but their expression was harder, while the boys had straighter bodies and pleading faces. Many drawings depicted rejection.

He described them thus: 'Mi laik holdim han bilong meri, meri no laik.' (I want to hold her hand, but she doesn't agree.) Or: 'Man i laik dans wantaim meri, meri i no laik.' These figures had a floating, liquid quality. Kauage, feeling so large and clumsy, was dreaming perhaps of flying. The courting sequence ended abruptly, with the man continuously rejected. Now there were drawings of lonely men and lonely women, but they were now clothed with bands of pattern. The pattern band on the female figures often had a blank patch in the vital area. Then suddenly these floating, rather frilly girls, became mothers. As mothers they are far more powerful, standing like statuesque protectors of their children. They are god-like, warding off evil and imposing fear, sometimes very large and monstrous.

Some fifteen months after Kauage had made his first drawings, the university began literacy classes. The excellent course aimed at teaching basic English, reading and writing to Pidgin speakers. Kauage attended the classes and at the same time his style of drawing changed. His dreamy, long-legged, long-armed creatures began to be fenced in with thin ribbons of pattern. The pattern became heavier and blacker. The arms and legs became shorter and shorter until they were stumps, and finally they were merely fingers jutting out of a box-like body. Legs and toes disappeared altogether, but male organs appeared for the first time in his work — on an enormously exaggerated scale. I think that Kauage probably found the classes too difficult or confusing. They brought him face to face with a world that made him uncomfortable and ill at ease again. Every human being goes through the traumatic experience of growing up, but in a recently colonized country like New Guinea a man goes through the agony of having to grow up twice. He can be a man in his own culture, but he is a child in the superimposed foreign culture, and he finds the prospect of another 'initiation' worrying and alarming. At this time Kauage produced drawings in two very distinct styles. Every day he brought me the disturbed, heavy, black, deformed creatures. But he made another type of drawing which he showed only to his teacher in the literacy classes: bad copies of adverts in sickly pastel shade crayons — a complete regression to his very first drawings. Kauage remained in a terrible state of depression for three months. I was beginning to think that he was finished as an artist.

At this stage I introduced the woodcutting technique to him. His new, heavy, solid shapes were easily adaptable to this technique. (His earlier, flowing line would have been ideal for etching, but I did not have the facilities for this.) One reason why I introduced the new technique was that Kauage — who had now given up his job as cleaner and lived much better on the sale of his drawings — had time on his hands. Kauage wanted to put in a full day's work, and no artist, however imaginative and prolific, can go on producing new ideas for drawings all day long, every day. The woodcuts allowed him to relax a little. He produced very fine work in this medium, but somehow, he could not shake himself out of the depression completely.

Then one evening he got drunk. He was involved in a fight and came out of it with a nasty cut and swelling on his head. He used his wound as an excuse to miss his literacy classes. Two weeks later, when he returned to the class, he found that the others had moved too far ahead and he lost all hope of catching up. He dropped out of the class altogether. He seemed relieved. The heaviness, the deformities left his drawings. Yet they did not recover their earlier quality. They seemed empty, sterile, somewhat insensitive. They were like reproductions of his good earlier work. There were new ideas, but the execution was flat. The line had lost its sensitivity. It seemed as if he had lost his creativity. Had he made a visual autobiography and simply come to the end of it? After all, artists do spend themselves. Famous European artists have had brilliant periods, and then never been able to recapture it. Why not Kauage? I tried to think of new techniques for him. Finally I bought some copper and aluminium sheets and let him draw on those. Then I taught him to beat metal into relief. After he had beaten out his first, tentative picture, I had to leave Port Moresby for six weeks. When I returned, I was told that he had worked for only one week and had wandered

about aimlessly for the other five. He had finished — he thought — twenty metal reliefs, between six and nine square feet each, in one week.

But gradually he mastered the new technique, and he became able to express himself in it.He enjoyed the craftsmanship and the sheer hard work that was involved in this work. He found the material satisfying and the technique itself created new inspirations. He began to develop self criticism for the first time: for the first time he would destroy his work, if it did not satisfy him. When that happens, an artist has crossed an enormous bridge. He was no longer working in a void, uncertain of the criterion I applied to his work. He had found his own criteria and his own standards. He had become a mature artist.

Kauage held his first exhibition of metal relief in February 1969. It was a tremendous success and every piece sold. The exhibition did look extremely impressive and rich; the work could have stood up to the most savage critics in Europe. With his new work and his new success, Kauage's confidence grew. His height now became a source of pride and strength and manhood. His style of clothing changed. He could afford to buy from shops intended for European customers. Kauage's clothes now fitted him. He dressed in brilliant colours, from expensive boutiques. He became a flamboyant figure. He wore a large brimmed hat with 'Kauage the artist' written on it. Sometimes he signed his his drawings 'master Kauage'. In New Guinea usage, of course, the word 'masta' is usually reserved for whites.

Kauage's appearance and personality had changed with success; Europeans now began to ask me who that charming, handsome, exotic New Guinean was around the house. He became a celebrity. Now he gets invitations to cocktail parties, to meet ambassadors or governors. He feels no embarrassment on these establishment occasions. He often becomes, and enjoys being, the centre of attention. The expatriate community now genuinely admires him. They find him charming, and those who don't admire his work certainly pay lip service to it.

The demand on his work was phenomenal. The rush of customers was disturbing, not only because they continually interrupted Kauage's work, but because they tried to influence him in all kinds of unintelligent ways. Most customers wanted to buy small pieces, when Kauage works best on a large scale. Every artist finds that he works best on a certain scale. Paul Klee rarely painted larger than 2′ x 15″, whereas Picasso would find those dimensions restricting. Kauage works much better when he can hammer out a sheet of 3′ x 3′ or over. But the customers tend to think of the size of their suitcase.

Some customers regarded him as a craftsman rather than an artist. They wanted him to execute their own ideas. One European gave Kauage his own poor drawing of a landscape to beat out in copper. Another wanted him to copy the university crest. Yet another hoped Kauage would copy a junky bracelet for him. They were treating him like a tailor, who executes the client's orders.

I advised Kauage to stop all sales and work for a second exhibition. Again he produced a magnificent show, and this time the customers rushed to buy, as if they were in a department store sale.

After his second exhibition, Kauage went home to Kundiawa to acquire a wife. Only a year earlier he could not have entertained such a thought. At home he must be something like a myth. It does not happen every day that a man who went to Moresby as an unskilled labourer returns with a lot of money. Moreover, his fame had already gone before him. The walls of the small trade store at home that sells matches, tinned meat, cloth and steel knives, were plastered with photographs of Kauage cut out from newspapers. He could have married any of the eligible ladies, for he could afford the top bride price. In the end he married two, but he says that they fought so fiercely, he decided to bring only one to Port Moresby.

Kauage was extremely fortunate, because the university provided him temporarily with married quarters. Few illiterate Highlanders in the capital can boast of such luck. Now Kauage is about to acquire his own house, which will cost him $4000, a fantastic fortune for a New Guinean. To be in possession of a home will bring

liabilities. It will be impossible for him to refuse accommodation to 'wantoks' who hold jobs, but have nowhere to sleep. Kauage will become automatically responsible for housing some of the homeless bachelors from his village. He is already responsible for a large proportion of Chimbu drunks. He is a generous lifter of depressions for those whom he supplies with beer to drown their sadness and acquire brief spells of aggressive boldness.

Europeans have commented that Kauage is frittering away his money. But he comes from a culture that has a strong sense of equality among men. At home, land is held communally. Wives are acquired, not by individuals but by the whole family. As a successful town dweller, Kauage is expected to share his wealth with his countrymen. He is not in fact frittering away money, he is meeting his social obligations. It could easily invite aggression, if he did not. To spend a proportion of his wealth on 'wantoks' is a form of public relations.

If some of Kauage's 'wantoks' were baffled by the nature of his work and his success, many Europeans were even more confused by the miraculous transformation he had undergone. He no longer fitted into any of the conventional categories for 'natives'. Some people mistook him for an American Negro. Others thought he had been educated in Australia and his refusal to speak English was merely a fanatical way of promoting Pidgin as a national language. Those who had known him before his success, sometimes believed that I did the drawings on his coppers, and he merely hammered them out. They could not conceive of an uneducated, uncouth Highland labourer, who suddenly had an exhibition in Los Angeles. In the days before his exhibitions and before he was known to the public, people often thought that his copper panels were some wonderful work I had brought back from Africa. One very influential businessman even remarked with a sigh, that New Guineans would never be able to achieve anything as good as that.

The confusion in the minds of many expatriates in Papua New Guinea about Kauage illustrates an important point: they had failed to understand that between their image of the primitive savage and the respectable, tame, suburban, black Australian they were trying to turn him into, there lay many different possibilities of cultural development.

Unfortunately the unimaginative system of Australian colonization spent a great deal of effort in trying to prevent urbanization. Unable to build homes and bring their families, the workers were forced to return to the villages sooner or later. Potentially, the large labour force of Port Moresby is enterprising and imaginative. But no facilities exist that would enable them to gradually move from unskilled to semi-skilled to more creative occupations. The total lack of opportunities often leads to drunkenness and lawlessness. This in turn stiffens the administration's attitude towards the migrant labour. The labour class in Port Moresby are made to feel tolerated, but never welcome, strangers. In their daily lives they run into a great deal of unpleasantness. Shopkeepers are rude to them; the police tend to suspect them and to jail them on a vagrancy charge even though the town provides no recreation facilities for them. The resulting feeling of nervousness and insecurity is hardly inducive to developing a person's creative talent.

To enable Kauage to become a mature artist I had to do far more than to teach him artistic techniques. I had to find accommodation and working space (no easy task in Port Moresby), I had to pay him a living wage and supply all his materials from my own private resources. I knew there were many other talented people in this group, but it would have been irresponsible of me to encourage them, when I did not have the financial resources to bring their talents to conclusion.

Kauage is an example of successful urbanization. He proves that if Moresby were a city rather than a huge white suburb, a city that is allowed its natural growth, slums and all — then the encounter and conflict of cultures could result in an immense fertility and inventiveness, could produce a wide range of unique personalities, from which would emerge eventually the New Guinean personality.

HELL AT THE BACKYARD

by Arthur Jawodimbari

We had sat down for our evening meal when one of Moresby's irregular rains began to pour down steadily. Our cube-shaped house had two beds, one for me and one for my parents. Our room was already damp and cold and the gusts of wind invaded it. My mother had already deserted her food partly to put away our things in the dry corner of the house and partly because the smell of waste matter and black tobacco was leaking in.

'One day, one of us will be very sick,' my mother muttered, while putting away our things. My father did not take any notice of my mother's complaints. 'What an unhygienic life in this house which has hardly enough room for three people and which is constantly surrounded by heaps of rubbish,' she continued.

My father looked out through the brick hole and then muttered, 'Those labourers must be sitting on the water by now.' I put the electric light on and settled down to read my comic called *Phantom* which was all about a huge white man and small black men.

My father had joined the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries at the age of eighteen as a tea boy. After three years he had become a junior clerk. Like other young men my father had spent most of his money on drinks and films to release his frustrations. One night he went to a dance in one of the colleges in Moresby and met my mother. After a few dances my mother asked my father to accompany her outside to have some fresh air. My mother was training to become a nurse. After she had graduated they got married and settled down in our one room house. The factory workers and the labourers have been our next door neighbours ever since. Our house was much better, a hundred times better, than the labourers' and factory workers' compound. They lived in the old shanty built during the war which had no garbage system, no sewerage system and no toilet block.

Every night our next door neighbours danced and sang at the top of their voices. Sometimes they used to sit down and sing some sad songs. My mother did not like our next door neighbours with whom my father mixed around freely. At times there were fights among them in the middle of the night because some men were practising homosexuality. My mother was always scared stiff whenever my father went out of the house on some business. They were really quite friendly and they never gave us any great trouble, but my mother was always suspicious of them.

At the weekends the noise was unbearable as Friday was their payday. They used to buy cartons and cartons of beer, and drank excessively. There was always a fast drinking contest and also another contest to find out who would not fall down dead drunk. Most of the times the drinking contests ended up with fights and some people were badly hurt. In the morning they used to put on big parties to shake hands and become friends. However, the relatives living in other compounds used to re-start the fight after peace was restored.

One evening my father brought some fresh fish from the market so we made a fire outside the house and my mother cooked the fish over the fire. Our next door neighbours were at their drinking contest. One of the labourers came up to us and asked, 'big man come up and join us.' My father turned round and looked at my mother for her consent. My mother just looked away disgustedly at the shabby buildings. 'I

won't stay there for long. I just want to make them happy by accepting their invitation,' my father chuckled. 'Go and get drunk in that unhygienic place,' my mother snapped. The chap who came down to invite my father was from the Highlands but I sensed that he understood my mother's attitude. My father turned round shaking his head. 'Sorry wan-tok I won't come,' my father put in. He laughed gently and then said, 'Why, is it because your wife does not want you to come up?' 'No, I'm a bit sick in the stomach,' my father mumbled. Our neighbour went away disappointed.

That night I could not go to sleep because it was unusually warm. I was turning from side to side and sweating. My mother got up and came over to the side of my bed. 'What's wrong with you?' my mother asked, while placing her hand above my eyebrow. 'It's just that I can't sleep,' I replied wearily. 'Well, I think you better have a shower,' my mother put in. As I turned the light on in the shower-room I heard our next door neighbours shouting and screaming at the top of their voices. I thought they were having their usual brawls after grog contests so I had my shower and then came out. The fight was still going on, not only among our next door neighbours but against the labourers from the other camp. There was great confusion and quite a number of people were struck by mistake. The fight broke during the night when someone from the other camp cheated while playing cards. The police vans invaded the shanty town and arrested those people who were running away from the fights, bashed them up till they were unconscious, threw them into the backs of the vans and drove them away.

The fights died out except for a few angry abuses and a great deal of murmuring. Eventually all was quiet and I could hear the birds singing, welcoming the first light of the day. I gradually drifted on to the deep sea and the waves tossed me about and then I was riding on top of the waves peacefully. I walked on top of the waves till I found myself on the dry land. I started climbing up the ridge of a tall mountain. As soon as I got to the top of the mountain I looked down at the valley and there was a blazing fire directly under the bridge between the mountain I was standing on and the one opposite me. The flame was almost reaching the sky so I turned round to run away. 'Umbaka, Umbaka,' my mother's voice came from somewhere. I turned the corner and while sighting our house, I sat up startled. My mother was beside my bed while my father was putting out the flames outside our house.

I ran outside and looked behind our house and to my amazement all the shabby buildings disappeared under the huge flames. The flames were almost reaching the sky and a tremendous heat could be felt from a great distance. The sun was sending out its golden rays which no one bothered to watch. The next door neighbours carried their few possessions and watched the mighty flames with sullen eyes. The huge trucks arrived and took the homeless folks to work. From the top of the trucks they glanced at the hot furnace within whose hot flames their valuable treasures, which they had collected during their stay in Moresby, were burning away.

As the sun rose higher my mother went out to work. I stood there watching the red-hot charcoal and thinking about my dream. My father came and tapped on my shoulder and said, 'Such is life son, you will understand things when you are grown up.' When I looked up my father was gone. I turned round and made my way towards the house.

A NIGHT BEFORE THE FLOOD HARVEST

by S. R. Kavani

Meriso slowly opened her door and stepped out. It was chilly and cold outside. The frightening dark shadows of the night had almost ceased to be visible and the reddish rays of dawn emerging behind the ranges revealed the once-hidden land form, reminding her of another dawn.

She was already shivering from the merciless mountain breeze which she thought was freezing the blood pools beneath her soft skin. She walked a few feet away and squatted to piss. Why should a creation of the Creator, the God Almighty, be disturbed at such unwelcome hours, she thought, and walked back into the house wishing the Creator had timed all creations to enable them to function at regular intervals at proper times. She carefully and noiselessly closed the door behind her.

Then excitement flooded into her veins warming her frozen streams. She remembered that she had prepared the previous evening to go harvesting at first cock-crow, for it had rained heavily that evening.

'The wet clouds will soon arrive,' the 'thinkers' had said and preparation for the seasonal flood harvesting had been made. The magicians had also been predicting storms and high waters for the past few days and nights.

And, indeed, a storm had come the previous evening.

She recalled the memories of the past flood harvests and thought of what the Ramu would look like in the morning.

The flood would possibly look like that of a collection of many rivers she thought, travelling down water that any humans, who watched the flood 'travellers'[1] going past them for so long, would fall on the ground as if liquor had invaded their brain.

She wished the flood would have shrunk at dawn depositing all that it carries so that she and her kinswomen would have a successful harvest after waiting all that long since the last flood.

Around this time of the season, flood waters from the high valleys up in the Munefinka often bring with them drowned animals, uprooted trees, woods and many other garden products that have been destroyed and carried on the route downstream. A little of the debris completes the whole ride into the seas of the Madang coast but a large proportion is often deposited on various points of the Ramu which are harvested and eaten by land owning clans along the river.

The spectacular snake-like path of the Ramu could be seen for many miles when the moonlight had torn the wet clouds apart. Smoke from the harvest camps along the river would form a continuous stream of clouds lying correspondingly above the river for many eye miles.

As she felt her way to the fireplace, she thought of the surprises that awaited her in the morning. She dipped her fingers into the ashes but to her surprise there was no warmth.

'Begopa,' she whispered. 'Begopa, stand up and go over to Karo's house and bring across a burning wood for fire.'

Still there was no help and she stuck out her tongue in the dark to cover her shame for talking to herself. Her fingers and feet were almost numb now and her desire to warm herself over a flaming fire was like that of a man's desire for money, when he wants goods that only money could buy.

She moved towards Begopa's sleeping mat,

1 All things that the flood carries along with it.

feeling every inch of her way. As she dragged the uncontrollable numb legs one after the other, her left leg kicked over a cooking pot. Its noise disturbed the quietness and was echoed in all directions with it becoming like a beat of a sing-sing drum that doesn't have a *susu*[2]. From behind her in the direction of her sleeping mat she heard someone stir. At that moment her capacity to think deserted her and she stopped, not knowing what to do. She could feel hairs from all parts of her body standing on end. Her armpits were secreting cold sweat and her body shook with fright. She stood there listening intently for any noise but nothing reached her ears.

She slowly and carefully felt her way towards Begopa's sleeping mat. Pandana leaves cracked under her as she stepped on his sleeping place. She felt in all directions but he was nowhere to be felt.

Gradually she felt her way back to her sleeping place ready to scream at any slight noise. Then she stepped on someone. Her sense of feeling took over which set the mouth screaming as if an uninvited man was laying hold of her, when a voice tore her screams.

'Meriso! You cave-like thing. What is going up in you?'

Then she realized that it was Begopa, her husband's voice. At that moment anger rose in her partly for Begopa sleeping on her mat and partly for the insult. But at the thought of the morning's harvest, her anger faded.

'Oe oe,' she sighed, 'it's always your given talk you make time after time. What has happened to your sleeping place? Has water pooled your mat?' But no answer came from Begopa.

She squatted down beside her husband, searched for the loose end of the blanket and laid down to sleep as far away from him as the width of the blanket permitted.

'Wake me up at first cock-crow,' she mumbled, while still shivering beneath the blanket. 'I am going to harvest something to eat that the flood may have brought down from the Kamano.'

But no reply came.

As she was about to doze off to sleep she felt him stirring and moving closer. Sensing the warmth of his flesh, she shifted herself closer as if she were a child longing for her mother's comfort. Their bodies' heat travelled to and fro from one flesh to the other, as they faded into a deep sleep.

It was first cock-crow when Begopa stirred. He yawned and spat out the *brus*[3] taste from his breath. Then he remembered what Meriso had said that night. 'Should I wake her up?' he thought deep in himself. A few minutes passed and a second cock crowed. But still he had not come to a decision yet.

While he was questioning himself on whether or not to wake her, a mosquito flew past his right ear. He attempted to catch it in the dark, but accidently slapped his ear. A sharp pain came from a scar on his ear which automatically reminded him of something, something that had happened some six years ago and something which every adult male in the Agarabi had experienced.

In this region, every male goes through *Ifoba'ne*, a male initiation ceremony where youths are 'licensed' to become warriors, seducers, husbands and finally fathers. One's ears are pulled and advice spoken into them, or at other times this advice is beaten into the initiates' flesh.

'When harvesting, gardening or feasting period is at hand, never sleep on your wife's mat or there will result little harvest, unproductive gardens and uncooked mumus.'

At the thought of it he felt guilty and dismissed the idea of waking her up. He crawled back to his sleeping place and laid down closing his eyes tightly to escape the cold that his mat had absorbed during the good hours of his absence.

The sun had risen above the horizon and the whole village was up and about. Couples in pairs were returning from the early morning's harvest. Most had gone out harvesting at first glimpse of dawn. A few had stayed the miserable night in garden huts along the Ramu.

2 The sticky liquid of a tree which is used on animal skins on drums. Nowadays PK's are used in its place.

3 Locally grown tobacco that is dried and smoked.

There were shouts of joy and uncertain giggles from children at first sight of their parents' harvests. Some had brought home garden crops and animals of various species and sizes, while the unfortunate ones had returned with a piece of wood or two for firewood.

The most fortunate ones had found larger animals covered in tanget leaves in rocky river sides and beaches. Everyone came to see the sizes and species of animals that were on display near Aio's door. Some had congratulated and said how lucky the harvesters had been, while others whistled jokingly at the skinny creatures. Begopa woke at the noise of the crowd outside Aio's door. He looked around and got up on seeing beams of molten sun pouring into the enclosed darkness from small cracks and holes in the walls. He opened the door and the bright rays of light darkened his sight. He stood there rubbing his eyes for a few minutes and walked over to the gathering.

Unnoticed by the crowd, he walked towards the gathering as if all the strength from his body pillars had been drained out that night. Then Aio's eyes caught him and asked what he had harvested, but an answer and excuses failed him. Everyone turned to look at him in silence.

'Have you not got big eyes?' shouted Moiso whom everyone suspected of being a witch. 'See the ashes on his feet. He has not been out. He must have been sleeping in Meriso's lap while you were out harvesting.'

Anger rose in Begopa at the insult. He thought up an excuse to refute Moiso's allegation but realizing there was some truth in Moiso's speech he scratched his head and walked back to the house.

Next time I will not be a stone-headed fool as I was, he thought, and saying a small prayer deep in his heart, begging that the spirits of his ancestors, whose blood flows in the streams of his veins, would not punish him. He looked down at his sleeping wife for the last time and kicked her in the stomach shouting, 'Passport to fear and punishment. Wake up. It is a morning after a night before harvest.'

TWO POEMS

by Apisai Enos

THE SACRED VOICE OF THE COCKATOO

The sacred voice of the cockatoo
is like a lullaby in my ears
It makes me sleep and dream
in noonday sun
to think of *Wuilom*
beyond the clouds
where crystal rivers snake their way
through manna bountiful
but when I wake
I know
that *Wuilom* is here
I hold it in my hands
Cockatoo!
leave me alone
pursue the emptiness
beyond the clouds,
yourself.

THE FLYING FOX

Flying fox,
you wander
in the sweetness of night
around the villages
you cry like a newly born child
on bread fruit trees
you suck pawpaw fruit
like a baby sucking his mother's breasts
around bunches of bananas
you flutter with flashing eyes.

Oh fox of juicy fruits
whose nuts you scatter
your house is bare bough
among the foliage
you watch the flowers and bees
the spirits of the ancestors
drinking at murmuring streams
you listen to *tabaliwana* spirits
singing around like *kuk* birds

Yet the eyes of *Kaia*
leave you not
as he roars across the sky
his words of wisdom
hurt you more
you cannot sit like birds
you cannot fly in the golden sun
you are neither animal nor bird
but *mawunai* of the shadow
AND SO CONFUSED
you hang headdown
your wings around your face
you are dust
victim
lost breath of life.

Flying fox
defy the gods
let birds be birds
let beasts be beasts
be a bat of the night.

KANNIBAL TOURS

from a play by Rabbie Namaliu

(Reprinted by kind permission Bureau of Literature, Port Moresby)

SCENE IV

Open square for dancing. Backstage, facing audience a raised dais, with chairs for the tourists. The stage is empty, but laughter and noisy chatter are heard from backstage. Enter tourists in a bus labelled 'KANNIBAL TOURS'. They climb out.

GUIDE: This way, this way, ladies and gentlemen! Take a seat. The dancers will be here to entertain you any minute from now . . . yes, this way lady, there's another seat right at the front here!

Good. Now if I may have your attention for a few minutes, ladies and gentlemen. You are going to see a real, genuine, tribal war dance — a dance that has never been performed for white people before. You will be transported from the twentieth century right back into the most primitive stone age. Not very long ago, such dances were performed by these savage people when they were preparing to feast on their victims.

FIRST TOURIST: Are these people still cannibals?

FIRST LADY: Oh my, and is it safe to come and watch this?

SECOND TOURIST: I hope they won't object to being photographed, because my little boy at home . . he's ten . . . and a real little rascal . . . and he insisted that I must bring home some colour slides of real cannibals . . . *(silly laughter.)*

GUIDE: Now one question at a time, ladies and gentlemen. First, let me assure you, there is no danger at all. The area was declared pacified five years ago. And besides, the police are standing by. We are lucky to have one of the toughest district officers in charge here. He stands absolutely no nonsense from these natives.

Yes, of course you may photograph anything you wish. If anybody has run out of colour film — KANNIBAL TOURS has taken care of that. The bus driver has a good supply of film. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, KANNIBAL TOURS looks after you, better than any other agency in the territory.

SECOND TOURIST: I say what is the appropriate tip to give these fellows, when you take their picture?

GUIDE: No tipping please, sir. We have a very proud record in this territory: the natives haven't learnt to become beggars yet, and we do want to keep it that way.

FIRST TOURIST: Can't we show our appreciation some way or other?

FIRST LADY: Oh, can you shake hands with them? Or will they take offence? I always wanted to shake hands with a real native.

GUIDE: Well, there is nothing to stop you, lady, if you must . . . but I wouldn't advise you to. You see, these natives are, er . . . er . . . I mean they have the habit of rubbing themselves with pig grease and they tend to be a bit . . . em . . . smelly, you see?

FIRST LADY: Ah, but I do want to have my picture taken, shaking hands with a real native . . . *(Kiap's voice is heard behind scene. He has adopted the tone of a sergeant major, drilling recruits.)*

KIAP: 'tentionnnnn! Everybody . . . DANCE!

(Drums and singing start immediately. The Kiap blows his whistle in rhythmic intervals. Enter dance group in full body paint and decoration, with the Kiap frantically trying to direct them.)

FIRST LADY: Oh! Isn't it wonnnnnnderful?

SECOND LADY: Aren't they colourful?

FIRST TOURIST: Boy, that's the real thing!

SECOND TOURIST: Fabulous! Simply fabulous!

(The dancers in their enthusiasm rush right past the tourists. The Kiap blows his whistle frantically. The dancers who have entered from the right, are now rushing out to the left. Kiap's furious voice is heard off stage.)

KIAP: Stop! Stoooop! Stop, you goddam stupid kanakas. The tourists are over there! Get back! Quicktime. *(Dancers re-enter from left, rush past the platform and rush out to the right. Kiap runs behind them desperately, off stage.)*

KIAP: Stop! Stop! Can't you understand? You are supposed to dance for the visitors! For Christ's sake will you people never see sense?

(Re-enter the dancers from the right. This time they are preceded by a line of policemen who keep them in place.

There is a sudden rush of tourists with their cameras. They go right up close to the dancers and click away frantically. Some kneel down, others lie on their backs to get better shots. One lady drags a mighty warrior to the front and makes him strike ridiculous poses. In the end she shakes hands with him.)

FIRST LADY: Well thank you EVER so much. It's been absolutely wooonderful. I am sooooo pleased to meet you. And do give my best regards to your wife and kids, will you?

SECOND LADY: Ah, they have a wonderful culture, haven't they? What a pity that they have to become civilized. *(As suddenly as they started the tourists rush back to their seats.)*

FIRST LADY: O well, I am getting rather tired.

SECOND TOURIST: Yes, it's getting rather a bore after a while, isn't it?

GUIDE: Oh, but ladies and gentlemen, you must wait for the primitive meal that has been specially prepared for you . . . the District Officer says . . .

FIRST TOURIST: Well, I am for going back. I have got all the pictures I want.

SECOND TOURIST: I wouldn't want to touch that food! You can catch all kinds of bugs in this kind of country.

SECOND LADY: O yes, DO let us go now, I have the most frightful headache.

GUIDE: Ah, well, just as you wish. I hope you have enjoyed this.

(They move towards the bus.)

KIAP: All right, that's enough! Everybody sit down!

FISRT LADY: Oh it's been the most wonderful experience of my life.

FIRST TOURIST: Yes, just like being in the stone age, isn't it?

SECOND LADY: Yes, isn't it a pity they've all got to be educated and lose their wonderful culture?

(They enter the bus of KANNIBAL TOURS.)

SECOND TOURIST: Yes, a real shame, isn't it? In a few years time there will be nothing left to photograph in this world!

GUIDE: Yes, I do agree, ladies and gentlemen. This education is all wrong. They get rather bigheaded when they've been to school. Besides — what's going to become of me, when they've all been to school?

(The KANNIBAL TOURS bus leaves with shouts of "goodbye" and "thank you so much!")

REVIEW

MAKING SMALL HOLES IN THE SILENCE:
The Poetry of Hone Tuwhare

by Nigel Krauth

An important poetic voice in modern poetry is the voice of the worker. America's Sandburg and Australia's Shaw Nielsen are bards of the factory and the construction site. Noticeably, they share other features: special interest in song, heightened sensitivity towards the child's world, and a love for the land.

Hone Tuwhare is a worker-poet stamped in a similar mould. But more than this, in his role as poet he combines the modern technological insight and experience of a construction boilermaker with the sympathies of a member of the Maori race. In a world where every year more powerhouses are built to drown the diminishing acres of ancient hunting grounds, Tuwhare stands as a barometer recording the pressures of the present on the past, and vice versa.

Tuwhare's most important mission is one of interpretation. Technology-conditioned man has lost contact with the land and the elemental forces. Tuwhare acts as interpreter between nature and humanity. He translates into human language the sounds, and the silences, of land, sea, river, wind, rain, tree, bird and animal.

"O voiceless land, let me echo your desolation."
("Not by Wind Ravaged")

Hearing only the night-birds
booming ancient blasphemies:
Moon-dark ease reflection
in the knocking stones
the river chortling.
("Roads")

Heard the rain applauding: the lilt
and swell fading to the wind's flirt
over the gaunt flank of the land.
("That Morning Early")

Gay wind . . .
The headlands await your coming
and the mute crags lend a pensive
ear to the listless drag of the sea's feet.

And if the earth should tremble
to the sea's unfathomed rage
it is because the sun has fled
uncupping the stone nipples of the land.
("Nocturne")

Tuwhare does not fail to give his qualifications for the job of interpreter:

. . . I am at one with the wind
the clouds' heave and the slapping rain
the tattered sky and the wild solitude
of the sea and the streaming earth
which I kneel to kiss . . .
("Lament")

He is high priest to the elements. He makes them available to us.

Why should he do this? How is man benefited by knowledge of what nature communicates?

I can hear you
making small holes
in the silence
rain

If I were deaf
the pores of my skin
would open to you
and shut

And I
should know you
by the lick of you
if I were blind

the something
special smell of you
when the sun cakes
the ground

the steady
drum-roll sound
you make
when the wind drops

But if I
should not hear
smell or feel or see
you

you would still
define me
disperse me
wash over me
rain

("Rain")

Tuwhare knows, and his links with an ancient culture have helped him to his knowledge, that the truth about human nature lies in the relationship between the human and the world that has sustained him through aeons of development. Interpretation of the elemental signals, especially the sounds, leads to definition and understanding of the self. The human senses are the major tools used to pick up the defining signals from the surrounding environment, while poetry is the language vehicle which translates the elemental sounds and gives them human relevance at the same time.

The Haiku form lends itself naturally to this type of poetry:

Stop
your snivelling
creek-bed:

come rain hail
and flood-water

laugh again

("Haiku")

The influence of the ancient Japanese haiku writers on Tuwhare's verse is obvious in his precise and vividly humanized descriptions:

The girl in the park
saw the moon glide
into a dead tree's arms
and felt the vast night
pressing.

("The Girl in the Park")

. . . when the new moon's bowl
is storing rain, the pull of time
and sea will cry to me
again.

("Sea Call")

To perceive with such originality and to speak 'for things' as he does, Tuwhare cleanses his senses in order to view the world with the child's uncorrupted vision:

I . . .
Through your mind's eye know
the feel of washed leaves
made green again: tall rain-shafts
drifting: wind wincing
a water-filled pot-hole

And I child-delighting share
your long walk your talk
to things *and for things* along
the bent road . . .

("Child Coming Home in the Rain From the Store")

The child's perceptions, like the perceptions of the primitive man, are not distorted by technology and intellectualism. By turning back to 'an earlier my-time', whether it be childhood or his ancient culture, Tuwhare has access to a set of poetic values eternally fresh and proper. In their close relationship with the natural universe these values short-circuit all the complicated religious, politico-economic and ideological systems created by modern man. For example, Tuwhare's advice to Africa is simple:

On bloody acts
that make less human
mankind's brighter sun,
let revulsion rise.
Eclipse
the moon's black evil:
so that innocence
and the child shall reign
so that we may dream
good dreams again.

("O Africa")

But Tuwhare is not too naive to know the survival chances of innocence in this world:

Daughter, daughter
know you soon enough
virgin nipples harden
to a sly man's touch.

("Moon Daughter")

As history has proved, it is natural for the human to move away from his uncomplicated, uncorrupted state. This very fact prompts Tuwhare to communicate with sources and origins and to record this communication — before it is too late. For he sees around him the constant onslaughts of technology against the

defenceless natural universe, and with every natural sound that is silenced a piece of man's heritage is lost:

Far off
the sea beckons
to the mountains.

Austerely
the mountains ponder
the cacophonic river tossing
white-splintered mane to the
mist's swirl

Here
alien sounds are struck.
Nowhere is there greater fuss
to tear out the river's tongue.

Blue hiss and crackle
of the welding rod,
compressed sigh of air
and the whump and whoof
fuse to the rising clamour
of the rivet gun.

("The Sea, to the Mountains, to the River")

It is not an irony that the welding rod is Tuwhare's own. It is natural that he, as a human being, should participate in man's progress. But he exceeds his fellow workers in his sensitivity to the problem man creates for himself with every step advancing further from his origins.

The ultimate silence, of course, is the silence after man has destroyed his environment and himself with a bomb. Foreseeing that the crowning achievement of technological progress may be the destruction of the human race, Tuwhare sounds a warning:

Something stirs in the night
A cat—fish—rat? A door slammed shut?
And the rain? What of the rain?

It is silent. It is insidious
It falls: there is no comment.

("Who Tests Today?")

When there is no comment from nature, there will be no man.

Although Tuwhare turns away from roads — 'sign-posted hot macadams' — seeking instead 'tumble stumble-footed' tracks 'poorly lit by stars', his attitude to the city, symbol of man's progress, is a natural one. He is cautious in his acceptance; sensitive to his essential disjunction from the dehumanizing aspects of the city, but feeling a natural attraction:

And the City seemed
the same lovely woman I used to know
grown somewhat more ample more assured
with new baubles on display

("Prodigal City")

Tuwhare's series of city poems can be contrasted with his memory poems, or culture clash poems as they often become. Typical of this latter category is *Wai-O-Rore*, a poem which delves back through successive layers of civilization and semi-civilization to the knowledge and beliefs of the original society. At this level a tiny gem of information is gleaned:

At Wai-o-Rore:
. . . the sluiced black rocks
define the blondness
of splintered wave.

The certainty that the poet can have in this tiny gem dredged up from the past is far more valuable than the perplexity of all the paraphernalia thrown off during the quest.

Tuwhare also has a series of religious poems, some of which examine the clash of traditional and introduced religions. The old values always succumb to the new. However, Tuwhare bears no grudge. He simply asserts the necessity to honour and record the old, since its value to humanity will never be superseded.

One of Tuwhare's most individual qualities is his sense of humour. This is particularly noticeable in his second volume of poetry, *Come Rain Hail* (University of Otago, 1970), where the urgencies and fears of *No Ordinary Sun* (Longman Paul, Auckland, 1964) are mellowed into a robust and hearty acceptance. An excellent example is the poem *Flood*:

In the back country
hard rain
is bucketing

Here
in the narrowing light
the river bellows
fatly

From high ground
I mark
twin rows of willow
dishevelled arms
clutching drunk roots

hoarding
bits of old bridge-planking
the body of a beast
puff-bellied
hind feet sticking out

I ask:
when will the waters clear
the eels breathe easy again?

Shall I be able to ford
the river soon: visit
a lean Aunt?

The play-off between the fat and the lean imagery over-rides the tragic tones in the poem. Death is the most powerful natural event in the universal process, and to laugh in its face is to assert life.

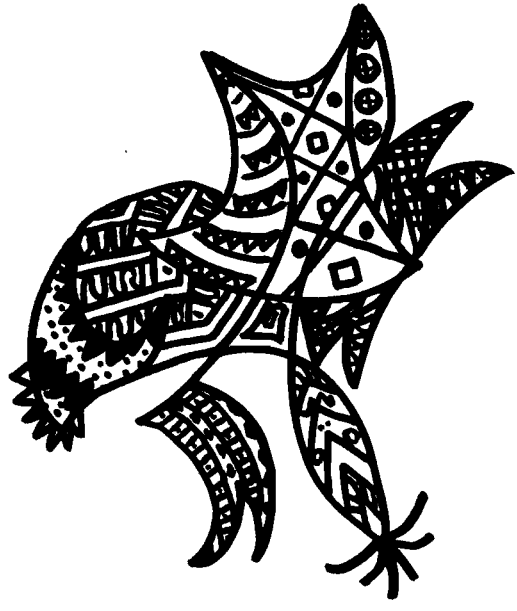
When Tuwhare is not at work interpreting the sounds in the natural universe, he is celebrating humanity to the fullest. He is not only interested in definition and essences, he is a great lover of the full and rounded form. In a total knowledge of humanity lies the truth about life — a truth whose value extends beyond this world and age:

And of trees and the river
no more say
that these alone are sources
for the deft song and the sad:
nor from wave-curl and the sun
cross moon wind and hail
calm and storm come.

Joyously I sing
to the young girl's hip-knock
and taunt: swing-cheerful breasts
shape my hands
to eternal begging-bowls.

("Muscle and Bone of Song")

Tuwhare sings the substance as well as the idea of humanity. His melodies are basic, his lyrics elemental. Cutting through silence, welding beauty and truth, Tuwhare's poetry stands stark and solid against the vast empty horizon of human ignorance and insensibility.



REVIEW

OKIKE, A Nigerian Journal of New Writing

Of all the emerging African countries, Nigeria seems to have the most virile literary output. This was the case long before independence, but now, the blood that was let in civil war has provided a grim transfusion of stimulus to her writers.

The first number of *Okike*, comprising poetry, short stories and book reviews, and edited by Chinua Achebe, is an impressive example of new awareness. The contributors demonstrate a compulsive need to say so much, but do so without taking an emotional trip, They are not high on anguish or despairing cynicism, and while there is an almost physical violence to some of the poetry, it is a violence controlled on the tight rein of a new tolerance. Control of both emotion and technique seems to be an integral part of the writing.

Nearly all the poetry and the stories spring from the very personal armageddon of one black nation and yet their message transcends nationalism. With sophisticated resignation they confirm, over and over again, that man's enemy is man, and ponder sadly that man is apt to be most inhumane to his own kind. Chinua Achebe's 'NON-commitment' is universal in its indictment:

Hurrah! to them who do nothing
see nothing feel nothing whose
hearts are fitted with prudence
like a diaphragm across
womb's beckoning doorway to bar
the scandal of seminal rage . . .

Closer to home, Gabriel Okara captures the idiosyncracies of war in his narrative poem, 'Suddenly the Air Cracks'. With the flip, near-blasé air of an on-the-spot reporter, he cleverly juxtaposes children playing at dive bombing after the all-clear while, nearby, bodies are stacked in the morgue.

Wole Soyinka, prize-winning dramatist, sums up the agony of the survivor in his smouldering poem 'Apres La Guerre' and South Africa's exiled poet, Dennis Brutus, conveys deep feeling for his brothers in three short poems.

To a foreign ear the prose does not flow nearly as easily as the poetry, but reveals a flair for bitter comedy with a sting in the tail. Again, it is Chinua Achebe's 'Vengeful Creditor' that makes the most impact.

The vitality and power of the contributions in 'Okike' should be of great interest to anyone following new or expanding cultures.

Subscription rate: US$1.50 for a single issue or US$4.00 yearly. These rates include the cost of surface postage.

Publisher: Nwankwo-Ifejika & Co.,
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