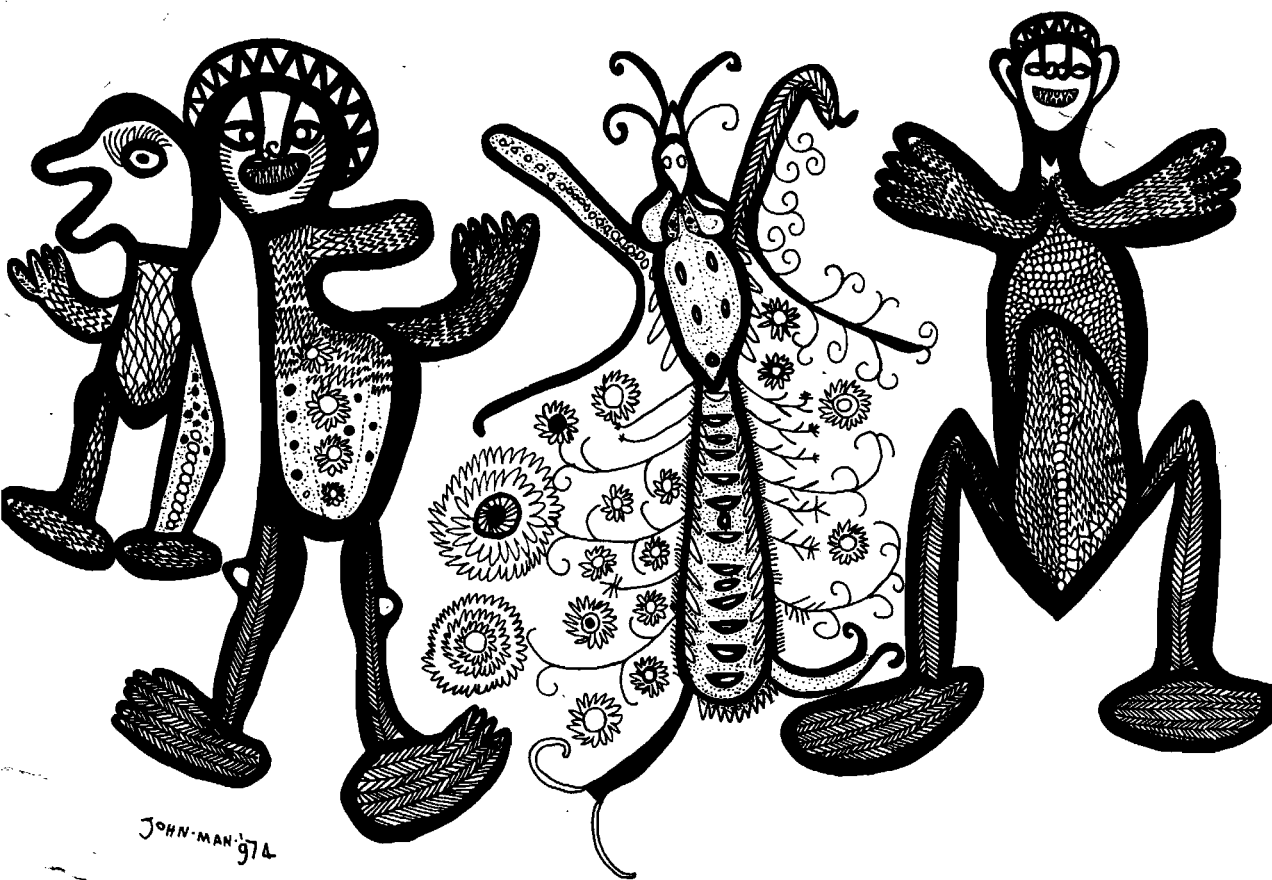


KOVAVE



A JOURNAL OF NEW GUINEA LITERATURE
VOLUME 5 NUMBER 1 JUNE 1975

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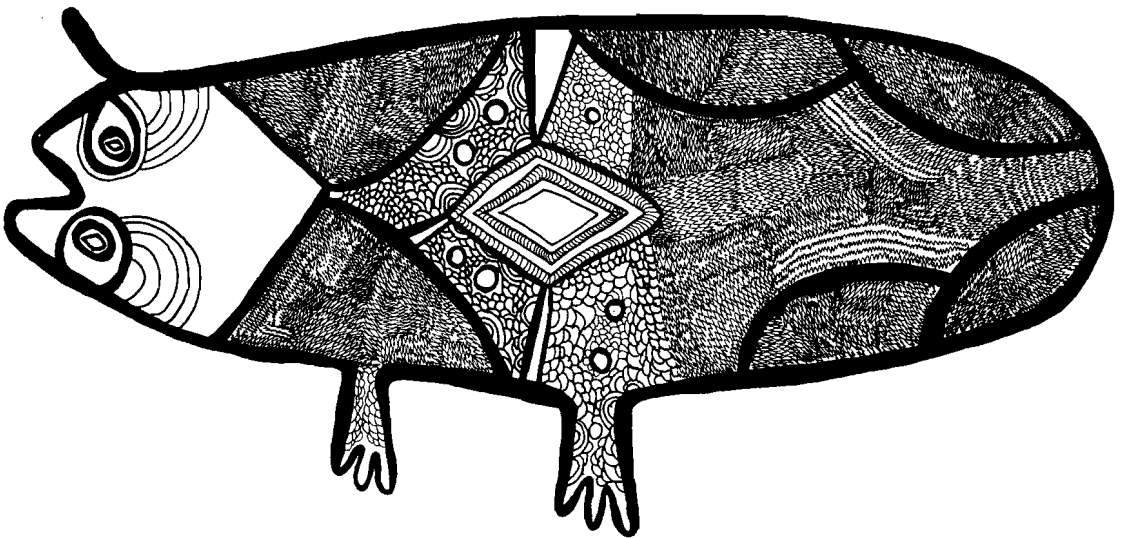
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Kath Walker is a well-known Australian poet. She has published several books of verse, all concerned with the life of the black Australian. This poem was written during her visit to Papua New Guinea in 1973.

The poems by Goroka Teachers' College students were first published in *Hey Now*, edited by Greg Murphy and produced by the Expressive Arts Department of the college.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The foreign jet-bird
Carried me overhead
And I caught my breath
At the beauty below.
I saw the aqua sea
Hide an Opal
Deep.
There way down
Where the Opal lay,
Was you,
My Mother of Life,
Dressed
In your Rainbow Cloak.

Oh my Rainbow Serpent,
You knew
Before I knew,
That I would be at home
In this silent land,
Where silenced people
Long to walk straight and strong.

Oh my Rainbow Serpent,
My Mother of Life,
Twine yourself
Around my silent cousins.
Hear their cries,
Help them bear their pain,
Wash them with your rainbow tears,
Reveal to them
Their Opal lying there.

Kath Walker

KULPU'S DAUGHTER

by Kama Kerpi

'There goes the dream of every man. Look! She walks gracefully.' It was Kulpu's daughter. The fluid language of her movements with her proud breasts almost ahead of her steps drew all the eyes. She walked towards the shade tree where the village girls had gathered, painting their faces and chanting.

'And look at her copper brown body . . . so smooth, like that of a new-born baby. Didn't I hear that she stayed home sick for the first time last week? . . . I mean, well, the monthly period,' said Mark.

'You have hit the nail on the head. Well, that means she is mature for . . . well, you know . . . love making.'

'I know nothing, sex-minded. Anyway, why do you associate sex with beautiful girls? Kulpu's daughter is a rare type. If it's only sex you seek from a girl . . . let me advise you, you are going down the drain.'

'My friend, some girls want to be reminded of their sexual powers. This might be a surprise to you, but it is true. Anyway, at least the ones I took advantage of seemed pleased when I told them they were sweet. To me they are merely sex objects . . . sex starved, if I may put it that way.'

'If they are sex hungry, they are humans and naturally have desires to satisfy their tensions. But women want to be praised in other ways. Some want to be told they are beautiful, honest, kind, understanding and all those praiseworthy things. I think you have come across the wrong type of girls.'

'Mark, don't stand there talking,' interrupted his father. 'We are expecting more visitors. And look there! The first groups are coming.'

It was the *ambkolmi* day. One of Mark's

blood-sisters was getting married to a young man from Luke's tribe who had just arrived from the coast. It took three weeks to prepare for this day. In actual fact, Mark's kins had entered into open negotiations with Luke's kins months ahead, even before the young man had time to court the girl. Bongaro returned from the coast where he worked in the plantations. He had been away for a long time. Now he came back a grown man. And his tribe felt he needed a woman and so took up their responsibility to arrange the bride-price.

The early groups of visitors were pouring into the compound from all corners. Mark's kins sent greetings by calling the names of individual visitors as was customary. Women went forward, with their crying children grabbing on to their legs and encircling their hands around the legs of their visitors, sending cries of welcome.

Mark's father's compound was in a festive mood. Young men slaughtered one pig after another to *mumu*, while the girls sang on their way to the water holes to fetch water. Elders raved around, shouting commands to those like Mark and Luke who were doing nothing, while the senior women dressed up Mark's sister with traditional wear and painted her face with paint made from plants. The children formed groups and scattered to throw corn cobs at one another. There were a number of high-school girls and boys dressed in their Sunday wear. They formed the colourful part of the crowd. Contrasting with those groups were the village boys and girls all dressed in their traditional everyday wear. They painted their faces and applied a cream that made their tattoos show clear and almost reflect in the sunlight.

In the background, Mark's combination

stereo cassette-recorder, radio and record player was turned on full volume playing Tom Jones's smash hits. Occasionally, when some of the high-school girls heard their favourites they would leave whatever they were engaged in and rush into Mark's room and shake their bodies as if some unknown happy spirit had possessed them.

As was customary, Luke's people would come after midday with the bride-price and the food they had prepared. Mark's people were preparing to receive them. Luke came ahead because he had a girlfriend there who had just come for her vacation. Luke had not seen her for two years, and this provided a good excuse for him to be there.

Kulpu's family were among the early visitors invited by Mark's father. Mark had wondered why his father invited Kulpu. He was not related to Mark's kins, nor was he an earlier friend. He had not questioned his father on why he invited Kulpu because he would have been interfering in his father's affairs. His father was the father of the ceremony, and a busy father was likely to get angry very quickly.

'Mark! There is one strange discovery I have made. Now if Kulpu's daughter was an educated girl dressed in a mini we would have run our big eyeballs from her legs to her groin in a contaminating way. But dressed in her traditional wear I tend to run my eyes from her face downwards. It's her beauty and not so much her sex appeal that I admire. Anyway, nowadays women are becoming a luxury. From rumours, Kulpu's daughter is quite expensive. The bride-price is three thousand dollars, twenty pigs, five bags of rice, two bags of flour and, on top of that, a bicycle for her brother. Kulpu is intending to make his daughter's bridegroom start off life a poor man. Nowadays, men who have a lot of daughters in their compound can retire on them.'

'Well,' said Mark, leaving off to chop some firewood for the *mumu*, 'what's wrong with that? Women provide man's greatest pleasure. We should pay for their bodies. That is our custom, you know.'

'I suddenly have the impression that you

would like to uphold the bride-price system. Good to hear that from you,' said Luke mockingly. Then continuing: 'You know that Kulpu's daughter is outstanding in this part of the country. Now, what if at this moment you were to marry her, and she gave consent to your tribe's proposal? And naturally you have to pay the bride-price. You can't get out of it just because you are a university student.'

'Ha . . . you are out of your mind,' replied Mark with a forced smile.

'Well?' said Luke after Mark stopped smiling. It seemed he was determined to get an answer.

'Well what?' came back Mark's voice.

'What do you say about that?'

'Well, let me see . . . as for beauty, she has got that. But beauty will wear out like paint. My mother tells me it's after the first childbirth. I will go for an educated girl with a good character. Mind you, I do not mean a harlot, or the ones that go for more male friends.'

'I would partly agree with you. But subordinating the value of a girl's sexual technique to beauty and education would be a foolish idea.'

'Well, you see it's for . . . well, her sake, and mine. Kulpu's daughter will not fit into my life, nor the strange environment she will find herself in. The greatest honour I can render is simply to refuse to marry her. She will be much happier in the village.'

It was as clear as crystal that Mark intended marrying an educated girl. He was a second-year arts student at the University of Papua New Guinea and expressed his thoughts on the type of girl he intended marrying.

'It seems you have not been told that an educated girl is very dangerous,' said Luke after a brief silence. Then continuing: 'Our elders say they turn out to be evil women wearing big smiles. They want to feel the manhood of many secret lovers. Mind you, when it comes to having secret lovers they suddenly become a genius. They always have an eye for another woman's husband.'

'This is a purely hypocritical belief. In any case, we all have secret lovers. You know what? I have always kept an eye on your Tolai girl-

friend. Forgive me if I am affronting you, but it simply goes to show you that we keep an eye on our friends' women. So be a little open-minded with what you are saying.'

'Well, there is more to say than merely having secret lovers. I have taken advantage of several educated girls and discovered that they all put up an act in bed. They make believe they are innocent . . . that they knew no other men before. And another thing, they capture your love by the way they take off their clothes for love making. It becomes rather an art of retaining their boyfriend's love. A village girl is fair to you and to herself. When her beauty starts to disappear she does not worry herself staring into the mirror. Nowadays, the shorter the mini the more sexually appealing the girl becomes. And they take great delight in looking sexy. Round bottoms seem to replace elegance.'

'I think I agree with some of the things you have mentioned.'

'Hello, you two', came the voice of a female. Then continued: 'What are you two talking about? Politics? When I think of university students I associate them with politics.' She laughed and exchanged glances with Luke, her boyfriend.

Maria was Luke's new conquest. Naturally he didn't want to put his image down. Mark was aware of this. For one thing, he knew that Luke was notorious for talking about girls. It was inevitable that someone had to think up a subject, and mighty fast too.

'Hello, Maria. How are you?' greeted Mark.

'Hello, Maria . . . we were talking about an educated man and the conflict he encounters once he is assimilated to live like Western man. The educated man becomes a victim of change. People like us are most likely to encounter opposition from the village people.' Then, looking at Maria as if she had a ready answer, he said: 'What society do we build if we let those oppositions occur and get out of hand?'

'Well,' said Mark when he realized that Maria had nothing to say, 'it's like poetry. If I write a poem I like it because it's my creation . . . it's my art. But I express a Niugini mind, using poetry as a vehicle of feelings, emotions, conflict

that the people of my generations tend to encounter. All I do is accept English and poetry as the media. As for society, we must create our own that is unique—unique in that it is not a carbon copy of the Western society. We have a saying that if a man is eating food that repels his tongue he should throw it away and eat the parts that are sweet to his tongue. The conflict occurs because the person has allowed it to happen. I think it's inevitable because we detest the ways of our fathers. If we reject our people they will do the same to us. People say if a dog refuses to smell the pig's vomit then the pig will do the same.'

'I think the conflict occurs in the mind. We are trained to question things rather than accept them. An attempt on our part to at least understand our fathers will greatly be appreciated by them,' said Maria.

Luke's people came with the bride-price. They all had to greet them. With the party on, no one wanted to miss the fun. Such marriage feasts were rare, and since this one coincided with their Christmas holiday they felt they should make the best use of it.

Dusk was thickening. The dying sun was making the last leg of its journey over some of the highest peaks. The clouds against the clear blue sky were glowing red and yellow in the fiery sunset. In the silent atmosphere the rolling hills with the desolate ridges in the background looked quiet and innocent, as if ready to turn in under the blanket of darkness. It's one of those rare occasions when we see God as the greatest artist.

Mark walked down the track, deep in thought. The conversation some time ago kept his mind perturbed. Now, the idea of conflict did start to have some meaning for him. Talking with Luke and Maria about conflict with the village people was like throwing off a cover to reveal the hard landscape of reality.

Not long ago he informed his parents about his Papuan girlfriend in Sogeri Senior High. For some time he was troubled by their reactions because they turned a deaf ear to what he was trying to say. They felt it was a trifle not to be

discussed seriously; at least, that was the impression Mark got from their reactions. Then something his mother said seemed to bring the message to the doorstep of his confused mind. When his father affected not to hear him his mother stared at him askance and whispered: 'I hope she will go out to the ridges in the cold mornings and weed the gardens.' There was a sarcastic tone in her voice. He remembered her looking at him with a frown of disapproval. Was it really disapproval? . . . it couldn't be . . . how could she dare disapprove of her only son making friends with a girl? In her old age she must want a lot of grandchildren to tell them legends.

He could recall the reactions of Carol's parents when he accompanied her to her village during the semester break. At first they could not accept the idea that their daughter was making friends with a Highlander. But a Highlander studying at the university . . . ha . . . that was different. Their reactions had angered him, but then he was dealing with fishing folk, so he controlled his anger.

Dealing with his own people was different. Mark's father was an eminent bourgeois in the tribe, a son of the late Kondom, a war leader before the coming of the white man. Mark was not looked upon as a university student but merely a child in his father's compound. Those who had gone beyond primary education were usually greatly respected. And if you had gone to a university the whole district knew you, so that, to parents who wanted their children to follow your example, you became a hero. But Mark could not claim a position above his father, like others did. The old man was like a dried-up tree, but he still stood strong and powerful. And there is a saying that only death decays an old man's bones.

The communal relationship had not been disturbed and its particular style had long been the tribe's pride and heritage. If Mark had a girlfriend the elders decided whether he should continue dating her. When a woman married into Mark's tribe it was the job of the tribe to arrange the bride-price. Thus, that clannish feeling was like an invisible shadow, above

which the clan with its distinct hierarchical structure loomed united like a silent hill.

Mark's father occupied a position at the uppermost end of the hierarchy. It was expected that Mark would follow his father's footsteps. His father had married seven wives and had so many children that Mark didn't know the names of some of them. The old polygamist was one of a few men who decided when the next feasting or initiation ceremony should be held. So, to the people outside his tribal group, Mark was addressed as Kamb's son, meaning his father Kamb was a 'big man' whose position was recognized by outsiders.

'Markus,' called someone a stone's-throw away. Mark turned around to see his father wearing a smile. That was strange. Why should his father smile? Mark could not recall his father smiling openly at him.

'Father?' he replied questioningly.

'Have you had anything to eat?' That was equally strange. Mark was the only son from the first wife and naturally his mother fed him well. Mark's father knew that very well. But why inquire? Something was amiss, and it didn't take long to realize it.

'I am going to mother's house,' he replied, waiting eagerly to hear what his father would say next.

'Tell your mother to keep enough food for five more people. And you wait to receive them. There is something to be discussed.' That was all he said. For some time Mark watched his father walk away with his ulster flying in the breeze. His father's youthful warrior figure began to bend low like a plant withering in the dry season. His admiration for his father's figure turned into pity—pity because old age had denied his admiration.

The tone in his father's voice suggested something of importance concerning him. Was it about Carol? It couldn't be about any other thing. It must be . . . it must be, he kept telling himself.

Mark ate his supper rather hurriedly. No sooner had he finished than his father came, accompanied by five elders of the tribe. Mark's heart gave a slight leap and then throbbed in

tattoo. Excitement shot through him in waves. The five elders plus his father made up the council of the tribe. Anything of importance concerning the tribe fell into their hands to be discussed, and their proposals were final, to be debated openly only when the council saw fit, or when disagreement arose from within the council.

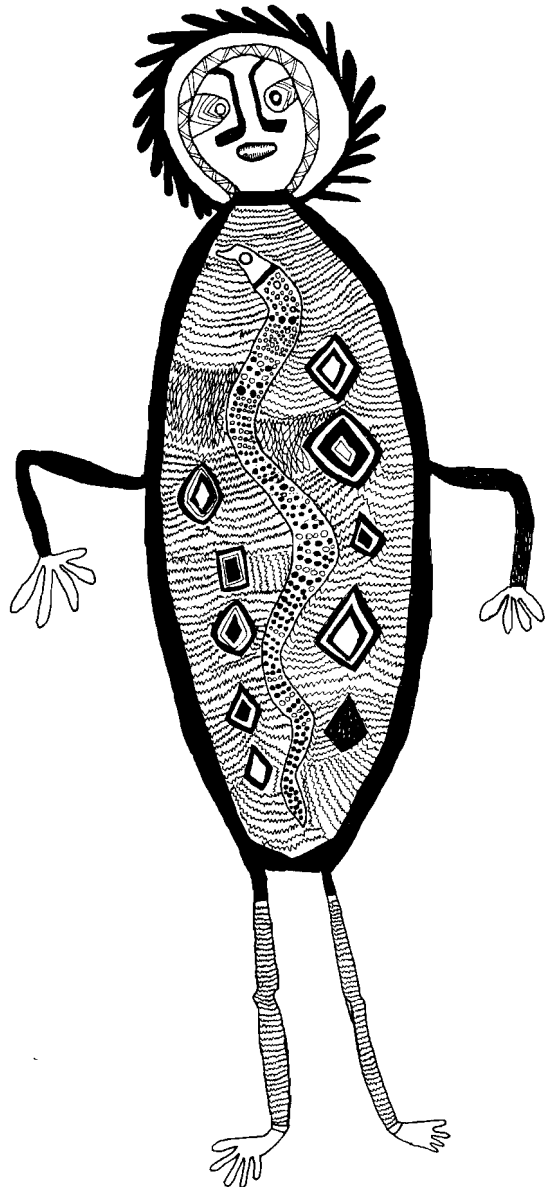
Mark and his mother greeted them and asked the council to forgive them if they didn't accept them well, which was customary. The five elders sat around the food prepared for them, talking of many strange things they had seen at the marriage feast some time ago. When the meal was over, they went into Mark's study room and, sitting around in a circle on a mat spread over the floor, they held their conference.

The first topic of discussion concerned the cattle project that the tribe was undertaking. The first ten cows were to arrive on Tuesday. It was decided that the elders of the tribe should each buy the first cows due. If the elder could not afford to buy, then the preference should go to the man who had ready cash. The cattle project, being the only one of its kind in the valley, was enough evidence that the spirit of enterprise had taken roots in Mark's tribe. The idea of owning cows sounded great and, being so enthusiastic about it, the job of fencing and growing elephant grass took up the whole wet season. To the agricultural officer, Mark's tribesmen were the only progressive types he had come across during his long years of service. Now he would retire to watch the fruits of his labour take their full colour and blossom.

An older man turned his eyes and stared into Mark's as if to say the next topic concerned him.

'My son,' he began, 'we, the elders of the tribe, watched you grow. You have grown faster than a mushroom. I began to detest my eyes, thinking they were tricking me. But other people say it's truly Kamb's son from the first wife. My old age has not taken away my eyesight. My son, school has initiated you to get accustomed to the ways of the white man; you are our pride—you are the only one from this valley to go to a big school.' He paused to wait for the murmurs of approval to die out.

'We Kumais are special, which is, by the way, a quote from somebody; and we have been special in our ways. You have proved this by learning the secrets of the white man. But you must be a man among our people. A baby lizard asked the ant how he could climb the tree. The ant replied, "Watch your father." My son, your father proved himself a man whose compound is alive with voices of children.' The old man



paused, rolled a *brus* (a home-made cigar), lit it and puffed out aromatic clouds of smoke. It seemed he wanted to create the right atmosphere to bring out his message. But it looked premature.

'Two moons ago your tribe was insulted and ridiculed with sarcastic remarks. One of your kinsmen's wives, after living with him, ran away to Kulpu from the ridge. She ran away because your kinsman is impotent. People say that when a man has been ridiculed, but refuses to do anything, he only waits for the right moment.' This time he paused to study Mark's immediate reactions and to allow time to let the message find a place in Mark's mind. Then, speaking in an arrogant tone, he continued.

'We can no longer stomach their insult. It has begun to hurt our feelings. Although Kulpu has hurt our feelings your father is friendly with him because he has a better plan. Kulpu's daughter saw the moon recently. My son, you will strike a deadly blow if you bring his daughter into the tribe. After all, your age mates all have wives.'

Mark could not swallow the old man's words. He forced himself not to believe what he was being told. It seemed he had just gone through a nightmare, and hot sweat began to exude from his face.

'Restore the pride we once knew,' added his father. 'It's a privilege to be chosen by the council to re-establish the image of the tribe. It's a call of duty. So think and think double hard.'

Only his mother remained silent, silent now, only to tear him apart later at the right moment. His father's voice had already trailed off into silence. Now they waited, not for his opinion, only for his approval and an indication of when he intended to take Kulpu's daughter as his village wife.

'Members of the council,' said Mark with nervousness in his voice, 'you have spoken well, but I was not flattered by what you said. It has begun to tear my inside like thunder knocking down a tree. I begin to think that your talk has been the ravings of a madman. Let me beg you to understand me. I must make close application to my studies. How can I study well when

I have a wife to worry about? In any case, she, whom you want to bring into the tribe, will not fit into my life. I have already set my eyes on a girl who has gone to school like me.'

'My son, you are too young to understand. There is clearly no wisdom in what you are saying. Didn't your father marry seven wives? Are they not like one big family? Let her be your village wife. This does not stop you from marrying an educated wife. Your father's last wife lives with her people, yet he has children by her. The tribe will look after Kulpu's daughter. Do not forget the reply the ant gave to the baby lizard.'

A bitter anger rolled into him. You bloody bastard . . . son of a demon. You are a pestering old man . . . you are old, dirty . . . why do you deny my rights, you old confused lot? Mark found himself shouting at them deep in his inside. Suddenly he felt like crying with all his might, and his stomach raged with anger. And yet he could not raise his voice and shout out at them. He found himself unable to speak and unable to think. He was confused. He had lost the battle. Maybe he was angry with himself for giving in, or maybe they were too strong for him. He had gone through an ordeal, and he found himself sweating, but sweating like a defeated man. The winner will rejoice, and the loser will hide his clammy face . . . you old confused lot, he shouted to himself as they parted.

When all had left, Mark walked out into the frigid evening air. The air brushed against his body and made him feel cool all over. He clenched his jaws and kicked an empty tin. You are all like this empty tin . . . valueless . . . dying old men . . . and I can knock the hell out of you crumbling things, he said to himself under his breath. The tin rang over some objects and then continued rolling to the creek below. Suddenly he felt like fighting somebody. He didn't care who the person was, and he didn't care if it was one of those elders. I will show them, he said, I will show them a few tricks about boxing. Let them run for their axes, I don't care, I really don't care. We will see who is physically strong. Boy, if I get one of them within the range of my fist, oh boy, he will see stars sparking.

Already the valley was plunged into darkness. Above, the sky was heavy with its night lamps. The grey *nop* trees shivered in the night, pointing into the heavens. He walked down the village path aimlessly, his vagrant thoughts touching many subjects—his school, a village wife and a town wife, the pride of his people and the call of duty. It seemed a whole mountain had rolled on top of him. And occasionally he sighed in a helpless manner.

He tried to remember a book, or rather a long poem of lament he read back at the university. What was it? Yes, now he could remember. It was 'Song of Lawino' by O. p'Bitek. He could remember discussing it with his friends. He hated the idea that he was going to be the educated black-white husband Lawino was lamenting over. Then he found himself swearing that nobody would force him to marry somebody they thought would be a good wife. Deep inside he shouted: Spirits of the darkness, stars above and the moon there peeping behind those hills, I swear before you that I am the master of my soul and body. And I curse those who deny this God-given freedom. For I love Carol . . . my Carol. And Carol's face flashed across his memory. She reminded him of many things. And thinking about her was like watching the climax of a spy drama. They first met at the youth club meeting. Carol was an average girl. There was nothing striking about her. One weekend she came to stay with him on the campus. That night, when he entered her, she

cried over her lost virginity.

'I swear I love you. I will marry you when I graduate,' he said that night.

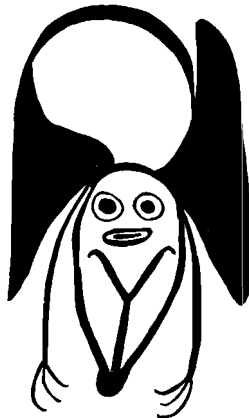
'Is it empty promises?' she asked between sobs.

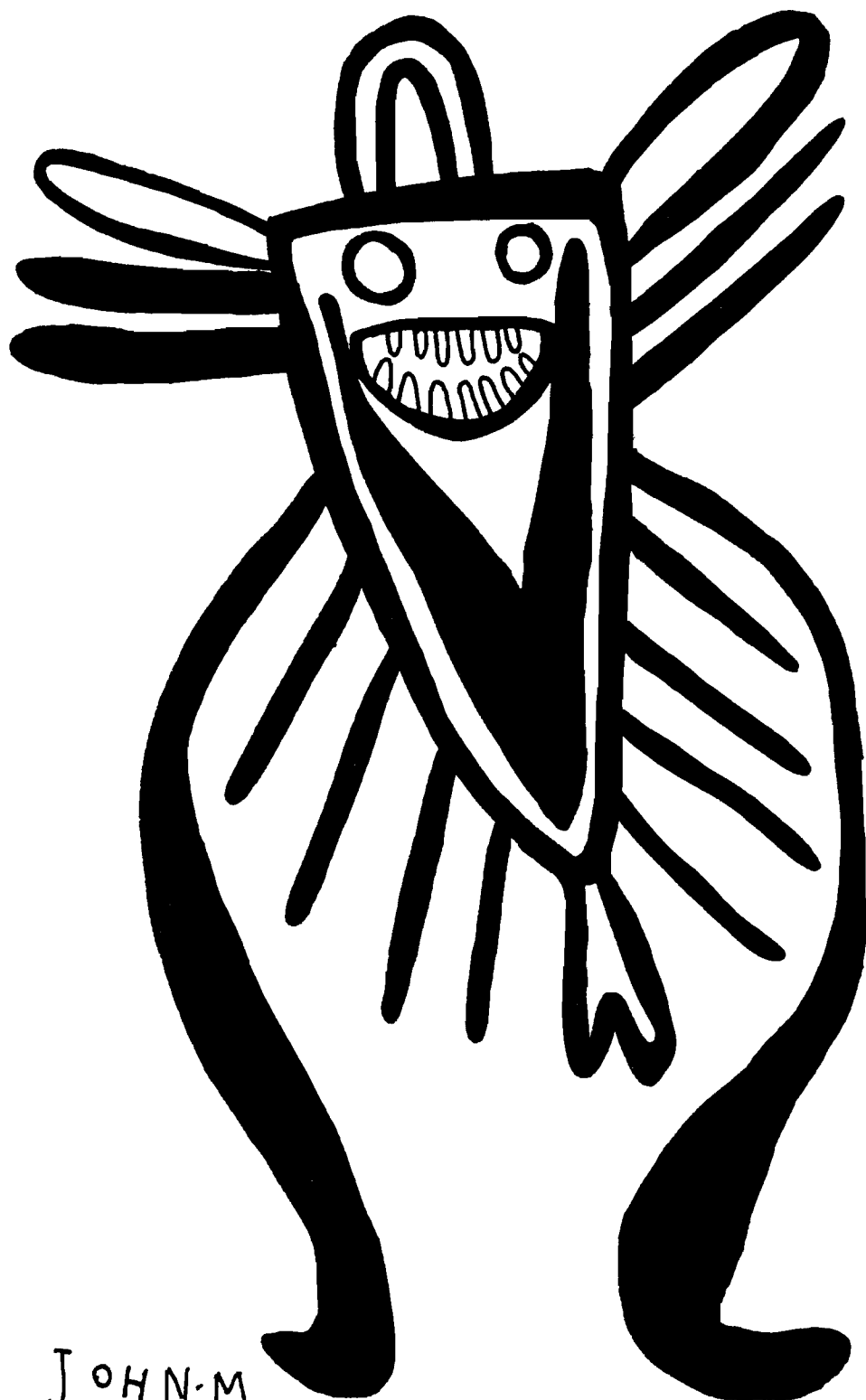
'Carol, I love you,' he said running his hands through her long hair. 'I love you.'

'Then you are mine,' she said, tightening her grip.

'I am yours,' he replied as he felt the thrill of her grip. Suddenly that part of his memory began to haunt him. Carol's sobs that night at the campus seemed near.

Mark could hear Carol's sobs in the darkness. It seemed so near he could touch it. He hurried his steps so that he could feel her breath near his face. 'Carol, where are you?' he said under his breath. 'Come near and let me for once like old times feel your breath . . . Carol, mother of all the fish in the seas . . . my love, let me touch the warmth of your body . . . I will keep that promise I made . . . I will.' And, as he said that, he felt his foot in the air. So he lifted the other, thinking that he was flying up by the help of some sweet forces in the environment. The wind from below the cliff brushed against his body as he dived head on towards the rocks below. He screamed when he came to, but it was lost as the wind howled from below the creek and surged up the cliff face as if running away from human blood and death. His screams rang in the night air, but only for a short while. As his body hit the rocks below, silence returned.





JOHN-M

MASKI KAUNSI

A play by Rabbie Namaliu

CHARACTERS

KEPAS TOMURIA	<i>a leader in the Raluana area and leader of the six luluais in the village</i>
FIRST MAN (TOVURUE)	} <i>members of the kivung, now an anti-council movement</i>
SECOND MAN	
THIRD MAN	
PENIAS	<i>a luluai</i>
DARIUS ALWAS	<i>a carpenter and one of the spokesmen</i>
TOGIGI	<i>a former schoolteacher and now a member of the kivung's executive</i>
TUVI	<i>a one-legged schoolteacher and chief spokesman for the Raluana people</i>
MAKATI (J. K. MCCARTHY)	<i>district commissioner of New Britain</i>
DISTRICT OFFICER	} <i>members of Makati's party</i>
LANDS COMMISSIONER	
PATROL OFFICER	
ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER	
NASON TOKABAIT	<i>president of the newly formed Toma-Nangananga Native Local Government Council</i>
POLICE OFFICER	
POLICEMEN	
DRIVER	
JUDGE	
A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC	
A MEMBER OF THE CROWD	
ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE CROWD	
MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN FOR CROWD SCENES	
MALE DANCERS	
DUKDUKS	

SCENE ONE

Morning. At about six o'clock the sounds of conchshells are heard all over the villages of the Raluana area. These sounds give the warning that all men and women are asked to assemble for an important meeting. At about nine o'clock the gathering takes place in the grounds of the Raluana Primary T School, which stands between the seashore and the main highway between Rabaul and Kokopo. The luluais and other important members of the kivung are dressed in the usual uniform—a white shirt or white singlet and a white lavalava.

KEPAS: *(addressing the meeting)*
Mipela ol luluai i bin kolim dispela kivung long wanem mipela laik toksave long dispela toktok. Nambawan Kiap bilong yumi, Makati, i laik kam toktok long yumi gen long wok bihain long dispela samting yet, kaunsil. Long Tunde bambai . . .

FIRST MAN: Wanem, i no gat arapela samting long toktok long en, kaunsil tasol? Mi no laik kam.

KEPAS: Orait, mi no pinisim toktok bilong mi yet. Yes, long Tunde Makati wantaim sampela man mo long gavman bambai ol i kam toktok long yumi. Ol i laik bambai yumi mas kam long hia long moning taim yet alsem nau. Na bambai yumi ken toktok wantaim ol long kaunsil, sapos yumi laikim wanpela o nogat. Bambai mi askim olgeta luluai long ol tavur bilong ol, i mas krai long moning long Tunde. Na mi laikim yumi olgeta i mas kam, long wanem kaunsil i bikipela samting tumas. Na maski long bikmaus tumas, ha.

SECOND MAN: *(at the top of his voice)*
Mi ting yumi tokim em pinis yumi no laikim kaunsil. Em i no harim yumi?

THIRD MAN: Nogat em i no harim. Em i ken kam. Samting yumi tokim ol long en ol i mas kambek na toktok long en. I orait em i ken kam. *(Penias, sitting next to Kepas, gets up and addresses the crowd.)*

PENIAS: Yumi olgeta i harim toktok bilong Kepas pinis. Ating bambai i gutpela samting sapos yumi olgeta i kambek hia long Tunde. Kaunsil i bikipela samting na i mobeta sapos yumi olgeta i kam hia, na toktok wantaim Makati, na ol bikman ken long en. Yumi olgeta save gavman em i bikipela papa bilong yumi, na sapos ol laikim toktok long yumi long wanpela taim yumi tokim ol long sampela samting yumi i no save gut long en. Yumi olgeta save long Makati, em i gutpela pren tru bilong yumi long Raluana. Olsem mipela laikim olgeta man na meri i mas kam long Tundé.

ALWAS: *(directing a question to Kepas)*
Kepas, mipela i laik save Makati i bin harim long dispela taim i bin kam bipo o nogat?

KEPAS: I tru yumi i bin tokim Makati yumi no laikim kaunsil, tasol ol ting ol i no bin toktok gut wantaim yumi long dispela samting kaunsil. Olsem Makati na ol dispela bikipela man i laik toktok gut wantaim yumi gen long dispela samting.

TOGIGI: *(getting up and addressing the crowd)*
Kaunsil, olsem Kepas na Penias i tok pinis i no liklik samting. Olsem na mi ting yumi mas toktok liklik long en nau, mi ting kaunsil i bikipela samting tumas long dispela taim. Mi ting yumi nogat mani yet long dispela samting. Olsem tu mi ting yumi nogat bikipela save yet long dispela samting. Mi ting sapos yumi go het yet long kivung bilong yumi, na bihain girapim kaunsil, em bambai i mobeta.

KEPAS: Yes, mipela ol luluai i ting olsem tu. Olsem mipela askim long tingting bilong yupela long dispela samting. I gat mo toktok long yupela?

TOGIGI: Ating i mobeta sapos Tuvi i toktok long dispela samting, long wanem, em save mo long dispela samting, mi bin tisa bipo na mi tokim yupela pinis dispela samting i no liklik samting. *(After having a little parley with Tuvi, Kepas gets up and makes an announcement.)*

KEPAS: Mi askim Tuvi pinis, na em tok yes i ken givim long toktok long kaunsil.

TUVI: *(speaking in his usual convincing way)*
Pastaim mi laik tok kaunsil i no gutpela long yumi nau. Kaunsil em olsem gavman, tasol gavman i bikipela mo nau, tasol kaunsil i bikipela liklik. Sapos yumi girapim kaunsil nau, bambai yumi olgeta i mas baim dispela samting ol kolim takis. Yumi nogat bikipela mani, bambai yumi baim dispela takis long wanem? Olsem yumi tok pinis kaunsil em i bikipela samting. Yumi nogat bikipela save yet long girapim dispela

samting. Olsem mi ting maski kaunsil yumi mas tokim Makati olsem. (*Everyone applauds.*)

KEPAS: Olsem wanem olgeta i orait long toktok bilong Tuvi?

ALL: Yes.

KEPAS: Mi ting dispela samting em bilong ol pikinini bilong yumi long bihain. Nau nogat, het i strong yet olsem hap ston. Yumi nogat bikipela save olsem ol masta. Olsem mipela askim yupela olgeta long kam long Tunde, long yumi olgeta tokim Makati olsem, ol dispela toktok yumi harim pinis. I gat toktok mo?

ALWAS: Yumi olgeta harim Tuvi pinis. Mi ting sapos yumi makim Tuvi, long toksave long Makati long tingting bilong yumi, bambai i gutpela tru. Em i ken sindaun wantaim Kepas na Penias, na i ken helpim ol long toksave long Makati.

KEPAS: (*turning again to the crowd*)

Mipela ol luluai i orait long dispela tingting. Olsem wanem long yupela? Yupela orait long tingting bilong Alwas?

ALL: (*shouting their approval very loudly*)

Yes, yes . . . yes, yes.

TUVI: Mi orait long tingting long yupela, long sindaun wantaim Kepas na Penias, tasol mi laik toksave tu long sampela tingting mo bilong mi. Pastaim, mi laik tok tenkyu long yupela long askim mi long dispela samting. Tingting bilong mi olsem, mi ting sapos Makati askim yumi long kaunsil, bambai yumi tok save ol long, yumi i no laikim kaunsil. Olsem tu mi laikim bambai yumi tokim ol, yumi gat kivung bilong yumi pinis. Sapos ol i no harim toktok bilong yumi, bambai mi yet mi toksave long yupela long han bilong mi, long olgeta man i mas kirap na sanap. Mi save Makati, em gutpela pren bilong yumi tasol, sapos yumi mekim dispela bambai em i no ken askim yumi mo long kaunsil. Em i orait long yupela olgeta o nogat?

ALL: (*roaring approval*)

Yes, yes, yes . . . yes.

KEPAS: Olsem mipela ol luluai i lapun pinis. Bambai mipela larim long yupela yet ol yangpela. I gat toktok mo long yupela?

TOGIGI: Mi ting dispela kivung bilong yumi ol i mas save gut long en. Yumi mas tokim ol gut long en, long wanem em olsem tasol kaunsil.

TUVI: Mi ting dispela i tru yet. Sapos yumi tokim ol gut long komiti bilong yumi, bambai ol i save harim toktok bilong yumi. Olsem tu bambai ol i no ken askim planti taim tumas.

KEPAS: Yumi harim pinis toktok bilong ToGigi na Tuvi. I gat samting mo? (*He pauses but nobody gets up.*) Orait mi ting i no gat samting mo. Yupela harim olgeta samting pinis. Mi laik tok gen mipela olgeta man na meri long Tunde long moning. Tenkyu. (*Everyone disperses.*)

SCENE TWO

Early Tuesday morning. The conchshells are blown and the warning echoes all over the villages. At about eight o'clock the crowd begins to pour into the school grounds. Makati and his party are now in front of the gathering. The meeting starts.

MAKATI: (*getting up and addressing the crowd*)

Mi bin kam hia bipo long toktok long dispela samting kaunsil. Nau gen mi wantaim ol man hia, yupela ken lukim ol mipela laikim long painimaut sapos yupela senisim

tingting bilong yupela long dispela samting kaunsil. Yupela harim pinis ol bilong Nangananga na Toma. Nason ToKabait, em stap wantaim yumi nau. Ating yupela olgeta i save long em. Olsem wanem yupela strong yet long yupela i no laik kirapim kaunsil, o yupela orait long en. Mi laik tokim yupela gen long dispela samting, sapos yupela kirapim wanpela kaunsil olsem ol ples hia mi tokim yupela long ol, bambai yupela yet inap long ronim sampela samting long ples bilong yupela. Bambai yupela yet inap long kisim takis olsem mani, na bambai yupela yet inap toktok long wanem wok yupela laikim lusim dispela mani long en. Bambai yupela ken nap long wokim dispela mani long en. Bambai yupela ken nap long wokim nupela haus, long skul bilong yupela, long kapa na palang na simen. Olsem tu, bambai yupela inap long stretim ol liklik trabel long ples bilong yupela yet long Raluana. Gavman bambai i givim planti helpim mo long ples bilong yupela. Gavman bambai inap long helpim yupela long kirapim gut skul bilong yupela, na bambai inap tu long salim sampela man long didiman long helpim yupela long planim kakau na kokonas. Nau, yupela laikim kaunsil o nogat?

KEPAS: Tenkyu tru Makati long toktok bilong yu. *(He turns to the crowd and continues.)* Yumi harim pinis toktok bilong nambawan kiap bilong yumi. Olsem wanem long tingting bilong yupela long dispela samting, kaunsil? Yumi harim pinis ol gutpela samting yumi nap wokim long takis mani. Olsem tu ol bilong Vunamami na Reimber na Nangananga, ol kirapim pinis kaunsil bilong ol. Nason em i stap wantaim yumi nau, na mi ting em bambai toktok bihain long dispela samting. I gat toktok long yupela long dispela samting?

TUVI: *(addressing the crowd and Makati and his party on behalf of the people)* Tenkyu Mr Makati long toktok bilong yu. Kaunsil em i gutpela samting na i bikpela samting tu tasol, mipela i no redi long en yet. Yu gutpela pren bilong mipela yet long Raluana, tasol mipela i no ting mipela inap yet long en. Olsem mipela i no laik kirapim wanpela kaunsil yet long ples bilong mipela nau. Ating long bihaintiam, sapos mipela redi pinis orait bambai mipela tokim yu.

MAKATI: Mi no ting em i tru. Yupela gat tisa pinis olsem yu Tuvi, na yupela gat planti man tu ol wok long taun na long sampela hap long Papua na Nu Gini. Yupela gat bikpela save pinis long inap kirapim wanpela kaunsil. Wanem kain save yupela laikim? Mi laikim yupela tok save mo long wanem tru yupela i no laikim kaunsil.

KEPAS: *(addressing the crowd again)* I gat toktok?

FIRST MAN: Nogat, mipela i no laikim kaunsil, em bikpela samting tumas.

SECOND MAN: *(angrily)* Wanem, hamas taim bambai mipela tokim yu mipela i no laik?

KEPAS: *(attempting to calm the crowd)* Em i no samting long tok kros long en, em samting long stretim. Mi laikim bambai yumi tok stret long ol. Mi laikim bambai Tuvi i toksave long ol tingting bilong yumi olgeta.

TUVI: *(getting up and addressing Makati and his party)* Mr Makati, mipela i laikim kaunsil tumas, tasol mipela i nogat save yet long ronim kaunsil. Mipela i no gat mani long baim takis. Yu save mipela gat kivung pinis. Dispela samting mipela ting em bilong ol pikinini bilong mipela long bihain. Long taim ol i gat planti mani na bikpela save, bambai ol i ken toksave long yu long gavman long kirapim wanpela kaunsil.

DISTRICT

OFFICER: *(to Makati)*

I don't see those reasons as rational enough. There must be some other reasons. If other people can do it why not these people? They have had the longest contact with Europeans.

LANDS

COMMISSIONER: You can't say much about bushkanakas, can you? Except that they are still bushkanakas, aren't they?

DISTRICT

OFFICER: Oh, no! I think they know perfectly well that council is a good thing except that we can't find why they won't accept it.

LANDS

COMMISSIONER: Well, in that case we'll just have to tighten up our land laws on those people. If they bloody well can't see the essence of setting up a council they can't expect us to give them back any of their land.

TUVI: *(talking to Kepas and Penias)*

Makati i strong yet hia. Yumi no ken pret tumas long tok strong. Yumi mas tok strong tu long yumi i no laikim kaunsil.

MAKATI: *(getting up and addressing the gathering)*

Tenkyu tru, mipela harim pinis sampela toktok bilong yupela tasol, mipela tu i no save tru long wanem yupela i no laikim kaunsil.

TUVI: Mr Makati, mipela i no gat mo toktok long dispela samting. Mipela tokim yu pinis long olgeta tingting bilong mipela, i mobeta sapos yumi larim dispela samting.

MAKATI: Tuvi, sapos yu tok gen olsem bambai nau tasol mi rausim yu long wok bilong yu. Yu harim? Husat i tok yupela i nogat mani, husat i tok yupela i nogat bikpela save, husat i save giamanim yupela long ol dispela kain toktok? Husat i . . .

THIRD MAN: *(getting up suddenly and talking angrily)*

Orait Makati yu ken givim toktok long mipela long wanem samting yu laik. Tasol mipela les pinis long harim kaunsil, kaunsil, kaunsil. Em i wanem samting? I nogat arapela samting long toktok long en? Ol taim yupela ol masta i laik kam na giamanim mipela long kirapim kaunsil. Long wanem yupela i no save laik long toktok wantaim mipela liklik long giraun bipo yupela kam stilim long mipela long akis, tabak na ol hap aen hia? *(He shows them a knife.)* Samting ol tumbuna bilong mipela i nogat save long en, na yupela kam giamanim ol long en.

SECOND MAN: Em pasin bilong ol masta tasol hia ol laik kam giamanim, yumi ol taim.

KEPAS: *(sensing the anger of the people)*

Orait, inap Makati harim pinis ol toktok long ol pipal bilong mi. Mipela i no laikim kaunsil long wanem mipela i gat kivung pinis. Mipela ting dispela samting orait long mipela nau.

MAKATI: Orait, nau husat em i memba long dispela kivung? Mi laikim ol i mas tokaut nau.

TUVI: Mipela olgeta i memba long dispela kivung. Olgeta six pela ples long hap long Raluana, ol i memba long kivung. Yu save tu ol bilong Viviran, Takubar na Navunaram ol tu i memba long dispela kivung. Ating, Mano i tok save long yu planti taim pinis long Navunaram.

MAKATI: Na wanem tru bilong dispela kivung? Wanem ol wok yupela save wokim?

TUVI: Sapos yupela laik toktok wantaim mipela long kivung ating i mobeta long sampela taim bihain. Nau i taim bilong yumi long toktok long kaunsil na mipela i no laikim kaunsil.

PATROL

OFFICER: Hell! It'll probably take ages to get any sense out of these people. They can bloody well go back to those dark old days if that's the way they want it.

DISTRICT

OFFICER: Oh, no. I think they are going to give up the struggle eventually even if they don't accept the proposals today.

MAKATI: *(realizing their anger)*

Mi na olgeta man hia mipela i laikim yupela ol man bilong Raluana. Mi save gut long yupela na dispela tingting long askim yupela long kaunsil, i no tingting bilong mipela, em i tingting yet bilong nambawan gavman Cleland long Port Moresby. Mi no ken putim yupela long kalabus long yupela i no laikim kaunsil, em i rong. Bambai samting yet long nambawan gavman. Yupela ol nambawan pipal long hap long Rabaul na mi gutpela pren tru bilong Kepas na yupela olgeta. Tasol wanem wok tru long dispela kivung?

FIRST MAN: *(at the top of his voice)*

Makati, giaman bilong yu i no liklik. Hamas taim bambai mipela i tokim yu?

SECOND MAN: Yes, hamas taim?

THIRD MAN: *(shouting angrily)*

Tromoi han long em. Het i pen pinis long kaunsil, kaunsil, kaunsil.

KEPAS: Orait inap. Makati sapos yu askim, yu askim ol pipal bilong mi long kivung, bambai i no long taim pait bambai i bruk. Olsem mi laik tok dispela komiti bilong mipela i olsem tasol kaunsil. Kivung i wokim sampela gutpela samting pinis long ples bilong mipela, na yu lukim sampela pinis long ol dispela wok. *(He turns to the crowd.)* Makati i laik bambai Nason i toktok liklik.

NASON

TOKABAIT: *(getting up and addressing the crowd)*

Makati i bin askim mi long toktok liklik long kaunsil long wanem olsem yupela harim pinis mipela i bin kirapim wanpela long hap bilong mipela long, Nangananga na Toma. Olsem tu long Reimber na Vunamami ol i bin kirapim tupela kaunsil. Mi laik tokim olsem Mr Makati i tok pinis kaunsil em i bikpela samting tru na em gutpela samting tru. Gavman i papa bilong yumi olgeta long Papua na Nu Gini. Wanem samting gavman i laikim yumi long wokim, yumi mas harim. Makati i tok pinis long . . .

FIRST MAN: *(angrily)*

Orait, Nason inap. Yu laik tanim plet, yu bilong we? Yu masta na yu laikim helpim ol, ha, yu bilong we? Yu husat? *(Tuvi makes a signal to the crowd with his hands and the men immediately stand up and advance towards where Makati and party are. The First Man gets hold of Nason and kicks him to the ground.)* Yu, husat? Yu husat, yu masta, yu kaunsil, ha? Yu kaunsil, ha, yu kaunsil, yu bladi wait bastet. *(He kicks Nason more. A brawl starts. Tuvi gets hold of Makati, who tries to help Nason. Makati soon finds himself in the centre of the brawl.)*

TUVI: Maski yu pren bilong mipela. Maski yu nambawan kiap. Yu ken polisim lek bilong mipela pastaim. *(He kicks him to the ground with his only good leg.)* Yu, ol taim laik kam giamanim mipela hia. *(He whacks him on the head with his crutches. A big shout, like that of the Red Indians during an attack, is let out. Obviously it has some significance in the Tolai custom. It is usually a symbol of manliness and the secret Dukduk society. Suddenly all the other members of Makati's party, except the assistant district officer,*

A MEMBER OF

THE PUBLIC: Em kain pasin bilong ol tasol hia. Ol laik bosim yumi ol taim olsem ol pikinini, olsem yumi nogat save.

TUVI: *(replying to the judge)*

Nogat, long wanem ol yet i laik toktok strong long kaunsil. Mipela tokim ol mipela i no laik na Mr Makati i strong yet.

JUDGE: In your village, if somebody attacks a luluai or a tultul what will happen to him?

TUVI: Bambai em i go long kot.

JUDGE: *(having established the point)*

Tuvi, did you strike Mr McCarthy with your crutch?

TUVI: Yes sir.

THIRD MAN: Tokim em Tuvi, ol i no save bilip liklik long yumi ol blakman. Samting yumi tokim ol planti taim pinis ol i no harim yumi liklik.

SECOND MAN: Tru ol i no stret liklik. *(He shakes his head.)*

THIRD MAN: Bambai yumi tok wanem samting long ol yet hia. Em nau ol laik bulsit long yumi tasol. *(The judge stops writing and turns to the second accused.)*

JUDGE: ToGigi, did you strike Mr Brown?

TOGIGI: Yes, long wanem bel bilong mipela i hat tumas long ol kain toktok bilong ol. Sampela long ol tok nogutim mipela long ol kain tok olsem buskanaka. Em i no stret.

JUDGE: Did you strike Nason ToKabait?

TOGIGI: Yes, long wanem long taim em laik toktok long mipela em laik helpim ol long tok strong tumas long kaunsil, kaunsil, kaunsil.

JUDGE: Did you know it is against the law to strike another man?

TOGIGI: Yes, tasol em yet rong ia. Em save pinis mipela no laik kaunsil na em laik toktok strong long em yet.

SECOND MAN: *(muttering to the others)*

Bambai yumi no nap hia ol wantok. Samting yumi save ol rong bambai ol no nap harim toktok bilong yumi.

JUDGE: Suppose a man here in town fights another man, what will happen to him?

TOGIGI: Bambai ol polis kisim em na putim em long kot.

JUDGE: You are therefore guilty of having committed a crime because you have struck a man for no good reason according to the law. Do you have anything more to say, Mr ToGigi?

TOGIGI: Yes, mipela no ting dispela fait em rong bilong mipela. Mipela tokim ol planti taim pinis mipela no laik kaunsil na ol no laik harim toktok bilong mipela. Makati i strong yet. Nason laik helpim em. Em no stret liklik long wanem ol mekim mipela kros mo. Olsem mipela ting mipela nogat we mo long tokim ol long mipela no laik kaunsil tasol long paitim ol long soim kros bilong mipela. Em stret tasol long paitim ol.

JUDGE: You have already heard that it is unlawful to strike another man whatever the cause may be. Now, is that all you have to say?

TOGIGI: Yes. *(He goes back to his seat. Meanwhile, as the judge is writing down something, conversation goes on among ToGigi and the others.)*

Ating yumi nap winim kot tasol yumi no nap nau. Makati givim em pinis olgeta toktok bilong yumi na em laik painimout tasol sapos ol dispela toktok tru o nogat. Olsem na mi ting bambai yumi lus hia.

FIRST MAN: Na yu ting bikipela man bilong gavman yumi paitim: yumi no nap winim kot. Em i gavman, bambai yumi tok wanem.

TOGIGI: Ating yumi nap kisim wanpela loa tasol em no nap nau. Olsem tu sapos yumi kisim

em long helpim yumi long kot. ating bambai gavman no ken tok orait long em, long wanem dispela kot em bilong Makati, i mas win na yumi olgeta i mas go long kalabus. Em olsem rot bilong ol hia.

ALWAS: Na yu ting olgeta samting ol stretim pinis wantaim Makati. nau olsem long lo bilong gavman yumi mas kam pastaim long kot long bulsit long yumi. Tasol samting tru ol stretim pinis wantaim Makati na Nason, long putim yumi olgeta long kalabus.

TOGIGI: Em nau ating jas laikim yu. (*Alwas goes forward and takes his place.*)

JUDGE: Mr Darius Alwas, did you also lay your hands on Mr McCarthy, Mr Brown and Mr Nason ToKabait?

ALWAS: Yes tasol mi no bin paitim tupela masta hia. Mi bin paitim tasol Nason long wanem em laik helpim ol long tok strong yet long mipela long kirapim wanpela kaunsil.

JUDGE: Did you know that it is wrong for a man to strike another man?

ALWAS: Nogat. mi no bin save long dispela lo. Ol no save tokim mipela long ol kain lo olsem. Mipela pait planti taim pinis long ples na gavman no bin kam long stretim ol dispela pait. Mipela no paitim ol nating, nogat. ToGigi tokim yu pinis, ol yet rong long dispela long wanem, ol no laik harim toktok bilong mipela. (*The judge writes something.*)

SECOND MAN: Em pasin bilong ol masta ol kam giamanim yumi long kisim giraun bilong yumi na nau gen ol laikim yumi long kirapim kaunsil. Bladi bulsit.

JUDGE: Did you know, Mr Alwas, that it is against the law to stop administration officials in the carrying out of their duty?

ALWAS: Mipela no save long dispela lo. Long wanem ol yet Makati na Nason na ol narapela, ol laik kam na toktok strong long samting mipela no laik? Em no stret. Sapos em lo bilong gavman, orait watfo ol laik mekim bel bilong mipela hat tumas long tok strong long kaunsil, kaunsil. Em tasol dispela samting mipela kros long en, na mipela paitim ol long en.

JUDGE: Well, Mr Alwas, you also have gone against the law by unlawfully causing bodily harm to another man, in this case to Mr Nason ToKabait. Have you anything else to say?

ALWAS: Nogat, sir. (*He retires to his place. The judge pauses to write something down.*)

THIRD MAN: Maski yumi go long kalabus. Six mun samting nating. Maski long dispela bladi kaunsil.

ALWAS: Na olsem mi tok pinis na ToGigi tok pinis ol laik bulsit long yumi nau hia. Samting ol stretim pinis wantaim Makati na Nason. Lukim tupela stap we, ol no stap hia long kot.

TOGIGI: Ol save mo bambai yumi tok wanem. Samting bilong ol masta yumi save long ol kain pasin long toktok long kot. Olsem bambai toktok bilong yumi go nating. Em no nap harim yumi. Sapos yumi baim wanpela loa long helpim yumi ating bambai yumi orait liklik tasol nau bambai no nap hia. ToVurue, ating ol laikim yu.

JUDGE: ToVurue, did you also strike the government officials?

FIRST MAN: Em i tru. Mi tu olsem tasol olgeta man long Raluana mi bin kros nogut tru long toktok bilong Makati na long Nason long kaunsil. Sapos ol no tok strong ating no nap mipela paitim ol.

JUDGE: Did you know, Mr ToVurue, that it is against the law to hit another man?

FIRST MAN: Long dispela lo mi no save. I nogat wanpela man yet long gavman i bin tokim mipela long dispela lo. Tasol mipela gat lo long ples long dispela.

JUDGE: Ha ha . . . Do you have anything else to say?

FIRST MAN: Yes sir. Mi ting sapos Makati na Nason tupela stap wantaim yumi nau, bambai

yumi nap stretim gut toktok. Em no stret long mipela tasol kam long kot. na ol nogat.

JUDGE: Is that all you have to say? Well, as far as I am concerned I am here to judge you, not Mr McCarthy, not Nason and certainly not the others. *(ToVurue goes back to his seat.)*

FIRST MAN: *(telling Tuvi and the others)*
Mi askim em long wanem Makati na Nason tupela no stap long dispela kot. Na em tok em dispela kot bilong yumi tasol wanem yumi bin pait.

TUVI: Nogat, olsem ToGigi tok pinis ol stretim pinis toktok wantaim Makati na Nason. Nau ol toktok bilong yumi em samting nating. Dispela kot em bilong painimaut tasol husat i bin pait. Olsem na mi laikim yu na yu. *(He points at the Second and Third Men.)* Sapos em askim yu long yu tupela bin paitim ol tu, tokim ol stret yes mi bin paitim olgeta. Long wanem ating, yumi olgeta bambai go long kalabus hia. Ating bambai ol salim yumi olgeta long six mun mi harim olsem. Em nau ating em laikim yu. *(The Second Man takes his place in the witness box.)*

JUDGE: Did you also strike the government officials?

SECOND MAN: Ating.

JUDGE: Well, you have committed a crime. Have you anything to say?

SECOND MAN: Nogat masta. *(He goes back to his seat.)*

TUVI: Em tok wanem?

SECOND MAN: Em wankain tok bilong em tasol hia. Yumi olgeta bin rong long paitim ol. Tasol em no stret liklik. Em tru bambai no nap harim toktok long yumi hia long ol dispela samting yumi tokim em long en.

TUVI: Bambai yumi no nap olsem ToGigi tok pinis, sapos yumi bin kisim wampela loa long helpim yumi, bambai orait liklik. Tasol olsem ating gavman bambai no ken tok orait long dispela long wanem olsem, ToGigi tok pinis dispela kot em ol na Makati em bikpela kiap hia. Ating, em i laikim yu nau. *(The Third Man takes his place in the witness box.)*

JUDGE: Did you also lay your hands on the administration officials?

THIRD MAN: Yes sir, olgeta.

JUDGE: Did you know that it is not right for a man to strike another man without a reasonable cause?

THIRD MAN: Ating Makati na Nason tupela bin rong long dispela. Ol no harim toktok bilong mipela liklik. Samting mipela tok planti taim pinis mipela no laik kaunsil na tupela laik strong yet. Mipela tokim ol mipela gat kivung pinis.

JUDGE: Tell me, what does your kivung do? *(The judge knows all about the kivung but he pretends that he doesn't.)*

THIRD MAN: Kivung bilong mipela em olsem tasol kaunsil.

JUDGE: I see. Do you want to say anything else?

THIRD MAN: Nogat. *(He returns to his seat.)*

TUVI: Em askim long kivung?

THIRD MAN: Yes.

TUVI: Em orait em save pinis long en.

JUDGE: *(pausing to write)*
Tuvi, ToGigi, Alwas, and the other men, have you got anything else to say before I pronounce the verdict? *(Alwas and ToVurue both start to speak, but Alwas beats ToVurue to it.)*

ALWAS: Yes, Makati em gutpela pren bilong mipela na olsem tu Nason. Tasol ol yet rong. Samting mipela tokim ol mipela no laikim na ol strong yet long en. Ol askim tu long

kivung bilong mipela na dispela mekim bel bilong mipela hat tru. Mipela kros tru na paitim ol long soim ol mipela no laikim tumas kain toktok bilong ol long kaunsil.

JUDGE: Has anyone else anything to say?

TUVI: Nogat em tasol.

JUDGE: *He pauses but no one else replies.*

Then I pronounce the verdict. This court finds you Tuvi, ToGigi, Alwas and the three other men guilty of the offences of which you are charged. I sentence you all to six months imprisonment. *(The court case ends and the prisoners are led away by police. Exit all.)*

SCENE FOUR

The visitors have just served their six months sentence and have arrived back in the village. The luluais and tultuls have arranged for a big feast and singsing ceremony to welcome them back. It is to be a day of feasting and dancing. The six men take their seats before the crowd in the centre of the village.

KEPAS: *(addressing the crowd)*

Tude em bikipela de bilong yumi olgeta. Yumi soim gavman pinis yumi no laikim kaunsil. Ol dispela man sindaun hia, yupela olgeta save ol kambek pinis long kalabus long Rabaul. Yumi bin rong long dispela pait tasol ol tu bin rong. Nau ol kambek pinis yumi ken hamamas mo long en. Kaunsil nau ken wet long bihain taim, na kivung bilong yumi ken go het yet. Em tasol liklik toktok bilong mi. *(The crowd applauds.)*

PENIAS: *(addressing the crowd)*

Olsem Kepas tok pinis tude em de bilong hamamas. Yupela save pinis yumi no nap winim gavman long kot long wanem ol save mo long kain, kain, bulsit bilong ol. Tasol nau long soim gavman ol man bilong yumi bin win tu long yumi long dispela samting kaunsil, mi laikim bambai yumi singsing go nap long tu lait. Em tasol *(The crowd applauds.)*

KEPAS: Mi laik nau bambai Tuvi toktok long yumi. *(Suddenly, women everywhere burst into tears. They sob and cry as Tuvi gets up to speak.)*

TUVI: Yumi olgeta save pinis yumi bin rong long kirapim dispela pait long Makati. Tasol lo bilong gavman mipela bin go long kalabus. Dispela kot i no bin stret liklik tasol bambai mipela tok wanem. Em kot bilong ol masta na ol mo save gut, long winim mipela. Jas em no harim toktok bilong mipela. Tasol mipela no bin wari long kalabus long wanem mipela bin laik long soim ol yumi gat save. Em nau mi tokim yupela long dispela samting, maski kaunsil. Kaunsil ken stap pastaim na kivung ken go het yet. Em tasol liklik toktok bilong mi. *(The crowd applauds.)*

KEPAS: *(addressing the crowd)*

Yumi olgeta harim toktok bilong Tuvi pinis. Ol toktok nau pinis na olsem yupela harim pinis maski kaunsil. Kivung ken go het yet. *(Suddenly, a member of the secret men's society, the Dukduk, gives out a very loud shout: E atumarang ToGigi, ha. From behind a special enclosure, specially constructed for them, appear two dukduks. They come out to where the men are.)*

KEPAS: *(greeting them)*

Atumarang ToGigi. *(The dukduks jump around displaying their freshly painted masks.)*

PENIAS: Ha. ToGigi na ba. (*The dukduks disappear back behind the enclosure.*) Nau mipela laikim olgeta sanap long lain na sikan long ol man hia. (*The crowd forms into a line and files past the visitors, shaking their hands.*)

KEPAS: (*requesting the first group of men to get ready for the first singsing*)
Olgeta man harim, mi laikim ol man bambai ol ken kamaut nau na singsing.

PENIAS: Ating ol meri tu ken go redi.

KEPAS: Yes, tokim ol, ol ken redi tu.
Moments later the men's group arrive, and they begin the singsing with this song; the song is called 'A Wutung'—the name of a special fruit from a tree:

U-uia ra ura turagu
Gori mulai amur watur warike tarika go ra logo na buai
Pina puongo ta wewet ati gori ra ravian orai eao.
Na woko ta ra liu kai Kepas tago ra wat
Pi una gire ra minamar ai ra kangal tara lokor
Ma i tamtavurvuru ma ra lur ilabura
Tara matai mavat, orai eao.

Tatak ra balana na buai
Torakan ra minigulai
Kabange ra gunan ma ra ninongon
Ivuvul marmari ra guria tatang wakilang
Ma ra minamar kai ra teo na male oral me
Larai ial-i na wako go ra mi
Kai ra tabaran akana ra matana kaia ToGigi ma Tuvi
Ma ra lur mamara itangi muri-i a liu
Na tavalilai walongore ealer.

Tar pipil taun iau nanai ra balana kor
Nania ra balana pidik ra ura bul imari i u
Tanawawigu una par walar iau
Mara gita ma ukalele
Upi ina malagane mara lomo
Ia nana itutur natugu iwarweai tara bakana marovot
Dave Alwas ma ToVurue
Waki a liu taunia na keta nor ae.

Na tar matam u we tar matam uro ToKepas
Tar matana winirua nam ra matam
Uri una wana kan awet
Tuvi wali-i matuagu ma turagu
Dora warboboi tatar
Madora ki na wurnunuk na tinangi-uliran
Kamu gunan go iwana kan awet.

KEPAS: Tenkyu tumas. (*The crowd applauds.*) Nau ol meri ken kam wantaim singsing bilong ol. Bihain yumi ken lukim tupela dukduk. (*Just as he finishes talking. Makati arrives on the scene with his driver.*) Gude tru long yu Mr Makati. Long taim no si yu. Olsem wanem yu orait long wokabaut i kam. (*They shake hands.*)

MAKATI: Long taim no si yu tu, Kepas. Yes, mi orait. Planti liklik maunten tumas na mi sotwin liklik. Yes, mi harim yupela gat bikpela singsing na mi kam long lukim yupela. Tasol mi pret liklik long yupela yet nogut bambai yupela kros gen long mi.

KEPAS: Ha ha . . . em orait. Hamas polisman ol kam wantaim yu nau. Planti ating.

MAKATI: Ha ha . . . Mi no save. Nogat mi no kam long dispela. Mi kam long lukim singsing bilong yupela. Nogat polisman kam wantaim mi, draiva tasol. Na olsem wanem yupela kros yet?

KEPAS: Nogat, mipela lukim yu kam na mipela ting yu kam long pinisim toktok bipo yumi no pinisim hia.

MAKATI: *(smiling)*
Nogat, mi lusim tingting long dispela pinis. Mi laik kam long lukim singsing bilong yupela na olsem tu long tokim yupela mi laik bambai yumi pren gen. Mi laik bambai mi pren gen wantaim ol pipal bilong Raluana. Olsem bipo yet. Mi nogat tingting mo long dispela samting yupela bin wokim long mi. Tasol sapos yupela gat kros yet long mi long dispela, ating mobeta sapos mi gobek.

CROWD: *Suddenly, the crowd standing by lets out a big shout of protest:* Mipela no laikim kaunsil, Makati. Go home, Makati, sapos yu laik toktok long kaunsil. No kaunsil for Raluana tenkyu, Makati. Go to hell with kaunsil.

KEPAS: *(addressing the crowd)*
Nogat nois ikam long yupela mo. Orait olgeta harim, mi laik toktok long yupela. Yupela olgeta lukim Makati pinis na ating yupela kros long wanem em stap wantaim yumi. Mi laik tokim yupela olsem, em no kam long toktok long kaunsil gen, nogat.

A MEMBER OF THE CROWD: Rausim em. Em kam mekim wanem.

KEPAS: Orait mi no pinisim toktok long mi yet. Em bin harim bambai yumi holim bikpela singsing long ples, na em laik kam long lukluk. Em kam tu long tokim yumi olsem, em laik bambai em pren gen wantaim ol pipal bilong Raluana. Olsem na em kam long soim yumi em no kros mo long dispela samting yumi bin wokim long em.

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE CROWD: Hamas polis em bringim kam?

KEPAS: Nogat polisman kam wantain em. Em tasol na draiva bilong em tupela kam. Em tasol mi laik tokim yupela long en. *(Kepas and Makati shake hands in front of the crowd to mark the renewal of friendship.)*

MAKATI: Tenkyu tru Kepas na yupela olgeta ol pren bilong mi. Mi hamamas tumas long yupela.

KEPAS: Em tasol yupela ken gohet nau. *(The singsing resumes.)* Olsem wanem yu laik sindaun liklik? Olsem longpela wokabaut tumas kam long rot, na mi ting bambai yu laik malolo liklik.

MAKATI: Yes, mi laik sindaun na malolo liklik.

KEPAS: Yu laik sindaun long haus?

MAKATI: No, no, maski long haus, yumi sindaun long gras. Em orait. *(A couple of mats are placed on the grass and Makati and Kepas sit down while the singsing is going on.)*

KEPAS: Tuvi bambai kam. *(He takes out a bottle of whisky.)* Olsem i tambu long mipela, tasol nau i narapela taim. Em taim long hamamas long mipela na olsem tu em taim long mipela long soim nambawan kiap long mipela no kros mo long em long kaunsil. *(He hands Makati a glass of whisky.)*

MAKATI: Em orait, mi tu mi ken soim hamamas bilong mi long mi pren gen wantaim ol man long Raluana. *(Tuvi joins them and he and Makati shake hands.)*

TUVI: Hamas polis yu kisim kam wantaim yu? *(He laughs.)* Mi lukim yu na mi ting yu kam long kisim mipela ken go bek long kalabus.

MAKATI: *(jokingly)*
Yes, mi kam long lukautim husat man i dring. *(They burst into laughter.)*

TUVI: Tru em orait bambai nambawan kiap bilong yumi go long kalabus pastaim. Pastaim em taim bilong mipela long go long kalabus. Nau em taim bilong kiap long wanem i no bin kam long kot.

KEPAS: Na tokim ol polis tu em bin spak nogut tru, na em bin kirapim bikpela pait. *(They all laugh again.)*

MAKATI: Ha ha, em i gutpela tingting tasol ol polisman no nap putim nambawan kiap long kalabus, long wanem em bikpela man long gavman. Lo bilong gavman tok ol blakman no ken dring ol masta tasol. Ol bilong Raluana no bihainim dispela lo, ol mo bikhet tumas. Maski ol ken go bek long kalabus.

KEPAS: Wantaim nambawan kiap Makati. *(They laugh and drink on and on. After a while they stop cracking jokes.)*

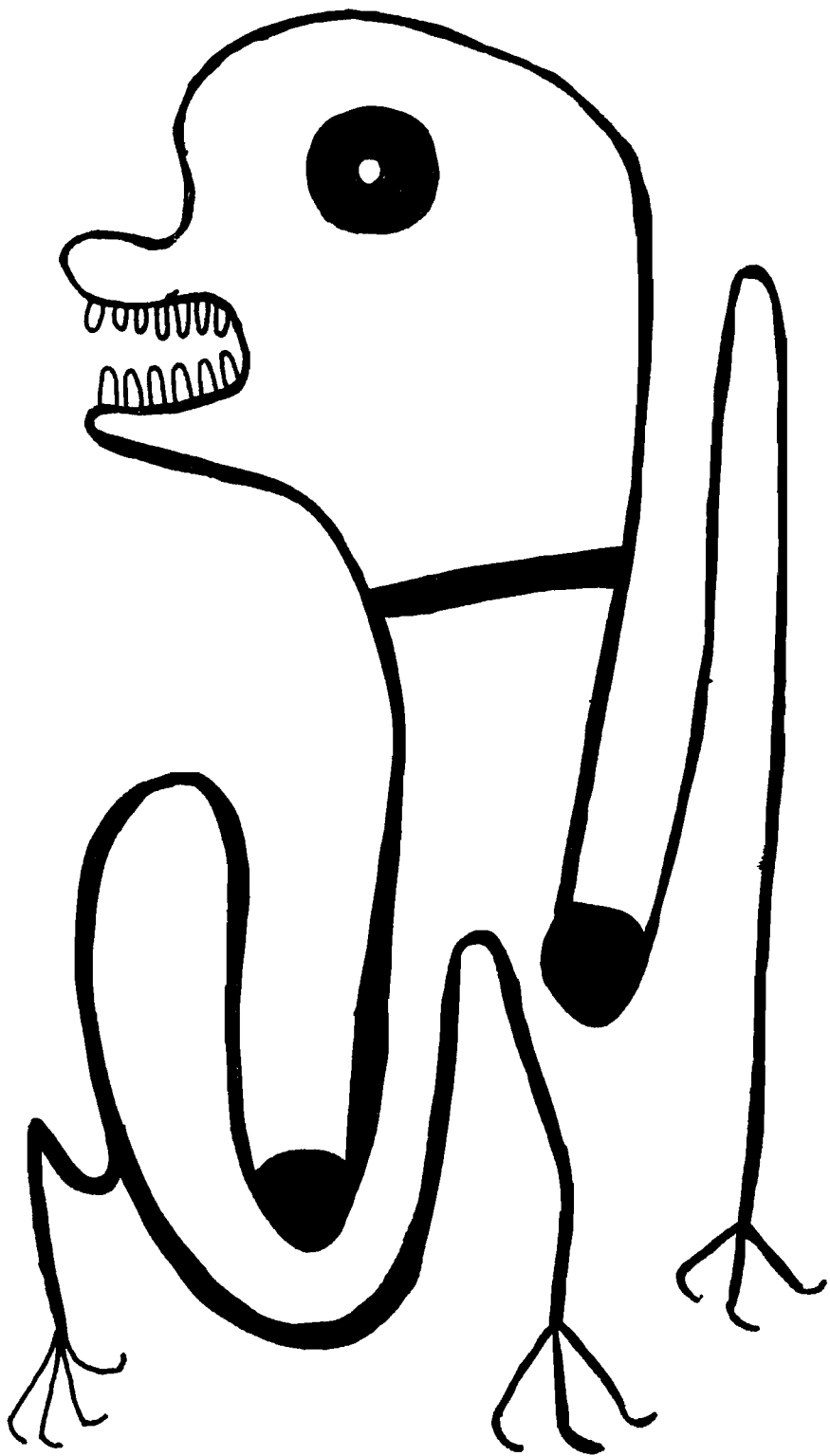
MAKATI: Yes, mi kam long wanem mi no laik bambai yupela ting mi kros yet long dispela samting yupela bin mekim long mi. Na ating long wik bihain, bambai mi kambek long toktok wantaim yupela long wanpela samting gavman laik wokim long ples bilong yupela. Na dispela long skul yet, bambai gavman i wokim sampela nupela haus kapa long skul bilong yupela yet.

KEPAS: Dispela long wik bihain long wanem de?

MAKATI: Yes, long wik bihain long Tunde.

TUVI: Gutpela tru ol papa bilong mipela. Na olsem long mi nap long gobek long wok bilong mi?

MAKATI: Yes, em tu wanpela samting mi kam long lukim yu long en. Edukesin Dipatmen i tok yu ken gobek long wok bilong yu. Dispela em tingting bilong mi yet long yu gobek long wok bilong yu long skul bilong yupela yet. *(They are all smiling at one another now. Then suddenly the sound of garamut is heard. The dukduks emerge from behind their special enclosure. Their dancing ends the play.)*



CARGO

by Kama Kerpi

'Cargo . . . cargo is what our people want. It has thrown everyone into madness,' said Abram. 'We must act now or never,' he added as an afterthought, taking off the bandage around Cain's arm.

'It was as if a man who was eating a meal prepared by his wife suddenly jumped up with anger on hearing from his friend that at midday his wife was caught opening her legs to her secret lover. But I cannot understand why the white men are so greedy as to keep the secret to themselves,' responded Cain, closing his eyes as Abram pressed his fingers around the boil on his right arm. 'We are the proper owners and demand that secret to be torn open. All those endless debates at the men's house has brought us nowhere.'

'It must be like this boil,' said Abram, pressing Cain's boil a little harder. 'I mean, the secret of our dead people's cargo.'

'Someone has got to tear it open.' He felt the pain shoot through his arm spasmodically, and he winced, feeling the blood pulsing around the boil. The pain was terrible and he closed his eyes several times. The desire and frustration to obtain dead people's cargo must be like this boil that was bulging with pus. Maybe to certain people the secret was like a pain in their hearts, growing as their anxieties increased. As these thoughts entered his mind, Cain felt like driving a sharp nail into the centre of the boil to force out all the pus and let in air.

'Last week Bola's brother, returning from a coastal town, claimed that he brought with him the secret of obtaining cargo from our dead people. If what he says is true then it's the holy water and the Bible that is keeping us blind. And to think that the Church has prevented us

from acquiring our property. It's a little hard to believe.'

'Bullshit with the Church,' said Cain as he ran his eyes up and down where new boils were developing on his arm. Maybe all the churches were like those contagious boils, he told himself. 'They preach "thou shall not steal," and yet they steal under our nose,' he added.

Cain had never before spoken against the churches. Now that he was beginning to, the ugliness the boil created on his arm must have had some effect. Since the boil had been giving him a lot of physical pain he had begun to be more aware of another type of pain that occurs in the soul—a spiritual pain. But then all pains can be cured and this suggested that there must be some hope in store.

'They preach the Ten Commandments, yet they soil their hands in things that are not theirs,' said Abram. 'We have become slaves to their teachings. Our people say when an enemy smiles at you his heart curses you and wishes you ill fate.'

Abram, having finished bandaging Cain's arm, averted his eyes to the far ridges where his people lived and farmed. You are all blind, ignorant fools, he told himself. It's a pity they do not realize that it's the Church that's robbing them. The pity he had for them turned around to face him. This created a sense of mission that crept into his heart, and he began to wrestle with it silently. Sure enough, pity had created hope and hope in turn increased his anxieties.

'Abram . . . what can we do?' said Cain.

'Just you answer me one question,' said Abram so quickly it was as if an idea that had crept into his mind was beginning to leave him. 'If a man came at you with a spear intending to

kill you, what would you do?" Abram moved closer to Cain's ear and almost whispered, 'You would not stand and watch . . . at least I wouldn't.'

'I wouldn't either . . . I would fight.'

'Cain, you have got the point . . . you have got it. You defeat him by simply taking the spear from him. And that's what I have been thinking about. If the Church is using the holy water and the Bible to blind us, we make use of them to defeat it.' Abram looked into Cain's face and blinked several times in the noon sun. He looked uneasy; he was planning something, and whatever it was it had to be checked twice if not three times.

'Bola's brother was simply saying that you defeat the Church by its own weapons. Bola must know more, at least the first steps of obtaining cargo.'

'Yes, he must. You know his sister died last week. He is playing marbles over there. Go and bring him over. He might need some marbles.'

Cain went over and brought back Bola.

'Do you need some marbles?' said Abram, rattling the marbles in his pockets. 'You can have twenty. But before you have them, tell me about this secret your brother brought with him.'

The question had taken Bola by surprise. A look of hate appeared on his face, and deep inside he sneered and wished that they would take a bee-line to hell. Bola's sister had died not long ago and he was planning to catch the Reverend Father stealing the cargo. And what his sister gave belonged to his family. He had just lost a game of marbles and the twenty marbles in Abram's pocket would help him to get his own back. From his confused mind a saying began to take shape and then hammer at him. His father had always said that when a man dances at the first rains of the wet season he is foolish, because the storms that will be coming will kill him.

'It's a mission. Our people need help in the dark; we must lead the way. We must be the beacon in the night,' said Cain with emphasis, when he realized that Bola was not going to answer their question.

'And we can only do it by finding the secret of obtaining it . . . I mean the cargo,' added Abram. He realized that he had to convince Bola, otherwise he had to make guess work and start from there.

'You know ten pigs await anyone who discovers the secret,' said Cain. 'That's a lifetime wealth.'

'Really? But I do not need pigs. My father has got a lot of them.' Bola's tribe and Cain's and Abram's tribe had always been enemies. And Bola had not forgotten that their young men had killed a close relative of his father. He gave them a sullen look and went away.

'Greedy bastard. Son of a pig,' muttered Abram.

'Just think, ten pigs. I will ask my grandfather, who died last year, to help me. He used to like me above my other brothers and sisters. Last week my father slaughtered a pig near the old man's grave. My father requested him to watch over my steps.'

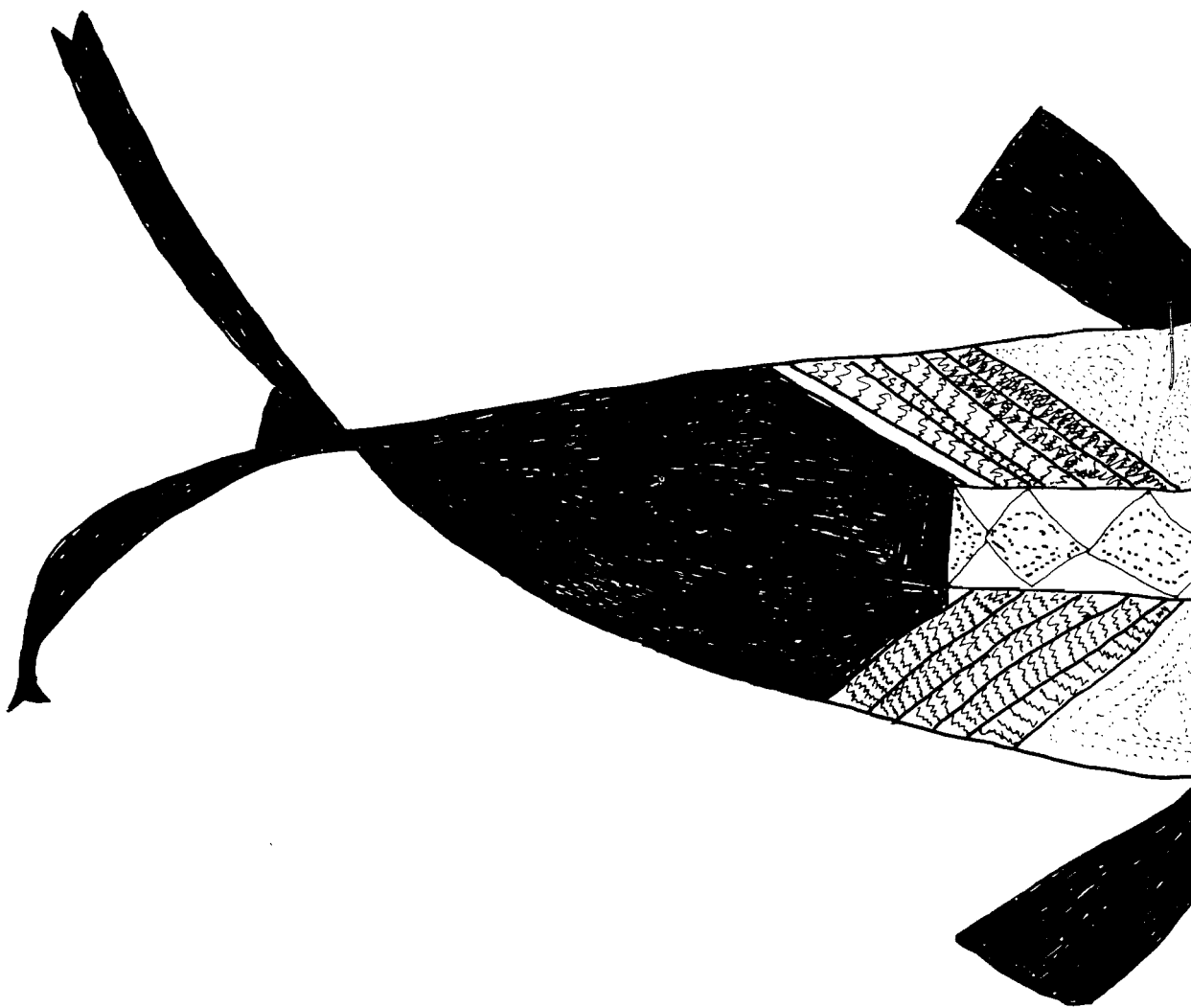
'That is probably the reason why you scored good marks in your schoolwork. I used to be better than you before.' Abram then looked around to ensure that no one was about and continued, almost whispering: 'A few days ago my father killed a pig in my grandmother's name, requesting that she should let my mother bear one last child in her old age; at least a boy to follow my footsteps in learning white man's knowledge. Our people have a saying that if you have a brother then in any fight your back is always protected—of course, you can apply it to anything.'

Cain watched a small boy walk towards the bell. The boy lifted up a big object and hit the bell. It was time for class; if they were late a big cane awaited them. Taking a deep breath he said, 'I have got a plan we might work at. We will talk about it after class. It may take a long time before the secret is in our hands.'

'I think my plans are similar to yours. We can defeat them by their own weapons. When we discover the secret we will hand it over to the elders and at the same time claim our ten pigs.'

'Yeah, we will do that.'

The two boys walked towards the classroom,



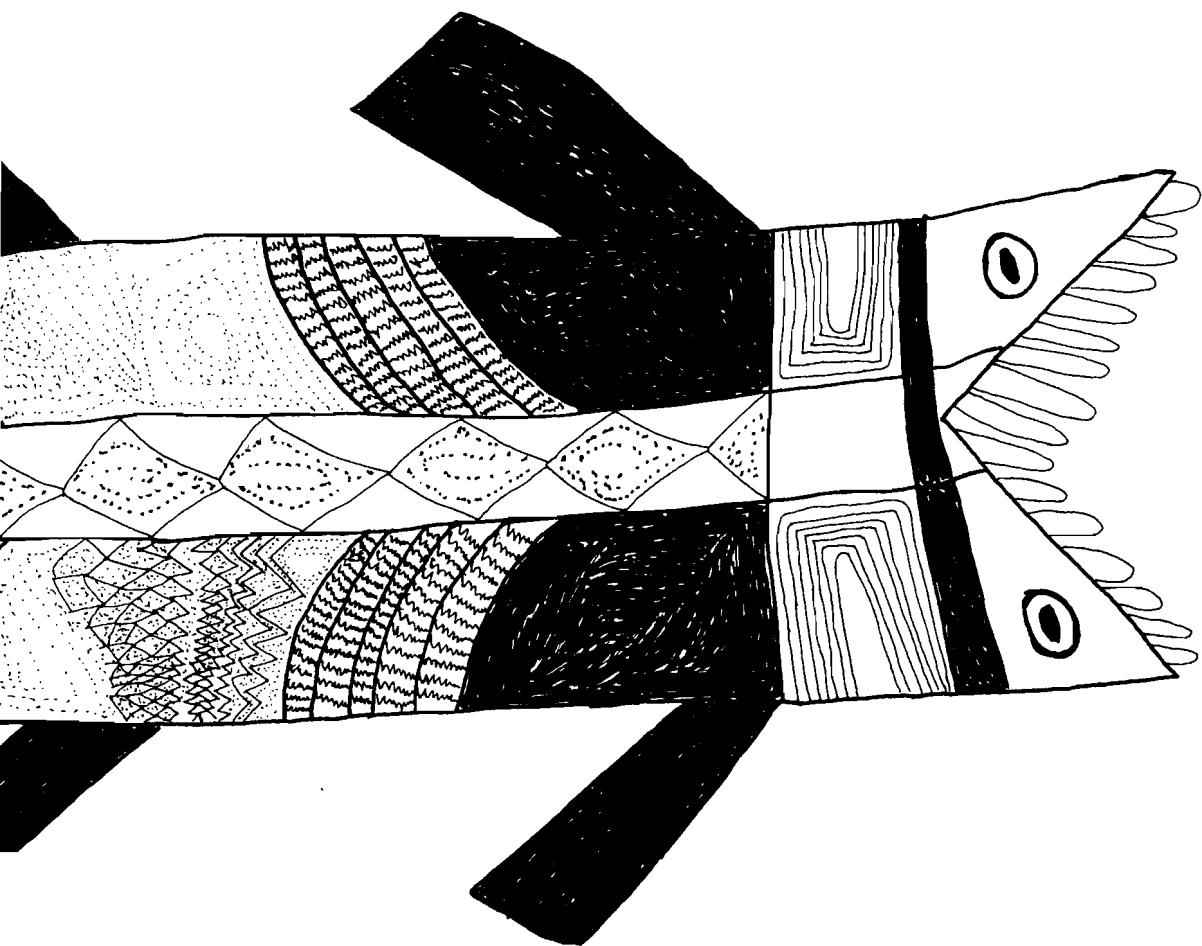
privately making great plans to find the secret of obtaining cargo. At times they were carried off into fantasy.

The half moon crept languidly from behind some low hills and poured its silver lights over the mission station. It was as if milk was poured on a table. The moonbeams danced on the leaves and the blades of grass like angels celebrating the homecoming of a prodigal son. The corrugated roof of the church reflected a greyish white colour, and in the silent atmosphere it resembled a mammoth statue. The stars twinkled in magnitude like countless Easter

candles, while the trees stood in mute silence casting vivid shadows on the lawn.

Two dark figures darted across the playground in mortal hurry as if they were the last species making for Noah's Ark. They made for the church and were immediately swallowed up in the dark. Far up at the altar was a glow of light that burnt day and night. It was symbolic of God's presence. They felt secure.

'Hold the cross and the Bible. I will go and get some holy water. It's at the back of the altar. I won't be long.' Abram's voice trailed off into silence. Giving the cross and the Bible to Cain, he vanished into the darkness.



Cain waited with the cross in his left hand and the Bible in his right. A good five minutes must have elapsed. His legs were beginning to pain a little, and the frigid air of the night began to send waves of shiver up and down his body. 'What is taking him so long?' he asked himself. He made a firm decision that he would have to go for Abram if he didn't come in the next few minutes. But he warned himself that their job must be fruitful. The darkness seemed to be alive with moving figures. They were beginning to test his courage. 'The mission must come to success,' he shouted silently to himself, closing his eyes. 'It's imperative that the elders have the

secret of obtaining our dead people's cargo. We must not fail. Our people have been fooled by the white man. It must come to success,' he whispered, impulsively folding his fist.

'Cain . . . where are you?' It was Abram's voice. For a moment Cain was taken aback.

'I am here. Did you get the holy water?'

'Sure I did!' exclaimed Abram, walking towards Cain's voice. 'Cain.'

'What?'

'I also got some wine!'

'But why wine? You will spoil our plans with . . .'

'Hold your tongue. Did they not say blood

and water ran down his body while hanging on the cross? I have perfected the plan by bringing in wine.'

'Yes . . . yes, you are right. I am beginning to have illusions of our kins dancing to the beat of the *kundus*!'

'Well stop it then. Let's get to work and have your daydreams come true,' said Abram.

Far into the night their ears tuned to a monotonous cry of a night bird.

'That's the right moment. The dead people are stirring alive in their graves. We must track Reverend Father; otherwise he will elude our trap.' Abram's voice became inaudible as he fiddled in his hip pocket for a match. He struck one and immediately it burnt, a yellow flame with a ring of blue at the burning end. Cain tore a page from the Bible and set it on fire. Immediately the light cast horror figures on the cement wall of the church. Then they set the Bible down, the cross immediately on top of it.

'Let's begin the ceremony,' whispered Cain, holding up the light.

Abram poured a few drops of holy water into the cup of his hand and dripped it around the cross and the Bible. The church had not been swept, and, as the drops fell, round balls formed a ring around the objects. Then Abram drank half the wine, making the sign of the cross very slowly. He passed the bottle to Cain, who had not recovered from mumbling some prayers. Cain then began imitating Abram, and when he emptied the last drop of the contents he placed the bottle in front of him and, closing his eyes, awaited Abram to proceed with the prayers.

'The lord is my shepherd,' began Abram, 'of whom should I be afraid? If an enemy . . . ha ha . . .'

'Encamps against,' corrected Cain.

' . . . Encamps against me, let him tremble and fall. If a friend is deceitful, let him grow hairs in his eyes. O Lord, we hear; Cain, son of Koirap, and me, Abram, son of Sua, request you, in the presence of the darkness and the silence of the valley, the moon above, and the dark ridges awaiting dawn, to help us track down Reverend Father. Open our eyes, we pray, and let the riches pass on to the rightful owners.

We seek the guidance of Mary and all the saints and angels in heaven. In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost.'

'Amen,' they chorused. A smile of satisfaction hovered on their lips.

'You hold the cross, and if any devils attack us put the cross in front of you and walk towards them and say, "Be gone, devil! For the Lord is my light and my shepherd." I will hold the Bible.' As Cain's voice trailed off into silence, they got up and walked to the back of the church.

Immediately behind the church were the graveyards of both missionaries and devout Catholics who demanded before their deaths that they should be buried near the house of the Lord. It was affirmed that their spirits would make an agonizing journey to the house of the Lord if they were buried in the tribal graveyards scattered on the hills and the ridges. The graveyard at the back of the church was well-kept, with low flowers bubbling in profusion, like dripping on a hot frying pan. A few pine trees grew, with rich green natural needles. In the moonlight, they stood almost terrified, as if awaiting a death sentence. The Reverend Father's house stood parallel to the church with a neat lawn in between. His toilet was in line with his house, and because it was a few yards from the graves they had been suspicious about it. It was thought to be the passageway to the dead people's cargo beneath the graves. Previously, Cain and Abram had inspected the toilet and were convinced that the wooden hole was a passageway to the underworld, and if they followed Reverend Father they were bound to catch him tricking their grandfathers. Then they would explain where the cargo really went.

'We will wait under that coffee tree. It's near the toilet. Now, remember to recite the "Hail Mary" when your ears track the slightest movement!' They hurried across the lawn, kicking a few dried leaves. Sitting under the coffee tree, they waited tensely as if ready to pounce at their prey. The broad green leaves stole most of the moonlight but provided the best hiding place. And there they waited. The seconds crept into minutes and the minutes into hours. The half moon crept away from behind

the *nop* trees. An instinctive fear of failing crept into them, threatening to smash their optimism to shatters.

Suddenly their vagrant thoughts were distracted by a door opening and closing. It came from the direction of Reverend Father's house. The beam of a flashlight danced wildly on the lawn and then took its pace in front of a figure. For Cain and Abram, excitement shot through them, setting their hearts in vibrant tattoo. The fluid language of Reverend Father's movements suggested that he was hurrying on an errand. A smile of satisfaction appeared on their lips. He was hurrying to receive the goods, they told themselves.

Cain and Abram immediately held the cross and the Bible in front of them and whispered as many 'Hail Marys' as they could before he got any nearer.

'Do not lose sight of him,' whispered Cain when he paused after the fifth quick 'Hail Mary'.

'Em,' grunted Abram with a tinkle of anger for having been interrupted in his prayer. The Reverend Father stood for a brief moment and, after looking around, gave the door a push and walked in. The door let out a groaning sound. The flashlight threw its light, splinters of which escaped through the cracks and cast long golden figures on the lawn.

'What do we do? Should we give him a few minutes more? Or go in after him?'

'We will give him a few more minutes. Say about two minutes. When we think he is down the toilet we will follow him. We will then tell our kins why their cargo does not reach our hands.'

'You are right. We will tell them that it's the white man's Bible and holy water that has kept us blind.'

'What's that over there?' asked Abram in a startled manner, his hands impulsively pointing at two dark figures crawling on their bellies towards the back of the toilet.

'Hell, who could they be?' said Cain. His voice was barely audible, as if questioning himself.

'Look! They are peeping in through the

cracks!' The last word had not left Abram's mouth when the door was literally thrown open. The two figures sprinted away as if they had witnessed their dead grandfathers coming back to life. Meanwhile the Reverend Father flashed the light and surveyed the vicinity. For a brief moment the light fell on the coffee tree where Cain and Abram were hiding, and seemed to stop. Cain sweated profusely, while Abram threw open his lap-lap and urinated due to fear. Fear of being caught crept over their desire to see the mission come to success. Both grieved but sighed when the Reverend Father hurried away, buttoning his long trousers, looking over his shoulder as if to check if anyone was following him.

'It's their fault. They spoiled our plans. Did you see fear on the Reverend Father's face against the moonlight?' said Cain.

'He hurried away as if he was discovered,' replied Abram. 'Let us go and find out who spoiled our plans.'

Cain and Abram dashed to the back of the church. There they encountered Bola and his friend Mickle. They were sitting trying to get back their breath after the fast run. Cain came forward and stood over Bola with a menacing look on his face.

'Why did you spoil our trap . . . you toothless ones?' he rattled as anger and bitterness flooded through him.

Bola was surprised to see Cain and Abram. 'They must have been after my sister's cargo,' he told himself. If they wanted a fight he would give them one, but for the moment he would control his anger.

'We were after my sister's cargo.' He spoke calmly, fighting to control his anger.

'But you spoiled our trap . . . stupid,' came back Cain's reply.

'You were out to steal my sister's cargo . . . you fat thief.'

'You cow. Did not my father push you to the ridges during the dark days of tribal warfare? Your father is a weak bull.'

A new madness took hold of Bola. An angry look appeared on his face. He stood up. His eyelids narrowed, his molars came together, his

fingers folded and the muscles around his arms tightened. He shook a little. Bola could not recall anyone calling his father a weak man. And no one dared to. How could anyone dare call his father a weak man? He was the father of the seven clans living on the ridge. He was well spoken of, and when he was at war with another tribe his name would blow with the wind. How could anyone dare speak false about his father?

'Your father impregnated a pig . . . you are their product,' shouted Bola.

This sparked a fight. At first they stood their ground and exchanged a few punches, then they grabbed each other, and as they rolled over and over on the grass they exchanged abuse. Both called upon the art of throwing each other that they had learned from older men. And at times wild fists were thrown only to scare the other.

Abram watched Cain. At first he seemed to do well, avoiding Bola's wild blows. But with boils all over his arms he would not last long.

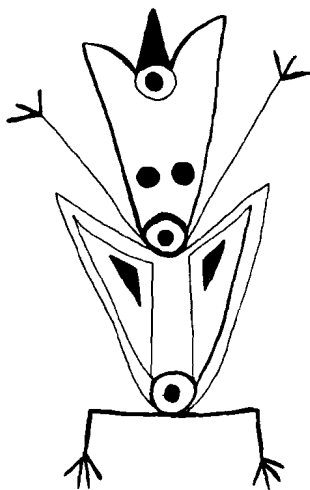
'Let's stop them,' said Abram when he realized that Bola was gaining the upper hand. It was some time before they pulled the two apart, and it was some time before the fighters calmed down from making attempts at getting each other.

'Listen, we are all after the secret of obtaining our dead people's cargo. Our people say that when a man gets up before the sun to work in the gardens he will get a lot of work done. Of course, he should shake off sleep, otherwise he would be a foolish man. I think we have been foolish. We must have some teamwork.' Turning to Bola he said, 'How about some teamwork?'

'We will think about it first,' replied Bola grudgingly.

They were all embittered by repeated failures. But another adventure awaited them. They must track the Reverend Father stealing their cargo. And all the wealth flowing into the hands of the white Reverend Father would arrest their interest. Maybe tomorrow night they would work as a team.

The glamour of the moonlight on the quiet mission station was enchanting and allayed their failure, moving a faint excitement in them. They would not abandon themselves to despair, because tomorrow was a new day, and there another adventure awaited them. The moon was high above, smiling. Nothing changed.



HIS JOURNEY TO TUMA

‘Tomorrow,’ he said to his wife, ‘I will dream : it will be
the end of me.

Put on me the best garment that you can afford,
For at sunrise I will only see you in a glimpse.’
He was as good as his words. He left with dawn, peacefully,
And along the long dead trail, trodden only by those of his
kind,
His feet fell noiselessly, lightly, as light as air,
Leaving imprints invisible to a mortal eye.
He followed the sun, for he had no choice to go any other
way.

If ever he came to see the cause of his early death
His mortal kin would know for sure,
But it was not so, for he never turned back.

He fell into the deadly fangs of his mortal antagonists,
Who had feasted all through the night in wait for their
spirit prey.
Eyes adjusted by powerful magic to detect their prey’s
invisible progress,
They saw him leave.
Now they began their ceaseless, merciless beating and
mocking,
His cries of agony echoed into the empty air of the dead
world.
There is no second death for him or any of his kind.
He strived hard to keep pace with the sun,
Which suddenly seemed to go faster, towards the west.
One by one his antagonists gave up their murderers’ acts,
Vainly, for he will never die again.

But the end came so quickly—
The bloodshot rays of the sun met him
Standing on the coral cliff with the waves beating under
his feet.
‘One last glimpse,’ he said, ‘to the land which I have
loved so much.’
He cast a tearful glance east, then crossed the international
dateline
Into Tuma, the Island of the Spirits.

Joseph Jacob

JACKASS'S PROBLEM AS YET TO BE SOLVED

by Paul Kuma

It was late in the afternoon when I heard my Uncle Jackass calling at the top of his voice on the other side of the coffee field. I decided to turn a deaf ear to him, but: 'Paulus, Paulus, *mi laikim you igo long mission stua . . .*' When I heard the words '*mission stua*' I took to flight, heading across the coffee field to him without bothering to hear what followed. He heard me answering his call only once with '*yes mi kam*' and I was on the spot in no time.

Taking out a green note from his auctioned army shirt, which resembled a mechanic's suit, he told me to go to the mission store, which was approximately a mile away, and buy a large packet of smokes of Gold Leaf brand and a pound of sugar.

'*Bai mi mekim wanem wantaim half money,*' I asked after a fast mental calculation. He hadn't mentioned anything about the change because usually he told the person who was doing the shopping for him to please himself with the change.

'*Oh, half money ino bigpela, you can do wanim you laik. You bin helpim mi long pickim coffee bilong me from morning na you look dirty with the grease bilong coffee so baim soap or laik bilong you. You mas hari up igo na ikam bek before dark. Smoke na sugar ino bilong mifela em bilong wanfela meri, em bai ikam long haus bilong mi tunait. Na harim, you no ken toktok long rot wantaim youngfela meri you save?*

I took no notice of his last sentence, but all the same I nodded my head to show that I understood what he had said. It didn't mean that I was very happy or excited about going to the store. No, as a matter of fact I just wanted to have the pleasure of passing by my intended girlfriend's house, which was a couple of yards

off the footpath between the mission store and my home. The second reason was that I had been persuaded to help him in picking his coffee berries and now was the third day, so I wanted to take a rest.

My Uncle Jackass is a cunning sort of man and an unusual sort of person. He is regarded by the community as a lazybone because he is a great gambler, but somehow he manages to have all the necessary traditional wealth such as pigs, black feathers and two wives. In addition he got large acres of coffee.

Jackass is a very interesting sort of man. He talks in such a way that anybody who doesn't know his personality or character too well will always fall into his trap. The kind of language he uses is persuasive, which makes him get out of trouble very easily. Slick in handling difficult situations smoothly from start to finish simply by using persuasive and evocative language in his conversation.

Tough luck. While passing my intended girl's place I was on the alert for any noise or sound coming from anywhere in the direction of her house that would indicate she was at home, or her parents, but there seemed to be neither of them at home. The entire place seemed to be deserted. Too bad for me.

After having bought a packet of sugar and a large packet of cigarettes of Gold Leaf brand, I noticed that it was getting dark so I ran as if the devil himself was after me. With my heart beating like a baby bird's heart, and puffing like a dog which had just come to the end of a race, I arrived home. Seeing me quite exhausted, Jackass mocked me.

'*You save naw? Mi tok you no can grease wantaim meri long rot.*' In other words, 'I hope

you learned a lesson. Already I have told you not to talk with girls on the road.' In fact I did not meet any girls on the road, but because I was late I acted as if I did talk to girls on the road.

That evening in the house of Jackass's first wife, Ambkomna, we had three additional people: Jackass's mother-in-law, Kopap, and two gamblers, Matias and Andrias. Kopap came to get what she believed to be factual answers to the reasons for her daughter's barrenness. Matias and Andrias came to have eyewitness proof of what they had heard from someone, whereas Jackass and his wife were going to benefit most from the performance. This performance was expected to commence as soon as the so-called *amb-gol-mol*—woman who communicates with the spirits—arrived. By the way, I was there to discover and reveal her secret to the people.

Jackass's second wife already had a daughter after only two years of marriage, which showed that, after all, he wasn't to be blamed when his first wife, now in her tenth year of marriage, showed no symptom of pregnancy. Therefore Jackass, following his second mother-in-law's advice, went and asked the *amb-gol-mol* to come to his house and, by communicating with the spirits, get an answer to the problem. It was at the invitation that he was told by the 'woman who communicates with the spirits' to have a large packet of cigarettes of Gold Leaf brand and a one-pound packet of sugar ready.

'Oh! Yer, gutpela frend ikam pinis. Gutpela na traipela apinun tru.' Jackass greeted the expected visitor with words unheard of, such as 'traipela apinun'. Anyway, he took her into the house after he had embraced her outside and we shook hands with her in turns.

The woman was of middle age and of average height. She wore a colourful skirt and an overcoat over her blouse. There was nothing unusual except that she carried a newly made *bilum* which was half-full with something. Generally she was cleaner than I had expected. Squatting in a square room on the dried grass floor, with the fire blazing away in the centre of the square, were the six of us plus the strange woman who

had just come. The corner nearest to the door was taken up by Ambkomna; on the *amb-gol-mol*'s instructions, Matias, Andrias and I took up positions in another corner of the small room.

The corner opposite where Ambkomna sat was empty, whereas, in the corner opposite the one taken up by Matias, Andrias and me, was the *amb-gol-mol* in between Jackass and his mother-in-law. Lying between the old lady and the *amb-gol-mol* was the new *bilum*.

It was, according to my so-called 'sun's eye', half-past seven. The large saucepan was already boiling, and steam could be seen escaping from the edge of the lid. The packet of smokes was lying on the floor in front of the *amb-gol-mol* with several cups. At that moment, the *amb-gol-mol*, after being silent like a dumb goat, spoke up.

'Mi halim oletem ol wantok bilong mi i kam pinis. Yu pela drinkimi hap tea long suspan na larim hap bilong ol wantok.' So the spirits were on their way.

Without hesitation I took out the saucepan of tea and made tea for the people in the room. Because it was very hot and we were not going to take it easy I excluded the old lady. We gulped our plain tea with too much sugar as quick as possible so as to get it over with before the spirits arrived.

At this stage I had all sorts of queer ideas creeping into my schoolboy head. Not only me alone but all the rest as well. I learned later that the two gamblers went as far as thinking that the *amb-gol-mol* might read their minds, so avoided any thought that came to their heads concerning this strange woman. I found that the others, too, had a similar idea about the woman.

Jackass was waiting there patiently for the moment to come when the spirits would talk to him through the *amb-gol-mol*. The spirit that talked to him was supposed to be his dead father. Similarly, the spirit that talked to Jackass's wife and mother-in-law was to be the old lady's husband. He would talk to his wife and his unfruitful daughter.

Suddenly the silent night was broken by all sorts of spooky sounds of various tones outside somewhere, behind the *amb-gol-mol*. It was

well after eight now, and who knew what was really going on outside in the pitch darkness? Everybody in the room was as silent as anything. The room was so silent and still that we could clearly hear two house mice squeaking around in their nest in the *kunai* roof above our heads. Only the devil knew what the two creatures were doing.

Then quite distinctly we all heard a familiar sound of a song-like whistle somewhere outside the house. Instantly my eyes flashed over to the *amb-gol-mol* for any movement of her lips but saw not the slightest movement. She just sat there and said in her *tokples*, 'Jackass, that's your dead father greeting you, so say something to him. If you are well, say so, or if you have any problems, tell him your problems.'

Well, Jackass really got a shock. He had nothing to say, or more correctly, he did not know what to utter first. With shaking nerves he talked to his invisible father, who was by now thought to be somewhere in the room watching us.

'Oh father, I have done nothing wrong,' Jackass started off. 'I am well and, as you can see, in perfectly good health. However, I have one very serious problem. That is, my first wife here doesn't bear any fruit. As you have probably seen, we tried our very best since we were first married ten years ago, but so far seem to be unsuccessful, for there isn't any result of our all-night stay-ups. Can you give us the child if you are withholding?'

As soon as he had finished revealing what I thought to be his secret there was a very long but low-tone song-like whistle again. The interpretation of what I thought to be a meaningless whistle was for the *amb-gol-mol* a straightforward reply from Jackass's father, saying that he did not withhold the children. Instead, his father-in-law was said to be withholding the children because of some reason or other which he himself would explain.

Sure enough a whistle was heard. But this time the volume and tone of the whistle changed to a sharp, hurting whistle, which went on for quite a while before it ended. The interpretation this time gave the solution to the problem. The

amb-gol-mol, the middle-person between the living people and the dead, told us that the old man was very angry with his daughter for what she had done to him in the past.

Once when Ambkomna was a young girl she had a fight with her father. It was during this fight that she promised him that she would not get married while he was still alive. For giving her a sound beating she told him that she would get married after his death, so that her bride-price would go to the hands of other men of their clan.

Probably Ambkomna did not really mean to say that, but unfortunately it turned out that the old man died before she was married. So, as she had told her father, the bride-price paid by her husband went to other men of the clan, and not to her father, for he had already kicked the bucket.

If Ambkomna wanted a child she was to take a chicken and go with her husband Jackass to the cemetery and offer sacrifices near the old man's grave. After they had done that, the old man would release the children.

As soon as the *amb-gol-mol* finished her interpretation, we heard, still from the same direction behind the *amb-gol-mol*, two whistles. This time, when it was interpreted, it turned out that the spirits were thirsty. They wanted to share a cup of tea and some cigarettes. So that was why I had to buy the sugar and smokes!

So far I found no fault. The *amb-gol-mol*'s interpretation of the incident between the old man and his daughter was correct, for Jackass's wife admitted that she could recall the incident and was sorry now. Therefore, we all tended to believe in the *amb-gol-mol*, for Jackass's wife did not in any way inform her about the past incident beforehand.

The *amb-gol-mol* now set about preparing a plain cup of tea for the spirits. She first of all put into a large cup a spoonful of sugar. Then, very gently, she fetched tea from the bottom of the huge saucepan. I could not really get a chance to take a closer look at the cup, for I was at the far end, but I noticed that steam was rising from the cup as she took it out and placed it carefully behind but between herself and the old lady.

This showed that the spirits were right behind the *amb-gol-mol*.

After a couple of minutes there was a short whistle, which meant that the spirits had finished the tea. The *amb-gol-mol* asked Jackass's mother-in-law to bring out the cup from behind them. With shaking hands she brought out the cup, and we were astonished when we saw the cup empty.

Then the *amb-gol-mol* asked the spirits if they wanted to have a puff. Sure enough, there were two low whistles. So the *amb-gol-mol* opened the new packet of smokes, pulled out the golden covering labelled 'pull here' and placed the smokes where she had put the cup of tea. This time, when the whistle went, Jackass was asked to take out the Gold Leaf packet. The same result. There were cigarette ends and ashes at the bottom of the brand-new packet of Gold Leaf. That was something true!

After the spirits had left we resumed our normal conversation again, but I had all sorts of ideas now. Did the whistles really come from the spirits? How did the *amb-gol-mol* know about the fight between the old man and his daughter if the whistles were not from the spirits? How come the packet of smokes plus the cup of tea were empty? Did she not just dip the cup in the saucepan upside down and pretend that there was tea in it? Wasn't it possible to tuck the new packet of smokes inside her *bilum* and put an empty packet with ashes and ends on the ground?

But wait a minute! I found out the whole secret when I recalled a novel that I read. It described something very similar to what had been performed a moment ago. Congratulations to the schoolboy brain! In the novel the performer was called *ventriloquist*. I recall looking up the term in a dictionary and it read under *ventriloquism*: 'Act, art of speaking or uttering

sounds in such a manner that the voice appears to come from some other source than the speaker.'

Secretly, that same night, I informed Jackass about what I learned at school on ventriloquism. Jackass knew that I was not fooling him because he had once been to school when he was fourteen years old. Because he was too big to sit on benches made for kids of eight and ten years of age he was dismissed from school. However, during his two years of school he had learned to count and add up numbers like one plus one equals two, and not one plus one equals three, as he had once thought it should be, but could not prove.

Anyway, Jackass and I planned out everything before dawn that night. When dawn came, Jackass, in his unusual manner of speech, told the *amb-gol-mol* that he was very grateful to her for solving his insoluble problem. He told her that he was very sorry and ashamed that he had no *one shilling* at the moment to pay her the usual fee for her incredible work. Jackass told her that he would pay an extra five dollars only after he had offered sacrifices to his dead father-in-law as directed.

Anyway, I don't think Jackass paid the *amb-gol-mol* fifteen dollars, nor did he offer any sacrifice to the dead. He was convinced by a schooled-up kid that the woman was just a ventriloquist and a lucky ventriloquist too, for nobody knew her secret. But now, tough luck for her, she might get nothing from Jackass, who, when she was out of earshot, said to us, '*Mi sorry long meri wantok, em bai ino inap kisim one penny long mi.*' In other words, he said that she would not get a single cent from him for her services. He added that from the corner of his eye he saw there was no tea in the cup, but he could not explain the whistle, so he kept quiet.

MOUNTAIN AND SEA:

POEMS BY GOROKA TEACHERS' COLLEGE STUDENTS

THE VILLAGE BEYOND THAT MOUNTAIN

look deep right, clouds mask the mountains,
look extreme left, clouds crown the tree tops;
i fly my eyes far beyond,
beyond those tame mountains
that overshadow my eyes;
the bubbles of the cloud
drop in the weak glittering of the sun,
the crown-like,
the mask-like god
turns into white rolling monster
down the hills, across the plains,
and swallows all the tree tops;
winds blow,
rains pour,
the poor god vomits
all that she had swallowed,
there appear trees, mountains;
my eye wants that land,
land beyond those shabby ranges;
as my eyes transport sorrow
i stand loose with my naked heart
on the glued soil
where my forefathers walked,
here i unfold my minds,
minds that wonder,
minds that wander
out to that tame land;
i fire my eyes
down deep into that uncrumbled land;
the mountains show me their tenderness
but not that smile,
rivers bring me back my memories
but not that loving hand;
the glittering rays of the sun
hook the earth
and my stripped and naked heart.

Henginike Riyong

THE BREEZE

The cool breeze of the morning
Kissing goodbye
Travels to the foot of the mountains,
Shaken leaves awaken,
Dews hurry onto the ground
 Wetting the earth's pants
 And its beards.
 The hissing breeze
 Breathes out cool air.
In my tidy mind
And from my strained ears
I can hear the bare feet
Shuffling down the mountains,
 Eyes search,
 Trees wave goodbye,
 Streams shed tears,
Lizards run to take dead leaves as their shields,
The hissing breeze has walked through once more
 Taking few,
 Leaving hundreds.

Henginike Riyong

GOGODIRO

Early in the morning
Gogodiro carries her bag,
She chants her morning magic
As she walks along.

She jumps and runs
At places sacred,
Her eyes roam for the devils,
Ears waiting for reply.

Her bag so big
Shakes at the back,
Gogodiro cries louder for reply,
Her eyes become black and hard.

Dusk in the evening
Gogodiro hears her reply,
She chants her evening magic
With the devils beside her.

She arrives home
Under the shadow
Of the dark.

Tamarua Miria

We stood out there
just there
only the two of us
except of course for
the moon and the stars who were
watching above us saying no words.
The southerly wind was blowing
penetrating into my skin . . .
I looked among my clothes for warmth
but still I shivered with cold.
Then suddenly . . .
he held my hand
it was warm
the touch was tender and comforting.
I said no word
but watched him with affection
knowing . . .
tomorrow the wind would change its
course—we know that well.
Each day had its ways.
Today it went south, maybe it
will remain or go north, east or west
tomorrow—I cannot tell.
But . . .
one thing was clear
and that he must part with the
changeable winds tomorrow
whether north south east or west
I cannot tell.

Bessie Lovai

Dark, it was so dark,
q-u-i-e-t, silence,
all fallen dead on wooden beds
outside; papa hangs the red firefly
and that was the only red dot.

Twelve o'clock, she arrived from Goroka;
the engine woke papa, then stopped!
Papa reached out, reached his hands up,
turning the firefly on full blast.
And oh! my only daughter.

Quiet! Mama yelled;
but mama I can't.
That noise; the drums I think.
No!
And that's only the waves beating.

Longlong, yu no save?
Wait for tomorrow, for the light.
I'll sleep there and watch,
watch you dancing
and that's you, the only music—
music of the beat of the waves.

Elizabeth Ebill

Oh garaunago
Serpent of the sea
Master of the land
And a legend to my people.

You took my place
And betrayed my being
You sleep on my mat
And talk like me
You fool my parents
And they listen to you
As we drift to meet my love.

Oh garaunago
Serpent of the sea
Master of the land
And a legend to my people.

I'm under your spell
 And the power is strong
 I float beside my
 Canoe while you
 Chew betelnut from my
 String bag.
 I am a coconut
 Then a flower
 Then a log
 You know I'm passing by
 Yet you let me be
 I am cold and hungry
 I might drown before
 I meet my love.

Bessie Lovai



PASSING THE MORNING

by Paul Palai

It was early in the morning when the sun dragged and scraped to penetrate its way to its regular route up through the endless mountain ranges on the eastern horizon, and the village elders urged their sons to be up on their sleeping heels to gather yard leaves. The morning was icy cold and miserable, and the three-legged people were busy curling themselves up by the fireplace with hundred-edges blankets, each visible mouth releasing a cloud of smoke like a double chimney when they inhaled from a varnished bamboo of diameter about six centimetres.

A word of encouragement was obtained from the far end corner of the room opposite to where Lakenan was half dead. 'You ought to be outside at this particular time of the morning to get familiar with the traditional sayings. The youngsters who are out frequently are regarded as rich ear possessors because they are alert and aware of the situation and condition of this environment. The community will accept you into their tribal meetings because you will be considered as young, enthusiastic and prepared to carry the village rules on your back. The branches of the veins running down from your muscular forearms really reflect out to the people. You well know that if you don't join the tail you'll be regarded as equal with the grandmothers in the grave.'

When Lakenan journeyed with the speech poured into some of his hollow rooms by his father, a solid thought punched right into his bonny, pinny head. He hurried with some snorings one after the other as though he was rolling some giant rocks down the slopes of Kanapindi, pretending that he was in the middle of hammering *karakul* nut in the land of ancestors.

He sprang up on to his weary legs and blindly led himself to the doorway. When the fresh and cool breeze hit his eyes Lakenan rubbed them several times, like an old mother trying to comfort hers when she got dust in them. He held his face down to the cloud of evaporating steam ascending from the wet soil which welcomed him outside. He glanced quickly around the village side and was surprised to see the mess of endless snowish cloud still hanging down from the treetops.

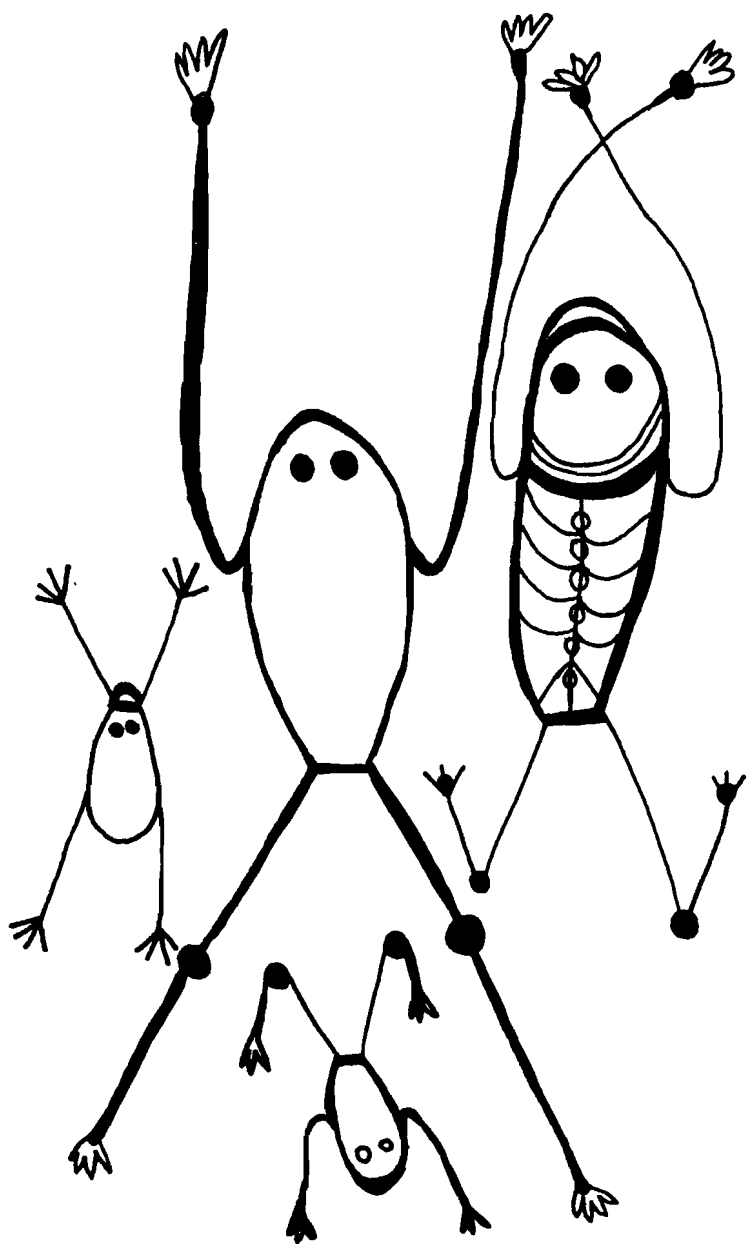
As soon as he was out of sight from the three-legged people he accelerated his walk and headed for the site of the new garden where he was sure to lay his hands on the watery woods. From the corner of his eye he immediately grasped a bundle of dried wood—a collection made by his small brother for Sunday. The scripture says that if you open your fingers you shall be thrown into the fire of death. Without any hesitation he grabbed the bundle and stepped backward as if he had walked over a pin point.

There was no delay in returning to his blackish semi-cone-shaped house. Soon the house was completely occupied by a mess of lazy smoke curled round a number of times and circulating, struggling to search for the way out to the cool air outside which it longed to dominate. The dried wood was piled up and stacked on the glistening coal in the fireplace. In a moment's time the house was as empty as an empty shell. The mess of second heaven inside all crept and escaped out of the tiniest wall cracks, joining their tails as they raced out, leaving behind a warm heat which had been created when they filled the room.

All of a sudden a yellow tongue swallowed

every piece like a hungry cow crumpling a whole sack of hay. There was hardly any piece of wood left. Only the white ashes were seen. That made the hollow room and the sleeping area a warm and comfortable place, like a nest that is left behind just after the mother has incubated her eggs.

Lakenan dragged himself along on his feet and hands to the sleeping room where he was warmly welcomed, and passed the morning in the new world, enjoying himself climbing up the Punari waterfall and chasing after the other young boys of the village. He was fast asleep and passed the cool, windy morning.



GHOST RIVER

River so full of catch,
You're like the mirror in Wong You's shop;
Never before have I returned emptyhanded, frustrated with shame.
But today you've changed your appearance,
You give me no fish.

My first catch is a white man's waste,
My second catch my land's waste.
Will you ever give me fish again?
No? I don't understand.

Like the thunder of heavens monsters roam in the valley.
Trees fall, mountains collapse, forests vanish,
And the river floods silently.
My valley has changed,
Never again will I fish my beloved rivers of Sigapai.

As the sun sets over the west
Silence reigns in the valley,
For the monster is at rest.
But slowly, surely the river still floods.

In their sleep dogs whimper and pigs grunt,
They know through instinct thin days wait.
Flood means no fish and no fish means no bones.
The fish shop is closed.

Paul Nerai

HIGHLANDER SEE THE SEA

Rising and lowering the wave, yu lukim?
Down and up the sea, yu lukim?
Here and there the wave, yu lukim?
There and here the sea, yu lukim?

A-ah! You mean long sea antap ya?
O-oh! You mean long wave klostu ya?
A-ah! You mean long sea hap-tru ya?
O-oh! You mean long wave dispela ya?

Oh! It is coming up here;
No! It is going out there;
Oh! It is coming over here;
No! It is going down there.

Don't say: 'Coming here,'
For it is always there.
Don't say: 'Going there,'
For it is always here.

Bany Baluwai



MOP'S WIFE AND GAI, THE STONE AXE

by *Paul Japhlom*

Beside the wild and gentle flow of the mud waters of the Sepik river there lived a man named Mop with his family in a tiny village known as Wodaten. The family had an axe, the Gai, and they used that axe to do their work.

In those early days stone axes were very common and useful tools to work with. People were very careful with them. They cleaned them and put them in safe places after they had used them.

But Mop and his family were very careless. They did not look after their axe. They left it in the sun and rain.

There were villages not far from Mop's. These villages regularly got together to have a big feast. These ceremonies took place at one of the larger villages in the dry season, and they went on for a couple of days. This usually drew along all the beauties and queens from all the villages. All the young women usually prepared themselves with new *lumis* and other traditional materials for the feast.

Mop had a very beautiful wife. He would be taking part in the ceremony and his wife, Sim, was to go with him. Sim was known as the Lily of the Wodaten Lakes. She was five feet seven inches tall, with dark brown eyes. Her slim waist swung about when she walked. Long black curly locks hung down by her face and over her shoulders. When she bathed her soft body was covered with her hair, like the stone covered with moss. The two shining bright stars on her slim narrow chest danced away when she moved about.

One afternoon Mop told his wife, Sim, that they would follow the river down and cut some sago shoots for her grass skirt for the coming ceremony. That afternoon Sim was so excited. Words spread through the tiny Wodaten village

like water spilt on a flat floor. But that afternoon words had reached Gai.

So, early the next morning, with the cold breezing wind from the north, Gai woke Sim up. 'Sim, it's nearly daybreak, we must go now.' With the echo of the hungry gecko and the rats in the house, Sim took her belongings and food for the day. With very careful steps she went about, not waking the others up. She made her way to the canoe and took up her position without looking in Gai's direction. With the cold wind blowing through their nostrils they hardly spoke to each other. Surrounded by wild noises, and with the splash of their paddle, they swept by. The morning birds and the owls were singing in the green with their splendid tune. The humming of the owls was like the voice of the people singing Christmas hymns in the high churches.

The approaching sun on the eastern horizon sent her rays like German searchlights attempting to sight their enemies. They passed the old place where they usually cut the shoots. Sim told the axe, thinking she was talking to her husband. The axe, Gai, told her that they would go down further. Sim began to wonder why they were going all the way down there. She began questioning the axe, still thinking he was her husband, and when she turned to speak, she found that the man she was talking to was not her husband. He was Gai, the axe. His face was covered with lumps. She began to cry and wanted to jump into the river. But she couldn't. She hated herself so much that she wanted to scream, or run away. The axe began to speak:

You use me to do all the hard work.
You cut down trees with me.

But you don't care about me.

You leave me outside in the sun, rain and wind.

They reached a bank with a large log that stuck out from the sand. He said to her: 'You will live on that log and I will live inside the water under that log. I'll come up from time to time to see you.'

He damaged the canoe and jumped into the river. As he sank to the bottom the bubbles appeared like boiling steam.

He came up from time to time and ate the children that Sim gave birth to. Sim began to hide her children in the bush and held a green frog in her hands each time Gai appeared. The hungry, greedy Gai ate the green frogs. Mrs Mop had nine children. The last birth turned out as an egg, and Sim placed it in a coconut shell and put it near the cooking place. It later broke, and out came the bird known as the eagle.

The children began to question their mother about where their village was. Their mother told them what had happened and how she came to the log. They decided to kill the Gai. So they sharpened all the necessary weapons.

One early bright morning they positioned themselves and waited for the Gai to appear with bubbles like a dynamite flow under water, throwing spray above the surface. The brothers were on the alert, like the Olympic players, ready to run. The man who killed and ate the past brothers and sisters came walking like a drunken man. His rough body with all the lumps approached. As he stepped up, the elder of the brothers drove a spear into his stomach. It sent him rolling twice and he hit the sand. The others ran to the scene like lightning. The eagle

dropped like a falling stone and took Gai's two eyes with his claws. Gai, the axe, was useless without his two eyes. They cut his body into pieces like sliced pineapple, and then burned them.

The family later returned to their natural father in a canoe with the eagle on the bow. They arrived in the village at midnight. The mother told the children they must keep their voices down. They left their canoe and crawled like snakes looking for food at night. They entered the house and went to sleep in a very large village-type mosquito net.

Early next day the father saw the net and the canoe and was wondering who these people were. The mother got up first and told her children not to make any noise until they were asked to come out.

Sim went to her husband, Mop, and touched him on the shoulder. Mop was so excited to see his wife. She told him not to breathe a word and asked him to go and get ten coconuts. But the husband was so happy about his wife's return he spread the news, and friends and relatives and other village people came to Mop's house like ants marching to their arena.

The coconuts were ready and Sim rolled the first one. As it rolled, the first son came out of the mosquito net, smiling. Then it continued until the last one, the eagle, emerged. He flew up to a tree near the house and sat there. The family was reunited.

Later the eagle started to attack and eat human beings. The village people had to kill him, and the body was buried under the *haus tambaran*. Even so, some people in that area now worship the eagle, who helped save Mop's wife from the clutches of Gai, the stone axe.

THE FIRST TO SEE DAWN: KAMA KERPI'S POETRY

by Nigel Krauth

The coastal poets who dominated the early development of modern Papua New Guinean poetry were rightfully concerned with the conflict of cultures and the alienation of the educated individual from his traditional values. They suggested various modes of reorientation to counter the crushing effects of Western development and education—for Kasaipwalova social revolution was the answer, for Tawali intellectual recycling of the past's standards, for Enos a reinvolverment in the old mystic experiences. Each of these poets set out to analyse the confusion and destruction caused by the colonial era and to recreate in poetry the dying values and fading perceptions of traditional life. None of these poets has been so far-reaching and deep-seeking as Kama Kerpi, a Chimbu Highlander, in whose verse the past is not just spoken about but is re-experienced with astonishing clarity of vision and vividness of detail.

The poems in Kerpi's first volume, *Call of Midnight Bird* (Papua Pocket Poets, 1973), cover three main areas. There are resurrections of Highland village life as it has been battled and celebrated since its dawn; there are presentations of agonizing dilemmas in the dark night of colonial imposition; and there are revelations of the frustration a poet must face in trying to bring about a new dawn, a return to certainty, simplicity and harmony. The depth and breadth of Kerpi's vision is daunting to the reader, yet he commits himself to every aspect of it. His love, his conscience and sense of justice are all hugely drawn on, and the vitality he pours into his poetic world derives from an inspirational reservoir of gigantic proportions. It is sobering to realize that Kerpi's poetry is only part of his production over the last three years—several

short stories, plays and chapters for a novel reveal the same dazzling strength of conception and delicacy of technical sense.

Kerpi sees the present phase of Papua New Guinea's development as its long dark night—a night of destruction, loss, sorrow, confusion and bitterness. There was a day once, but it faded with the coming of the white man. There will be another dawn, and the poet's mission is to shine a light towards that dawn. But the road is hard and the darkness stifling. The most the poet can do to escape the night is dream; and the most he can do to help his brothers is warn of impending disasters, as the midnight bird does with its call across the darkness. Yet there is an added burden on the poet: though like his brothers he too fumbles and gropes in the darkness, unlike them he has taken on the responsibility of carrying the lost day through the night, of nourishing it and keeping it from extinction. The poet must be in touch with the old bright life, even while confronting the problems of the dark present.

Kerpi is happily gifted for this task—he has a talent for 'time-tripping'. He says that when he sits down to write poetry he can transfer himself across the swamps, valleys, rivers and peaks to his home ridge where he hovers over his village. He becomes a watchful spirit suspended above the life and landscape he writes about. Yet he is also able to swoop down and penetrate the minds of the people there, dramatizing their conflicts and desires and revealing the spiritual depths and complexities of their existence. This transcendence of the limitations of place is sometimes accompanied by a transcendence of the limitations of time, as in the poem 'This—My Village?' Here the travelling poetic eye sees

a village of the present bearing the scars inflicted by the introduced culture in the new roads, new gods and new lifestyles of the people. Having seen this, Kerpi's 'place-trip' develops into a 'time-trip' and he sets off to 'explore the landscape of memories' about his village.

In the hovering process he can not only contact his ridge-top village in the lush Highlands from his small room in the bustling, dusty city of Port Moresby, but he can also go back into the past to recover the history of his village. Presumably his childhood memories and his knowledge of oral history help him here. But reading those poems which resurrect the past—such as 'Prayer at the Graveyard' or 'Moments of Initiation'—which bear no imprint of the white man's world except the language they are written in, one knows that the experiences there are not related simply by descriptive history-telling: they have been contacted, revitalized, and transported into the present by Kerpi's hovering process. Kerpi is the first Papua New Guinean to make the past *live* in English verse.

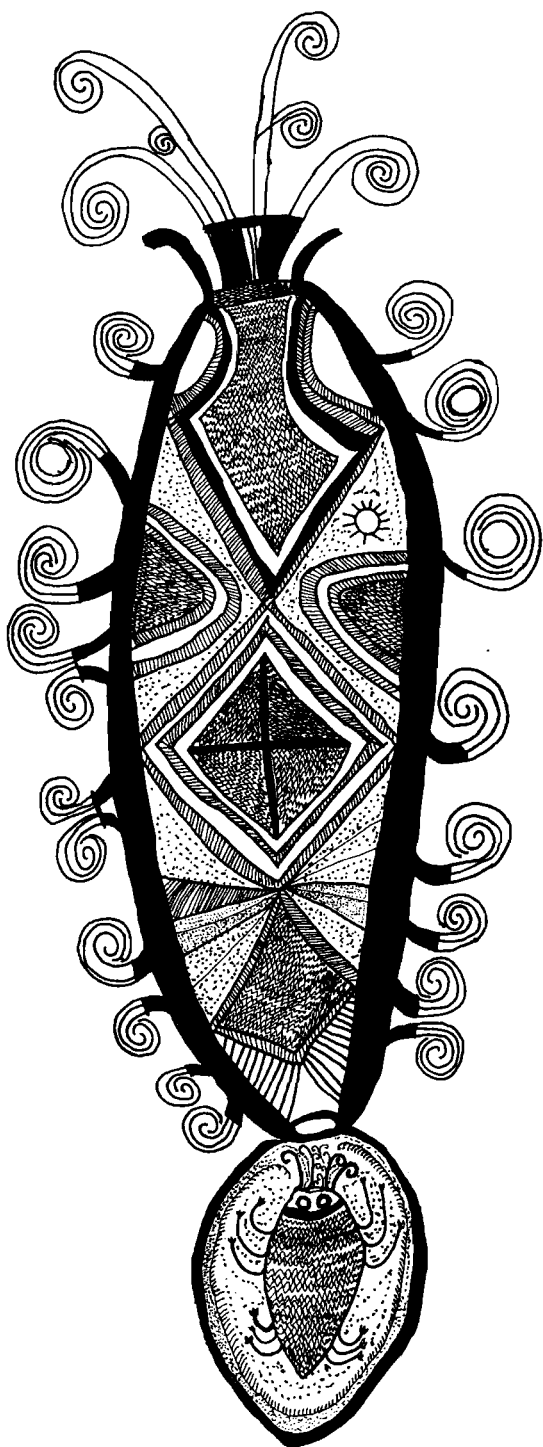
But the hovering process is not simply a transferring of the poetic eye across place and time barriers. It has a moral quality too. The 'eye's eye' in 'This—My Village?' is closely related to the conscience, so the poetic vision is a value-sensitive vision assisting the poet in his chosen redemptive role. The eye's eye reports directly to the exiled soul, and through this link the projects, values, ideals, even the bold failures, of the past are preserved.

Kerpi is concerned with recovering the old spiritual standards on which praise and blame, loyalty and betrayal, harmony and conflict were based. In 'Public Confession', a poem where Kerpi takes an ironic look at himself as the educated modern man, he calls these old values a 'lost Treasure', but the materialistic connotations of 'treasure' are a distortion produced by the presence of the new culture's values in the poem. The vision hovering on the edge of his consciousness is one of spiritual importance, but its significance is almost overwhelmed by the new imposed standards. Kerpi sees himself as 'a victim, whimpering in a wrestle of waves', a lone human tossed and torn in the great ocean

of culture conflict (surely the ocean image is especially horrifying for a Highlander) and somewhere underneath all this turmoil lies the treasure waiting to be brought back to the surface. But that salvage job, like carrying the old day through the night, is a gargantuan task, and all Kerpi can do is 'whimper' in his poetry. But the whimper marks the location of the drowned treasure. It is a hopeful beacon.

With characteristic perceptiveness Kerpi sees that his mission could be misinterpreted by those people he wants to lead out of darkness and bondage. In the first stanza of 'Public Confession' he looks at himself through his villagers' eyes. He is the white-washed spear glittering conspicuously, a successful thrust by the village into the European culture. In the villagers' eyes he is the majestic 'painted sign-post' pointing away from traditional life, and he is the 'golden calf', the false god which does not really have the power to lead the people to a better future. In this poem, Kerpi is at pains to explain that his apparent success in the new culture is a hindrance rather than a help in his chosen mission. He has met with the darkness and disorientation of modernity and has seen the need for cultural preservation. Yet his people will continue to be swept away by the overpowering material values of Western ways, and his calls of warning—ironically expressed in the language of the new world, and a language his people don't understand—will be lost in the tumult. It's a familiar bind, suffered by artists of colonial periods throughout the Third World. Needless to say, Kerpi knows he must talk with the village people in their own languages; and that's another problem of the night.

Where Kerpi has succeeded so far in his mission is in getting back to the heart of the traditional culture, to a level deeper than the conflict of the present, where life without trace of white men occurred. This life is shown to be as glorious, as horrifying, as spiritually demanding as any vision of modern Western life. The first four poems in *Call of Midnight Bird* and the title poem all dramatize aspects of the old way: the pride and dread of the boy entering manhood in 'Moments of Initiation'; the hopes and fears



of those farewelling the warriors bound for battle in 'Drum Beats'; the curiosity of the child and the apprehension of the mother when faced with the mysteries of faith and death in 'Hut on a Ridge'; the desperate pleas of the deserted husband for help from the daunting powers of the dead in 'Prayer at the Graveyard'; and the convulsive experience of the son faced with the moment of his father's death in 'Call of Midnight Bird'.

Of these poems 'Prayer at the Graveyard' is undoubtedly the technical tour de force. Kerpi uses the chorus, an integral feature of traditional oral verse, as no other modern Papua New Guinean poet has done. This chorus places the events of the poem in a wider natural context, and indicates the potential of supernatural forces working on the natural order.

*And winds kissing giant trees,
Howling down river beds.*

The chorus goes through a number of metamorphoses, drawing together a variety of movements in the external world—violent, grand, swift, tender.

*And sun is setting
Swallows returning home.*

The chorus reveals the ambiguities of the speaker's situation. Will Kunani return to her home like the swallows, or does the setting sun indicate the failure of the husband's pleas? Are the winds' kissing and the howling in riverbeds images relating the ancestors' anger at Kunani's betrayal and their promise of future prosperity for the husband's compound, or are the dead kin emphasizing chaos and sterility for his family's future? The activity in the chorus contrasts with the fixed form of the husband, rigid with fear and boldness beside the graves, and through the balance and fusing of rushing and suspended movements in the chorus is transmitted the dramatic climax of the poem. After the husband has spent much calculated time praising the dead and thanking them for protection and prosperity in the past, he bitterly admits the defection of

his wife and begs for her return. Immediately, the drumming intensity of the chorus dies away: there is a cathartic release, leaving only silence and the obscurity of dusk. Were the spirits really there or was all that activity merely the projection of turmoil in an exploding mind? Have the spirits heard, and is the resulting stillness an indication of their decision to help or ignore? The poem dramatizes the existential problem of all humanity faced with the questions of the nature of their faith and the existence of their gods.

In other poems Kerpi's contact with the past does not escape involvement with the tensions and conflicts of the present. In these poems modern values begin to interfere with the traditional values: the new impinges on the old. 'Chants from Mendi' and 'Bring Them Home' show the disintegration of village life following the loss of those seduced by the coastal towns, while 'Song', 'The Simple Joys of Life' and 'Farewell Kiss' grow out of the alienation of the educated man from his traditional heritage. 'Song of Lament' and 'Hamlet on a Ridge' belong in this category. The first dramatizes the departure from traditional values due to the corrupting influence of the white culture; the second is the return of the prodigal son from the modern world and his defiant celebration of the traditional values.

'Song of Lament' is a chant. Its incantatory evocations of objects and repetition of names are totally alien to English poetry. Its muscular beat and sinuous language patterning show it to be a son of Papua New Guinean ritual verse. Its imagery is old-value oriented—English words are stripped of their original cultural connotations and moulded into new significance:

*Uchimakona.
My backbone,
My beloved.*

*Uchimakona.
My digging stick,
My red shell.
Cream of love dream,
Pride of Ochimakona.*

Uchimakona—the protective, the strong, the fertile, the beautiful, the fearless, the terrible, the distant, the near, the secure, the joyful—carries all his titles proudly. But notes of decay begin to insinuate themselves into the verse: bitterness, grieving, bending, rotting, rusting.

*Aia! Uchimakona
Aia! Bitter spear wound.*

*Our ways, our paths are retiring,
Uchimakona.
The white bear whispers song of departure,
Dried blood of Ochimakona.*

What Uchimakona could not protect his worshipper from was the wounding of the Western world, the seductive whisper of the mysterious white bear, so out of place in Papua New Guinea, yet so inhumanly strong.

*Aia! Aia!
I have dreamed,
A terrible dream.
Two horrible white termites have eaten
Your shield.*

The protective shield of traditional values has been attacked by the insidious corrupting processes of the modern world. The nightmare's prophecy must be opposed by action, but the very marrow of the old way's fighting strength has been undermined: the termites are taking over and a method of cultural fumigation must be devised.

Kerpi's 'Hamlet on a Ridge' is a beautiful evocation of dusk, night and dawn in a Highland village. It is a melange of spectral vibrations: pulsing sounds and silence, fleeting lights and darkness—a world of sensual mystery where darkness makes love to the mountains and the ridges breathe their knowledge into the people. The unwanted stranger to whom the poem is addressed is challenged by the 'pig shit ridden path', and Kerpi's repeated references to the pig shit act as a chorus emphasizing a difference in cultural values: the old way contains the pig shit in its definition of beauty while the new way is

repulsed. Yet the poem throws the onus back on the stranger: he is forced to decide whether or not this world is beautiful and desirable. The confidence with which Kerpi challenges the outsider's view causes the old values to triumph: the stranger can't resist treading on down that path following the steps of the prodigal son. Kerpi's attraction back to village life, in spite of the seductive power of Western ways, becomes understandable to the stranger. Although to say so defies modern physics, one *gravitates* to those mountain ridges.

A typical problem in the dark night of new experiences and modern values occurs when the prodigal son finds he is also the stranger. In 'Let Her Blood Enter the Tribe' the young man returns from outside the village orbit to beg for a cancellation of the marriage arranged for him by the village elders. He wants to marry a girl from the towns who is not educated in the rituals and customs of the ridge people. His dilemma is a dramatization of the old-value-new-value conflict at a personal level. But even his admirable honesty in the situation cannot reverse the fact that his request involves something of the same kind of undermining that the termites caused in 'Song of Lament'. As he says, his liberty has become his enemy, and the storm imagery that haunts the poem reinforces the ambiguities of his situation: does his request contain the seeds of fertility or fatality for the traditional law he wants modified?

Kerpi's most direct look at the influence of Western culture on Papua New Guinea occurs in his devastatingly accurate view of a Port Moresby suburb, 'Hohola in the Night'. The poem is technically brilliant, its artifice contrasting with the simplicity of description in the parallel night view of 'Hamlet on a Ridge'. The images of masking and deception and corruption beneath the surface intertwine and writhe in the poem like the infested mass of wasting life they describe. The narrator is attracted to the gaudy, seductive exterior of Hohola, its bright lights, its promise of pleasure, its apparent beauty, but once drawn beneath the surface the spell is broken—he is nauseated by the foulness of the real Hohola's deformities, wounds and disease.

What looks like heaven is hell; what symbolizes the enlightened future (the promise of more government housing settlements built with modern materials) is a dim pit of violence and horror. Hohola is a diseased harlot. In her the old values have sold out to the new. She produces only deformed life. She cannot be loved. The enraged and bitter narrator calls for her destruction.

Ultimately it is love that motivates Kerpi to carry the past into the future: the love of a son for his mother; the love of an exile for his homeland; and the love of a young man for his future bride. The short poem 'Distant Love' (whose title is missing on page twelve of *Call of Midnight Bird*) draws together several themes running through Kerpi's poetry, which describe his mission to keep in contact with the past values during the onslaught of modernity.

*Awaits in the mountain
Diamond
Of my treasure hunt.
Under the shadows of Kubour range,
Awaits the subject of my dream.*

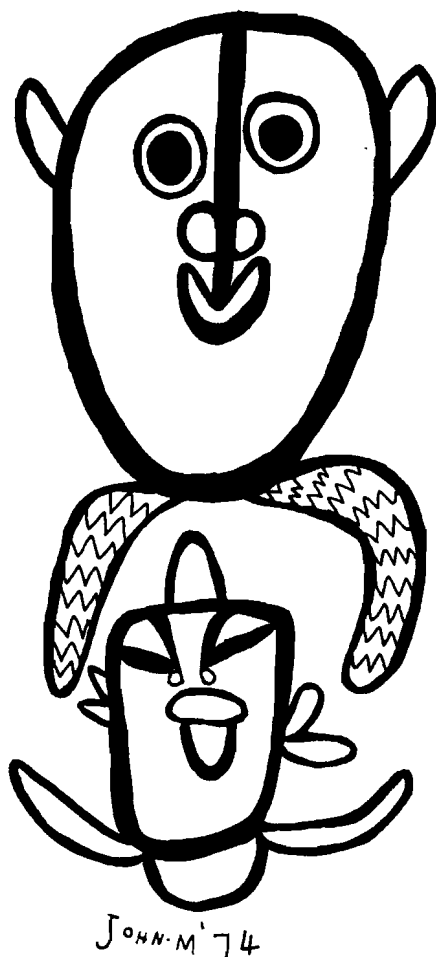
*Rolling to the subject of my dream,
Picture of her dancing before me,
Reminds me of
The long distance.*

The poet knows where the treasure of the past values lies buried under the mountain of the present (Kasaipwalova sees the problem in similar terms in *Reluctant Flame*). It awaits the time when it can be re-established. The treasure is also the dream, the escape from the confusing obscurity of the dark night of imposed values. And the diamond, the bright gem of worth beyond materialistic calculation, is also the beloved, the distant vital attraction that the poet hovers towards in the transcendence of his mission. The distance from present to past is long, and from present to future revitalization of that past probably even longer. Kerpi's task of carrying a communication line between past and future is unenviable.

The arrangement of poems in *Call of Midnight Bird* dramatizes the historical movement away

from traditional *mores* to the confusion and ambiguities of the present. Generally the atmosphere and tone of the sequence devolves from brilliance and strength into greater obscurity and uncertainty. The final statement of the volume, made in a confusingly portentous poem called 'The Night Walk', serves to remind us that Kerpi's mission is far from straightforward. Surrounded by a gulf of loneliness, indirection and hostility, the poet must grope and wander without really knowing where he is going or when he will get there. All he has for comfort is the 'flicker of joy' deriving from the past and the somewhat uncertain figure of his present lover. Even so, out of this dark poem emerges a quiet confidence in the vision of the future, those fertile mysteries the poet and his love carry within them.

As a finale, 'The Night Walk' draws together all the questions that have been posed in the volume. They boil down to one: 'How do we get out of this dark night?' There is no answer yet that can give any details—perhaps these will come in later Kerpi volumes—but the important thing is that the vision is there, the poet is voicing it and is moving towards it, albeit in agonizing uncertainty. Kerpi's home villagers, the Kaling ridge people, 'are the first to see dawn and equally so the first to bathe in the first drops of rain'. Raised by his poetic vision, Kerpi has looked across the shadows lying on the lowlands to a new dawn for Papua New Guinean identity. Hopefully his next volume of verse will reveal the fertility of those first dawn showers in an inspired nourishment programme for the wilting traditional spirit.





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