

VITAL WAVE

By Want Kiap

In early life time, I was a mirror
Attracting every man's attention
And every man had an ambition to admire.
But I had no choice of my own
Nor rights to make any decision for my future.

My parents treated me like a small kid,
They had the right to make decisions for me
And so I had to follow them.
But how did they know that
Their decisions would suit me?

I suffered greatly after they told me.
Without them noticing
I escaped safely from prison.
With shallow thoughts I became
An adventurer, an explorer, a prospector, a tourist.

Three enjoyable years vanished
And again I faced the worst problems
That ever have come across-----
Problems of being homeless, familyless, welfare-less,
Problems of having venereal diseases, of no friendship.

Who has ruined my significance?
Partly the parents and partly myself.
Obviously nobody will solve my problems
So I must kick the bucket
And that will leave no more worries.

POETRY IS... By James R. Burns, Australian poet.

"A special way of saying things...that's poetry to me.
Poetry can be written about any subject. You don't have to
know anything about poetry to write it. There are no rules,
except the ones that impose themselves on you. The poem
writes itself. Rules to poetry are something that critics
discover about poems after they are written.

"New Guinea has no poetry--or has it? I think there is
a spring--in the legends and songs. In New Guinea, the
past is closer to us than anywhere else. No one can make
a future unless he knows the past. Here, you can look
around and see the past--myths, gods, animals, smells,
sound, food, colour, the taste of food. To find himself
in his past--this is the job of a poet.

"Poets are prophets of the people...Poetry is a bigger
view of life...The Poet opens a strange door. Songs--poems,
it doesn't matter if no one ever reads them. Poets will write."

Why Mumu Island Stands Empty

by Peter Steadly Ruasoi

Mumu is a small island off the East Coast of New Ireland. In olden days it was said that people did not want to live on it as they believed that it was very mysterious. People who took the risk of living there met death of some sorts. So for many hundreds of years the old people along the mainland coast told hundreds and hundreds of legends about this beautiful little place. My story is one of the many that our old people are still telling youngsters.

Once upon a time a man and his wife lived on Mumu island. The name of the man was Babar and Sila was his wife. No doubt about it, Mumu was a rich little island. Its tropical climate enabled the gardens and fruit trees to grow and bear greatly.

We can just imagine how happy Babar and his wife were to live on the island. Just as most New Guineans do, Babar, being a married man, built himself a fine village right at the centre of the island. The village was made up of three bush material buildings--a sleeping house, a kitchen, and a houseboy, or men's house.

Babar and his wife were very happy as they shared their daily activities. That is, Babar used to work in the garden while Sila took care of her domestic duties. They were the only people living on the island.

Babar was always busy and he would work from 7 o'clock in the morning till 6 in the evening. If there was moonlight, Babar really enjoyed working in the cool night.

One certain evening it so happened that when the moon was slowly rising like a silver ball on the eastern horizon and the birds were singing joyfully on their return flight from the mainland to their night's resting place on the island, Babar accidentally chopped off the thumb of his left hand with his sharp knife. With a shock, poor Babar fell unconscious to the ground. Perspiration wetted his shivering body and blood spit out from his thumb onto the ground.

After some minutes, Babar woke up. He took a piece of bush rope and painfully tied it around his hand to stop the bleeding. In order to retain strength, Babar chewed a betel nut. Of course this made him feel better and he was able to return home. However, before he headed to the village he wrapped some of his blood in a taro leaf. He wanted to show his wife that he had lost a lot of blood.

After wrapping the blood he placed it on a piece of log. He then went into the garden and harvested some food to take home to his wife. Then he went straight home, forgetting something.

When Babar reached home he told Sila what he had done and only then remembered that he had forgotten to bring the blood. Sila quickly helped to comfort Babar and soon he was eating a fine meal. Babar then told Sila that he was going to bring the blood parcel the next day.

The morning was bright and beautiful. The night's dew was still on the leaves and the air was slowly losing the coolness of the morning. Babar dodged into the garden with the hope of picking up the blood. As he approached he heard human voices. Going nearer, Babar was sure that the sounds were children's voices. He jumped over the fence and slowly inched towards the spot where the sounds were echoing from. He was struck with surprise to see two handsome little boys chasing grasshoppers among the taros.

After staring at the strangers he called them to him. The children stopped and smiled at Babar. They were not frightened. There was happiness and joy on their faces.

"Come closer to me," insisted Babar while stretching out his hands in order to reach the two children. "Where have you two come from and what are you doing here at this early hour?" he asked.

"Uncle, you left us yesterday evening in the moonlight. You forgot to take us home. We have been waiting here for you all through the night. And now you have come." replied the boys.

Babar was greatly astonished at the strange information. They called Babar their uncle right from that day, and he took them and hid them in his houseboy.

Sila was not interested in taking care of small children. Before she got married she had eaten a "Kobola" which caused her not to produce babies. For this reason Babar had to hide his two nephews in the houseboy.

Anyway, Sila was not told about the two boys. Instead, Babar told her that plenty of young boys from the mainland were going to occupy the houseboy and that she was bound to prepare for them. Sila obeyed her husband and for many years prepared and sent food to the "men". Traditionally, women were not allowed to enter the houseboy.

So Babar and his wife led a happy life on the island. Similarly, the two boys were happy and were growing up strong and young.

It was on a hot sunny day when every thing was dry and birds were hardly to be seen that trouble started on the island. Babar was out working in the garden and the village was quiet. Sila was in her kitchen but she made no noise. She was busy weaving a basket. The two lads in the houseboy thought that Sila had gone to the garden too, so they began to play around at the doorway of the houseboy.

Suddenly a willy-wag-tail flew and sat just in front of the boys at the entrance of the houseboy. One of them excitedly took a stone and threw it at the bird. The stone missed but almost hit Sila on the head. Shocked, she dropped her basket and looked in the direction the stone came from, and she saw the boys. Furious, she did not know what to do for a minute. Then she angrily marched towards them and shouted and scolded them.

"Why are you so angry with us, cursing and calling us all sorts of names?" they said. "Don't you know that we are Babar's nephews. We didn't really want to kill you."

Then Sila swayed with great hatred at them. She roused them, insisting that she was tired of cooking for them. She gave no chance for them to say a word.

The two boys were now down in misery. Their hearts were empty and their lips were dry. They looked to the eastern sky, to the west, to the north and to the south. They sighted nothing but sadness. Their eyes filled with tears, they left the houseboy as Sila had commanded, and disappeared.

When Babar returned in the evening he first went to see about the boys. But when he reached the house he heard a voice saying that his nephews were gone. The voice also told Babar their reasons for leaving.

Babar, very sad to lose the two boys, then killed Sila his wife, burnt the village, and killed himself. The island Mumu became empty.

Between the mainland coast and Mumu we can still see: two huge stones standing in the water and people believe that these were the two boys that Sila Roused. The beautiful and fertile little Mumu has been lonely and empty ever since.

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The Unforgotten Memory in My Childhood.

by Joe Mondia

On Christmas day, 1956, we were living at Nende, a small village beside the highlands highway in the heart of Chimbu. It's rather a pity to say that there were only three people in my family. These were Apa, my father, Kauna, my mother, who was pregnant at that time, and myself.

It was a real fine morning and everyone had gone to Mass except my mother and I, who were in a hut. This was a custom of the Chimbu people, that when a woman was pregnant she was allowed to sleep in a different house from the rest of her family until the baby was born. Usually the man had to build a "gakruaingu" (a small hut) for his wife when she was pregnant.

I was there as a "watchboy" although I was only five by that time and couldn't do much help.

Anyway, for a moment the gakruaingu was completely quiet. Suddenly my mother began to cry. I was at a loss about what to do and I really felt like crying too. Somehow I asked quietly what was wrong with her. With tears running down her face, she told me that she was thirsty. I then rushed out of the gakruaingu with a nilmige (a long bamboo bottle) in my hand, headed for the brook which we used for drinking water.

Although I seemed to be running I didn't really get far. I fell almost every ten or twenty yards because the nilmige was a bit heavy and long. As soon as I got up I ran for the brook, which was a quarter of a mile away from the gakruaingu.

When I arrived I held the nilmige flat on the sand and the water rushed in. However after filling it I was not able to lift it. I fell into the water with the nilmige on top of me. I got up crying loudly for my
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father but realized that I was alone. I started to lift up the nilmige and found it not too heavy because some water had been poured out. I closed the top with some bush leaves and carried it, like a piece of a dead branch, on my shoulder.

At last I arrived at the gakruaingu and rushed in. My mother was in a different mood. She was smiling at me as I entered but she was not alone. There was a small baby beside her, crying. I was so surprised that I just stood there staring at the baby when she told me that this was my sister. I was so happy at the word of "sister" because I had no brothers and sisters. Two boys had been born dead. So I started to jump around in the gakruaingu.

Towards the middle of the day my father returned from mass. As soon as I saw him in the distance I ran, crying at the top of my voice, "na ambra!" (my sister). How happy he was when I told him and he carried me to the gakruaingu.

However, the baby lived only for an hour. I cried as I helped my father to bury the body. We buried her in the gakruaingu and took my mother away to the inguteka (main living house). She became very ill that night and died. Just before she died, she called me two times. "Wana, Wana" (son, son) and I rushed forward and answered. But there was no voice from my mother again. I saw only my father standing over her body. I stood there with tears raining down my face. When he looked at me, I saw his tears falling too. At that moment our house seemed larger and completely empty.

As my father's loud scream rang through the house the village rose to life. There were men, women and children running towards our house. There were cries of small babies who had been awakened by the noise. It was a terrible sight that night with people running back and forth in the darkness. In our house there were people crying till dawn, when I saw my mother being buried. I couldn't believe she had gone and I cried for days. For days and weeks I was so lonely that I wished I was with my mother.

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The Hunter Who Never Returned

by Harry Omohae

One clear, beautiful morning as the sun was rising, its rays streamed through the cracks of a small hut made from sago palms. The rays lit the room with a bright whiteness. One of these rays streamed on to the dark face of a figure sleeping with his legs and arms coiled around his dark, dirty body as it lay motionless on the hard wooden floor.

But!.....suddenly he woke up.

"Ha! so the sun has risen and I am late," Heka said to himself.

He had planned the day before to wake up early and go hunting farther west than he used to hunt.

"You are very late dear," said Notisefa to her husband.

"Yes! Of course I am," answered Heka. "But is my breakfast ready?"

"Yes, come and eat before you go hunting," answered Notisefa.

As he was greedily eating he heard the footsteps coming quickly up the step.

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"Hi!....who is that, oh...it's you my little Seme. Come.....come to your father before he leaves you," said Heka.

Seme was the only child of Heka and Notisefa. They loved her very much. They would do anything to please her, if that would be the last thing they could do on this earth.

"Where are you going father?" asked Seme.

"Your father is going on a very dangerous hunting expedition, but do not ask me where," he answered.

It was a custom that no one in the family should know where he was going to hunt.

Seme came forward and sat in front of her father and said, "Father, would you please take care? Don't get yourself hurt, because we do not want to lose you, our shining light."

"Oh, my Seme, my little bright star, do not worry about your poor father, he can take care of himself," answered Heka.

After he had devoured his breakfast Heka took his bow and arrows, said goodbye to his family, and headed into the bush.

Little Seme watched cautiously as her father walked away and disappeared into the bush. She watched as though he was going out of her life for good. Her feelings caused her to weep.

"Why are you crying, Seme?" asked her mother, sympathizing with her.

"Mother, I do not want father to leave us," she answered.

"Do not cry my little bright star. Your father will return to you, he's not going away for good."

Heka headed toward the west. He met many different kinds of bush creatures. Some were beautiful-looking and some were frightful-looking creatures. Heka had no mind of shooting any of them.

Suddenly, there in front of him was a clearing. He could also hear the hissing sound of water as it rushed along the bank.

"Ha!....good I have reached the place," said Heka to himself.

As he reached the bank, he could see the river. It was very clear as it reflected back the blue bright colour of heaven. He could see that the river wound like a snake coiled around a tree branch.

"Ha, it makes me feel frightened to see this river," he cried to himself.

So he dashed into the bush. After he had come back to his own mind, he went out hunting some distance away from the river. He hunted all morning, but failed to shoot one animal. He didn't even fire an arrow. It was not because he was not a good hunter, but there was something strange about these creatures. Heka tried many times to shoot them, but they dashed off before he could fire an arrow.

"Why! Why can't I shoot any of these creatures? Why do they run away when I want to shoot them, why....why? Am I not my father's son, who can shoot anything whether it is moving or far away?"

Suddenly, unexpectedly, there came a hushing and hissing, commanding voice behind him.

"Yes....why....because you are on somebody's property. You will never leave this property alive and you will never shoot any animals again, for you will be my meat," said the strange voice.

When Heka heard this, he turned around quickly and there in front of him stood an enormous man. His eyes were like lakes stuck on his mountain-like face and it seemed as though they would pop out from his head.

Heka was transfixed. He couldn't do anything, so he fainted and fell on the damp leaves. When he recovered, he found himself lying on the leaves in a very dark cave. He stood up nervously and looked cautiously around him. He was very frightened of the darkness.

The words and the appearance of the giant came streaming through his mind. It made him shake all over. All his bones seemed to be creaking.

In the midst of his confusion, he made a last effort to get out of this horrifying place. But he never made it. He was suddenly held by the neck and twisted around, and that was the end of him.

Mother and daughter wept bitterly as the truth dawned on them, after they had waited for five days, for the return of their light. There was never a light in that house again.

The Gazelle Home Planner

By William Laisuit

My journey was hard and weary.
From my homeland I proceeded
To redeem the poorest ones,
Who care not for good home planners

Several days I journeyed,
Journeyed on across the deep
To redeem the poorest ones
Who care not for good home planners

Your ignorance invited me
To modernize your Gazelle homes.
See what I would do for you?
Wait a while and you will see

Fathers, clear the land and I will settle
To produce what you will need.
See what I would do for you?
Wait a while and you will see

Five good years have gaily gone
Since I last saw my homeland
See my hands and get yourselves
The rich fruit that you longed for

See my island, what I have done...
All that I have in my good house?
The cocoa tree, brave home planner
Modernizing every Gazelle home

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Thank you for your fruit
Gained we what we badly needed
See the hands and get yourselves
The rich fruit that we longed for

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The Lips that Developed into Human Beings

Told by Zokanao

High up in the mist of the Highlands there lived a woman with her pretty young daughter Vizo. Vizo did most of the daily work for her mother because her mother's days were passing quickly. Vizo's mother had promised that the girl could marry anyone of any age after she had returned to the dust.

Vizo's heart was filled with sadness and she did all she could to please her mum. After the days gardening, Vizo would get the water bottle and fetch water from the nearby creek. Beside the creek there grew a tall pandanus on which a beautiful parasite flower grew. Everytime Vizo came to fetch water she would spend some time looking at the flower. She would wish that the beautiful flower was growing next to her house where she could see it all the time. And she would try to strike the flower by using a long stick but she would never succeed.

The beautiful parasite flower had been placed there by Ume Ume, a mosquito-like human being, for a specific reason--to attract the attention of the beautiful girl.

Ume Ume's plan had worked when Vizo was attracted by this parasite flower. But when they met Vizo ran to her mother because Ume Ume looked strange and too ugly.

But Ume Ume's flower attracted Vizo so much that she would not give up visiting it. As time proceeded Ume Ume met Vizo under the pandanus tree and said, "Ah young girl, why are you always visiting my flower?"

Vizo grew suspicious and said in a low voice, "Your flower?"

"Yes, that's my flower."

"Well, ugly creature, how did you plant it up there?"

"Well, I have got wings and I went up there to plant it."

And Ume Ume flew up to the flower and sat beside it. By this time Vizo was shocked and interested to know more about Ume Ume's life. So she calmed herself down and asked Ume Ume to come down close. Then Vizo politely asked Ume Ume to give her a seed of that flower.

He said, "If you promise to marry me and kiss me now I will give you the seed of my beautiful parasite flower. There aren't any more of these flowers on earth except at my home. And no one knows how this flower of mine grows.

Vizo, seeing that her mum was still alive and that she had promised that she would only marry after she had died, asked Ume Ume politely again if she could have only one stalk of his beautiful flower. When Ume Ume gave her one, Vizo disappeared without saying a word or kissing Ume Ume.

Before Vizo returned to see her mum the beautiful flower wasn't in her hands at all. It had disappeared and had returned to Ume Ume.

So from time to time, Vizo and Ume Ume had lovely and promising conversations. Ume Ume would give Vizo a stalk of his flower but it would always return to the

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mother plant because she was not willing to marry him.

After Ume Ume had fed up with Vizo's false promising politeness, he decided to lay his tricks and magic on a sharp stick. He planted the sharp stick point upwards in the gateway through which Vizo passed daily to see the flower.

After their next conversation, Ume Ume gave Vizo a stalk of his beautiful flower in the usual manner and once again Vizo disappeared. But when she tried to jump over that gateway, Ume Ume's sharp stick ripped part of her lips and she went home bleeding.

As soon as Vizo had disappeared, Ume Ume came quickly to the ripped lips, picked them up, wrapped them in leaves, and took them home. When he arrived he placed the lips in a round pool of water and left them there to rot.

After three weeks Ume Ume returned to see the lips. He was surprised to see two bee's-larva-like creatures swimming around the pool. When Ume Ume went close to the pool the two creatures swam towards him. Ume Ume scraped some dirt and threw it, trying to frighten them, but the two creatures intended to belong to him. So he caught them in his hands and proved to them that he was sorry for throwing the dirt. Ume Ume left the pool with the two creatures in it.

After two months he returned to see the two creatures. Once again he was surprised to see them shaping into a sort of human foetus. Without much hesitation Ume Ume lifted the two creatures out of the pool and greeted them in a child-like manner. Seeing that the two foetuses were developing quickly into human beings, Ume Ume visited the pool regularly.

After approximately 9 months the two foetuses were able to see and live like normal babies. So Ume Ume had to provide them with food and accommodation. When they had fully developed into human beings one was a female and the other a male.

While still in childhood the two asked Ume Ume for human natural belongings. The male asked for a bow and arrow while the female asked for a digging stick.

After ten years of happy life, Ume Ume told the two that he would go to his neighbour to get material for their feasts for their human rights.

When Ume Ume had departed, an old ugly fat woman appeared. The two youngsters trembled because their father had informed them that some odd person would come and would try to cause harm. The old woman appeared at the front gate and asked for some cold water to drink. But the two youngsters would not listen to her.

The odd woman, Lana, had some clubs in her billum and so took them out ready for a battle which she hoped to win. Lana's clubs were boomerangs and so when she threw at the two youngsters they returned to her when she missed.

The youngsters attacked her from front and back. When Lana was attacking the male the female used all her strength to weaken Lana. And when Lana turned around to face the female the male did all he could to weaken Lana.

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Unfortunately Lana was too strong and tough. After several hours of fighting Lana swung her club unexpectedly around at the girl and killed her. At her death Lana jumped up and down while the boy disappeared to change himself into a bee.

Happily Lana took her prey to her faraway home. The boy was now a bee and so followed her. When Lana reached home, at that instant dark, red blood dropped on Ume's lap while he was preparing to return.

Ume Ume forgetting everything, hurried home. He was sad to learn that the female had been killed and taken away by the cannibal lady. Ume Ume and the boy got cracking with their preparation for the attack.

Early next morning, they set off for Lana's home. When they arrived Ume Ume gave the instructions. While Lana was busy cooking the girl's flesh Ume Ume went up to her door and asked for fire to light his pipe. Ume Ume said that he had been looking for his lost pig and that he wished to smoke and make himself warm. When the light was given to him in an ignorant manner Ume Ume set the house on fire straight away. When Lana tried to escape Ume Ume and the boy killed her and threw her into the flames.

The next morning Ume Ume and the young boy returned to see what was left after the fire. They were eager to see a very fat pig lying there and so they made a big feast for the loss of the female member.

NOT TIME YET

by Mapesa Dume

Man! don't dare cry for joy now.
You must first sweat on the fields in the sun.
You must first shiver on the fields in the rain.
You must first shape-up the future.
My man, it's not time yet.

Woman! don't dare weep for freedom now.
You must first struggle out of that thick jungle.
You must first promote that hidden world.
You must first shape-up the future.
My woman, it's not time yet.

Boy! don't dare ask for freewill now.
You must first fill your jar with pure milk.
You must first understand the big jar around you.
You must first know your land thoroughly.
You must first shape-up the future.
My boy, it's not time yet.

Girl! don't dare beg for selfwill now.
You must first suffer hardships of all kinds.
You must first devote yourself into the world of this kind.
You must first divest this globe that has dirt.
You must first shape-up the future.
My girl, it's not time yet.

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