Papua New Guinea Writing

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YOU CAN HELP US...

Writers sending their contributions for publication in Papua New Guinea Writing, can help us by enclosing a short note about themselves. We like to know the name of the writer's village, the names of the primary and secondary schools he has attended, and the school form or job he is in at present.

If the contribution is used this information will be used in the section called 'About the Writers' or the one called 'About the Poets'. It would also be helpful if story writers would enclose a photo of the type seen on Page 22.

The Editor.

Editorial

CHRISTMAS: 1973

Our cover depicts the blending of religions in our emerging country. The haus tambaran (or spirit-house) is the traditional meeting place for village heads to gather for spiritual discussion, the same as people gather in the various churches in Papua New Guinea which brought to us the meaning of Christianity.

The young people shown on the cover are singing Christmas hymns and depict the spirit of love and peace.

In the world today there are an estimated 3.8 billion people and 11 major religions. In Papua New Guinea there are 2½ million people and many religious beliefs.

Every one of these religions is essentially based on the desire of the people to live in peace and harmony with one another. Never before in this troubled world has it been so important that each person remembers his own beliefs and follows them. In Papua New Guinea, as we move rapidly towards nationhood we must remember both our traditional heritage and our Christian concepts of brotherly love and goodwill towards others. It is through practising goodwill towards others and through hard and steady work that we will realise our ambition for a strong united Papua New Guinea.

This year's annual creative writing competitions have been the greatest and most popular since the competitions began six years ago.

The Literature Bureau received 1188 entries in the three competitions and the 21 winners took away a total $610 in prizes.

In this issue you will read some of the winning stories and poems.

With this Christmas issue, your Editor has completed his second year with the Literature Bureau and the production of "Papua New Guinea Writing". It has been a most rewarding year in which we have seen further improvements in the quality both of the production and the content of the magazine. We hope you have enjoyed reading the magazine as much as we have producing it. During 1973 subscriptions have again risen considerably and it now circulates among interested readers in twenty countries.

On behalf of the Literature Bureau and the Department of Information and Extension Services, and the staff of "Papua New Guinea Writing" seasonal greetings are extended to all our readers, contributors and advertisers.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

Roger Boschman,
Editor.

Contents

Editorial Consultant: Richard Pape.

Editor: Roger Boschman.

Assistant Editor: Jack Lahui.

Layout: Roger Boschman.

Drawings on pages 2, 4, 5, 9 and 19 by Tex Moeckel of the Art Section, Dept. of Information and Extension Services, on pages 6 and 16 by Tabua Bama of the same section, and on page 15 by Esau Reuben, Senior Illustrator of the Art Section.

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"Aha! Now I've got you," said the huge, ugly, smelly creature.

THE MESSAGE FROM THE CEMETERY

by Sewid Gipey

Sorewe's heart beat faster as the man was slowly lowered into the grave. People paid their last respects by tossing flowers into the grave and Sorewe looked around the cemetery for the best hiding place. The last song was sung and slowly the earth was thrown into the grave. Sorewe memorised every detail before walking home with the mourning people.

Sorewe was an elderly, brisk and intelligent man. Long ago a church leader had told him that during the night, after burials, peculiar things happened in the cemetery. He was told that a strange vehicle shaped like a motor car usually picked up the spirits of the dead at midnight. It was an odd and curious story. For a long, long time Sorewe had been tormented by curiosity. Was it true or was it just a story? If it was true, then was that how the dead people went to the spiritland? As the years had passed by Sorewe had often thought about the man's story. He had often had opportunities to find out whether it was true or false. But every time he brought up the question he had shivered in fear of the spirits of the dead, lest they discover his plot and became angry and he had immediately removed the thought from his mind.

Now however, Sorewe was determined to find out the truth and place himself at the cemetery near the freshly made mound. He would see what would happen for the person just buried was none other than his own grandfather.

Sorewe did not waste his time that day. He began preparing himself bodily and spiritually for the night. He shaved and had his hair cut. He approached the village pastor and had himself prayed upon. He had washed with pure soap and put on his long sleeved white shirt and lap-lap, which he often used for Communion. All these preparations assured him that he was at last clean — both within and outside. He believed that if he died that night at the cemetery, then he would at least be prepared for burial in the morning.

In their house his poor wife pleaded in vain to stop him for she feared that he might die in the cemetery.

"Don't you know it's the home of the spirits? They'll eat you up. Please, don't go."

"Why stop me?" Sorewe had asked calmly. "Don't you know this is my only chance to find out the truth? All the people that have died so far weren't my relatives, but now that my grandfather is dead I'm going to find out the truth from him."

"What truth?" cried the wife. "Accept the truth that Christians will be raised from the dead and be satisfied. Why are you endangering your life? Do not go," she sobbed.

"My dear Sara," said Sorewe, "there is no fault in what you said but listen; I am not all the Christians. Our child now in high school is also a Christian. Do you think he will accept our true Christian teaching without proof? He once did, but now .... You tell me!"

Sara broke down and cried.

No one in the village knew about his plot except his wife. Of course the pastor had wondered why Sorewe had gone to him for purification as there was no communion coming up until next week.

"I will tell you," Sorewe had told him, "if I come back alive," but he did not tell the pastor where he planned to go. Somewhere in the sago swamps behind the village a night bird gave a strange call and was immediately joined by his friends as if to imitate the depressed people. Slowly the twilight disappeared and the night gathered. It would not be long before the darkness would fall completely.

"Pray for me," Sorewe told his wife, "and if I'm not back by midnight, do not come looking for me alone." Grasping his Holy Bible under his arm, Sorewe jumped down from the verandah and disappeared into the night.

The sky was clear and the stars were shining but there was no moon. It was a pity the old man had died at the time of no moon. Sorewe feared walking on moonless nights but the truth must come out now or never.

Sorewe walked timidly along the small track, towards the village of the dead not far away. As he neared it something within him told him to turn back but he urged himself forward. Sapa village fell farther and farther behind him, and his back grew a little cold. An owl hooted in the cemetery and was immediately answered by his mate.

What now? Were they warning each other?

The walk became slower and slower as Sorewe's eyes darted from side to side nervously. The trees growing around the cemetery made it look dark and gloomy and as he got nearer Sorewe imagined cold eyes staring at him. Perhaps they were thinking of destroying him for trespassing. No! No! Sorewe quickly removed the thought from his mind. As he stepped into the cemetery his body became numb with fear for he felt something approaching him from the rear. Abruptly he stopped on the spot. Slowly and deliberately he turned around .... but .... there was no one, or else if there was someone, he just couldn't see him because Sorewe just wasn't able to see beyond his nose. In fear he said a nervous prayer. "Father you know my intentions . . . I . . I am . . am . . here . . only to watch . . . Give me the strength to . . ." He broke off, because he definitely heard someone cough right at his feet. He stood paralysed! Moments later he heard a pig grunting away to his left. "Damn pig," he thought. "Nearly killed me with fright." The pig somehow gave Sorewe some courage. He brushed the sweat aside and walked the last couple of yards to his hiding place, after bumping into a couple of crosses. Having said another hasty prayer Sorewe settled down to wait. For how long he didn't know and didn't care because it didn't matter to him even if he waited until it was dawn.

Minutes impatiently ticked away into hours, but Sorewe continued to wait and watch. When would something happen? By the arrangement of the stars he knew that midnight had already passed. The call of the night birds and the direction of the breeze also assured him of that. He wondered if the church leader lied to him? He stretched his tired limbs, leant against the coconut stump where he was sitting and was soon asleep and dreaming.

He found himself walking along a sandy beach under swaying coconut trees, on a fine, sunny day. The beach was peaceful and cool with the ocean breeze blowing over his face. But all of a sudden the beach was plunged into darkness. The sun seemed to be completely switched off. A creature, black, smelly and ugly to the sight, slowly materialised out of the darkness before the shaken Sorewe. What could he do? He turned around quickly and began to run as fast as he could but he found to his horror that the sand was soft and his feet sank into it. At the corner of his eyes he noticed that the creature was at his heel. "Aha! Do you think you can escape me," said the creature. "I've got you where I wanted you." Faster and faster ran Sorewe but faster and faster came the ugly creature.

"Listen, you weary traveller," boomed a voice quite suddenly before Sorewe.

The night darkness immediately disappeared as Sorewe witnessed a man on the other side of a river holding up something.

"Listen!" he said.
"Eat it with your eyes
Drink it with your ears
But keep the seeds safe and dry
Lest your children should cry
And choose a lonely spot
Where the beggars roam
And build your home
Upon the rocky soil
Where the travellers toil
And plant the seed
And feed it,
Till it bears fruit within your heart
And let your children quench their thirst
Here catch! catch! catch!"

The man threw something and it came with increasing velocity, heading straight for him. Sorewe cupped his hands and got ready. Missing his hands, the object hit Sorewe square on the forehead with a violent thud. With a cry he awoke and immediately realised that he was in the cemetery. He felt his forehead and touched the warm slippery remains of a mango fruit and simultaneously heard a flying fox disappearing into the night, its wings making a familiar sound of 'Catch, catch, catch.'

As he was cleaning his forehead Sorewe witnessed a flash like lightning light up the sky from east to west. He stopped, looked up and froze. With eyes wide open and mouth gaping, Sorewe watched it as it avoided trees and coconuts and glided slowly towards the cemetery. It was like a huge car. Sorewe blinked and blinked again, but it was true — real. His eyes weren't deceiving him. It was brighter than any human light. His bones softened like water as fear engulfed him and he collapsed into a mass of flesh behind the flowers. Breathing became hard. His heart beat fast as if to pull itself free and sweat bathed his face like water. He turned and buried his face in the ground. He thought the time had come and he would certainly die.

"Munuba! Munuba! Wake up!" boomed an authoritative voice, calling to Sorewe's grandfather. Slowly Sorewe turned and lo! He witnessed the grave give way and his grandfather slowly rise out of it in the clothes in which he was buried. The caller was dressed in a white robe and his brightness lit up the grave and dazzled Sorewe. Not far from the man was the strange vehicle. It was brighter than the sun itself. Within it, Sorewe could make out the figures of men dressed in white robes and singing heart-breaking hymns.

" . . You aren't very good at reciting your Ten Commandments, are you?" the man was questioning Munuba. "This is because you do not obey them as you are supposed to do. Your life, no wonder, is full of holes and it's too late to patch them up now. Now let me hear your beliefs."

Sorewe noticed from behind the flowers that the poor man's eyes were full of tears. By the time the "entry preparation" was over the old man was shaking like a leaf and he was crying.

"Please let me go home and tell my relatives to be careful in life so that . . ."

"No! Get in! There is a pastor in the village. If your relatives have ears then they will listen to him. As for you, there's no turning back. Come on, let us go!"

It was certainly a sad sight. As they turned for the vehicle Sorewe wondered whether the people in Sapa would pay attention to his story or not. He was as deeply troubled as his poor grandfather. The people in Sapa would certainly believe the old man's story if he was allowed to come back to life and tell them what to do and what not to do.

But Sorewe was a mere village man. Would they believe him? They would think he was out of his head. But what was the meaning of the strange dream he had had just before he woke up? Perhaps it meant it was his duty to plant the seed. Perhaps it was up to the seed to sprout out and grow into a new tree and to bear fruit. So to Sorewe the strange dream and what he had just witnessed seemed to fit like a jig-saw puzzle, and told one story.

He was still thinking about it when the door of the vehicle closed behind Munuba and the robed man. He was intently watching the vehicle when all of a sudden it disappeared from his sight — light and all — plunging the cemetery again into complete darkness.

Sorewe closed his eyes. There was a flash simultaneously with the opening of his eyes. He could now see things clearly. The eastern clouds were reddening as he made his way slowly out of the village of the dead.

Sorewe stepped onto the verandah and a woman's voice challenged him.

"Sara it's me — Sorewe."

"Are you the living or the spirit?"

"Here," cried the frustrated Sorewe. "Touch me and believe." With some uncertainty she touched him.

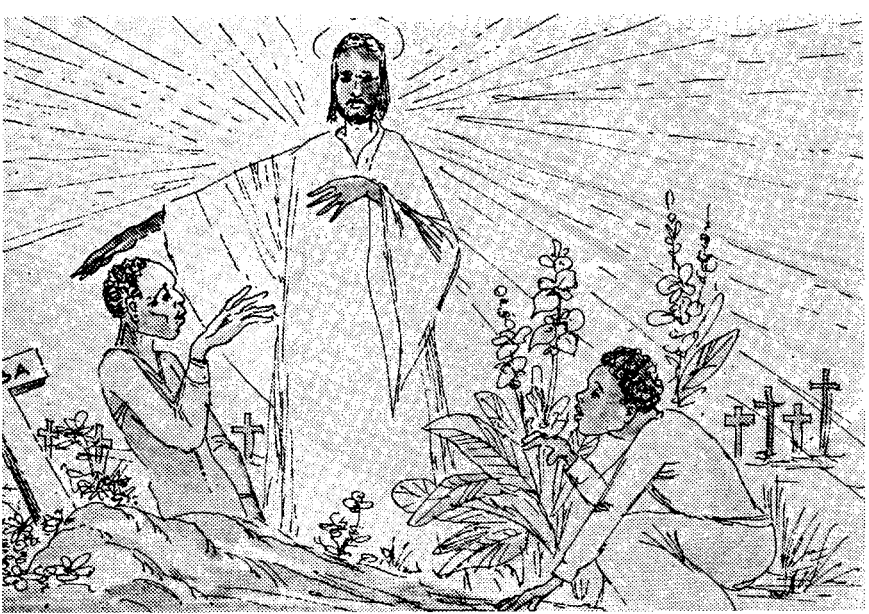
"My husband . . . you are not dead." She burst into tears of relief.

"Woman now will you stop that childish act and listen to my story?" cried Sorewe angrily.

"Yes my dear husband — every bit of it."

"Do you want to listen to every bit of it because I am alive and because you have touched me, my dear Sara?" pleaded Sorewe. "At least listen to my story, it may contain some message for your stone-like heart."

And Sorewe told Sara his story. Even as he began it, he knew she would believe him. When he had finished he swore her to secrecy forever and vowed he would never again repeat the story. He believed he was the only man alive on earth who had seen God, but no one would ever believe him. People were happy to believe without seeing. ●

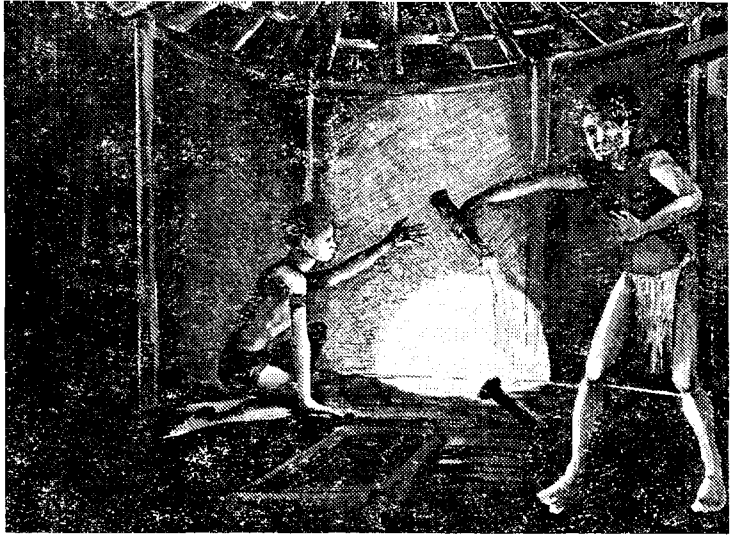


Sorewe saw the grave give way and his grandfather slowly rise out of it.

A NIGHT WITH UNCLE KIA

by

James Sam Giglma



Kia poured water on the battery torch.

One day I set out to see a girl in the neighbouring village. I had hoped for fine weather, but angry-looking clouds were growing thick and dark and rain was beginning. I looked around, saw my uncle's house nearby and started for it. Lightning came in great flashes and I fell to the ground each time because I was afraid I might be struck. By the time I reached the fence around Uncle Kia's property I was covered with mud and grass. As I climbed over, a flash of lightning sent me to the ground and my shorts tore on a split post. I inspected the tear, then said, "Maski"[1] and went on to Uncle Kia's house. Within a minute or two I could smell the sweet fragrance of burning bark and I knew he was home.

Uncle Kia sat near the fire with his broad legs stretched around it and tobacco fumes puffing out of his nostrils. The house was small and round and the smoke fllled it thickly. I was greeted with a warm welcome as though I were someone important.

"Man! Welcome to my house! Is there any news for me?" he asked.

"No, I was going to the other village when this rain started. One of the girls invited me for the night," I said.

"Oh, I see," he said, giving me a big smile. "You'll have a good time there but beware of those people; I killed a pig from that village and I have not paid for it yet, so watch out."

"Don't worry, it's only a minor case; I don't think they'll do me any harm," I assured him.

We cooked some kaukau, first toasting them, then pushing them under the ashes to get them well cooked. The day gradually changed into a fearful black night. Thunder rolled and rain in heavy drops beat on the banana leaves making queer rhythms and water rushed down the slopes. When our kaukau was cooked we ate and then talked. I heard stories of tribal wars, superstition, stealing, robbing and the like. Gradually we became tired and I realised how late it was.

"Uncle Kia," I said, "I can't go on to my date. It's pitch black outside and the downpour hasn't stopped. I could see my way with my torch, but I would get wet and cold."

"You can stay with me tonight," said Uncle Kia. "What's this 'torch' you mentioned?"

I showed him the battery torch and told him that it was a simple thing which gives light in the night. I flashed it on and off and told him it was the white man's fire. He seemed to understand.

Soon we went to sleep, each covered by a blanket. Uncle Kia slept opposite me and between us was the warm fire. Within five minutes I was fast asleep, dreaming of my girl friend. Suddenly I was awaken by a hand shaking my foot.

"What's that?" I asked.

"It's me," Kia said. "I want to use your white man's fire! I want to go to the 'small house'."[2]

"You can take it," I said, handing him my torch.

"Well, you'll have to light it for me," he said. I flashed it on and gave it to him. He wrapped a piece of cloth around the torch and then headed out. As he went out I told him, "When you want to stop it press the button towards you and it will stop," but he was in a hurry and he didn't seem to catch what I said. As soon as he was gone I went back to bed and was soon fast asleep, but a few minutes later I heard a crash and Uncle Kia was yelling at me.

"Get up, the house is on fire; get up," he yelled.

"There is no fire," I said sleepily.

"Wow, get up, please get up or we'll be roasted," he said, shaking me. Thinking that the house was really on fire I got up and looked around.

"Look," he said. "There by the wall. This white man's fire you brought."

He started pouring water from the bamboo container onto the torch, which was lying near the wall, throwing its beam across the floor.

I told uncle to stand back, but it was extremely hard to convince him. He poured more water on the burning torch. Then quickly I got in front of him and picked the torch up. It had been dropped and the switch and glass were damaged. I loosened the bottom end and it ceased burning. I held the torch in front of me so he would see it, but it was dark so I started making a fire.

When the fire was lit he saw the torch in my hand and asked if it had burnt me. At that moment I burst into laughter. I couldn't help it. But I was sorry for my uncle and stopped laughing. Then I explained to him, that this type of fire would not burn anything. He understood and calmed down. I apologised fot laughing at him.

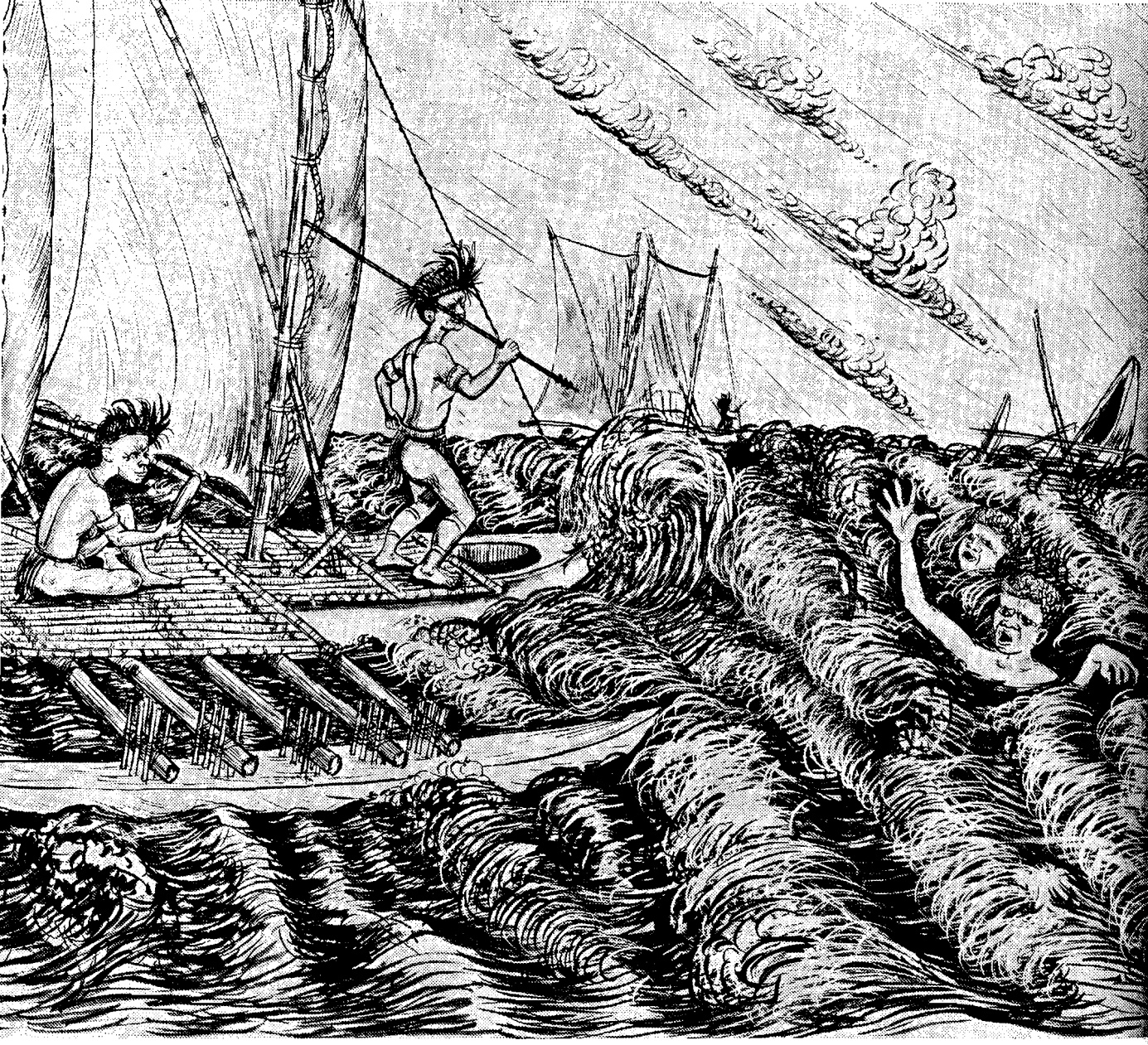
"Uncle Kia, I'm sorry I upset you with this white man's fire."

With real anger and raised voice he said, "The things I don't know shouldn't be brought here. I am fooled by them and am frightened."

I again told him I was sorry. I got a bamboo container and gave him some fresh water to drink.

Soon we were both fast asleep again. I will never forget that night with Uncle Kia. ●

[1] *Never mind* [2] *Lavatory*



They sailed away, leaving the Ullumelli men struggling in the sea.

GHOSTS and WILD VINES

by Micah Pitpit

At the northwest end of Lou Island there were two large villages. Ullumelli village lay on the beautiful coastal plain near the sea while to the west on a small hill was Palme village.

Although they were separate, each village having its own chief, they managed to live together peacefully for many years without declaring war.

Most of their day-to-day activities were on a community basis. This relationship between Palme and Ullumelli went on until jealousy arose between Mwalo, the chief of Palme and Kana, the chief of Ullumelli.

The sun had just risen over the horizon, the blue sky was clear and the sea was calm. With the absence of mist a man could see a long distance. In a huge house at the centre of Palme village the handsome chief Mwalo, with his two beautiful wives, Asap and Tumalo, were busily eating taro and roasted pig. After they had eaten, the two wives took their baskets, kina shells and planting sticks and started the long journey down to the coastal plain on the other side of Ullumelli village where the soil was fertile.

As the two beautiful women walked down the hill, Mwalo took his lime container, a small basket of betelnuts and mustard and went to a hut at the edge of the village where he could rest with a good view of the plain and the village below. Mwalo kept a close watch on every step taken by Asap and Tumalo as they approached Ullumelli village. He was afraid some young men from the other village might fall in love with his wives.

The two women were about to pass Kana, the middle aged chief of Ullumelli, who was lying on his carved bed elevated above the ground on two cylindrical logs. Kana was awakened by the sound of footsteps and he suddenly jumped to his feet when he saw the beautiful women passing. Their beauty left him speechless for a moment. He regained his courage and greeted them, but Asap and Tumalo walked on without a word because the sun was getting hotter and they wanted to go quickly to the edge of the village and walk in the shade.

Kana, still standing, called out, asking the two sweating, half-naked women to the shade near his house. The two women stood undecided for a minute because they knew their husband had been watching them very closely and would be angry if he saw them talking to the chief of Ullumelli. However Kana explained to them that he was chief of Ullumelli and it would be a disgrace if the wives of the chief of Palme rejected his offer. Asap looked into Tumalo's eyes, then motioned towards the shade near the chief's house. As they walked towards Kana's house, they looked to the hill where Palme was and they saw their husband had been watching them. They sat in the shade with the chief of Ullumelli, feeling very guilty.

The chief called them one by one to his side and asked them if he could sharpen their planting sticks, but they refused. He took their planting sticks himself and sharpened them. He then asked them to make love with him, but the women showed no interest because their husband Mwalo was a better looking man than this chief of Ullumelli. Kana kept the women a long time until the sun was directly overhead. Asap and Tumalo grew impatient and walked away without thanking the chief. The chief walked after them and kept begging them to make love with him. The women threatened him: if he kept following them, they would tell Mwalo what Kana had said to them. Fearing this, he returned to his house.

When the two wives reached their garden the sun was moving to the west. They did very little clearing, weeding or planting and by the time they had collected firewood and food for the night, darkness had fallen. Through the dark of the night they made their way home. As they approached their house they saw Mwalo sitting beside glowing charcoals. Slowly and gently they lowered their loads and greeted him.

Mwalo lifted his face from between his knees and burst out with anger. "Where have you been the whole day? Maybe you've planted the whole coastal plain. Tell me . . . why did you enter the chief's house? Why did he accompany you along the beach? What did he say or what did he do to you?" It was the custom of the people that wives should not enter the house of a person who is not related to them unless on a special occasion.

The two stunned wives stood beside the fire as if they were dumb for his words sent fear through their veins. Mwalo shouted again.

"Tell me exactly what happened, before I lose my temper." Asap forced herself to explain to their husband what had happened.

Mwalo's face went red with anger. He sprang wildly to his feet and dashed out of the house. With a fist clenched he lifted his eyes over Ullumelli and with tightened lips he muttered, "Oh! you pig, you are no more than human waste; our fathers were friends and never such things happened between them. Maybe you're not the son of your father and your mother took you from the bush." Mwalo took lime from his basket and blew it into the air towards Ullumelli, then returned to his house.

Days passed but Mwalo said nothing about the great wrong that the chief of Ullumelli had created between them. He kept his secret until Kana forgot about what he had said to Mwalo's wives. But deep in his heart Mwalo plotted revenge.

One dark night Mwalo collected all the men in his village and told them what the chief of Ullumelli village had said to his wives.

"My people, the chief of Ullumelli had no respect for me; he tried to make love with my wives. We will take revenge during the long voyage to the mainland. On our way back I shall curse the people of Ullumelli with their chief, Kana. The north-west wind will tear their canoes and they will all be drowned. Ullumelli will become the place of ghosts and wild vines, a feeding ground of the possums and pigs."

After the chief had finished an old man stood up and said, "I have an idea. During the trading season the Ullumelli villagers are going to seek advice from us on how to build canoes. We will deceive them and they will use weak vines and clay for their canoes." A few days later, the chief of Palme sent a message to the chief of Ullumelli. "The trading season is coming and I want you to prepare forty canoes, I also will prepare forty canoes. We will take food and weapons and exchange them for sago and clay pots on the mainland." The chief of Ullumelli agreed with Mwalo's idea and preparations were started at once.

The men from Ullumelli village were ignorant of the strongest vines and casta fruit[1], so they sought advice from the Palme who deceived the people of Ullumelli, telling them to use 'tellsiong' the weakest vine and 'pu-ur' the red clay. The Ullumelli people took the advice and applied it while building their canoes. They used red clay for patching holes and weak vines in the joinery. When the canoes were ready the two chiefs, Kana and Mwalo, asked the people of both villages to go to their gardens and harvest food for trading on the mainland. The women brought bananas, yams, taroes and other vegetables to the beach while the men waited for a favourable wind. When they saw the wind was good, the conch shells were blown and the canoes were launched into the peaceful lagoon. The men waved to the women and children who stood along the beach wondering whether their husbands and fathers would return.

The eighty canoes moved each with two sails filled, until they disappeared where the clouds and the sea met. The women and children went back to their houses with tears, wondering whether the voyage would be a success or a failure.

[1] casta — *used as putty*

Continued overleaf

GHOSTS — *Continued*

The canoes reached the mainland of Manus safely and next morning they exchanged food and weapons for sago and clay pots. The trading lasted two days and when the chiefs, Mwalo and Kana had sold all they had brought with them, they ordered their men to set sail for Lou Island. The canoes of both villages raised their sails hoping to reach home before sunset. Halfway between Manus and Lou Islands, the chief of Palme signalled his men to lower their rear sails so the canoes would slow and he could talk to them. While his forty canoes dropped back, the Ullumelli canoes kept sailing at high speed.

Mwalo stood on the prow of his canoe and cursed the air in an ancient language that shook the four corners of the earth. He lifted his head and looked towards the northwest and begged the wind to be stronger. "Wind you hear me begging you, northwest wind blow stronger. Sink the chief of Ullumelli with all his men and peace will enter my heart." Mwalo held his lime container up in the air, then smashed it on the outrigger of his canoe. As soon as the container broke and the lime spread over the water, the chief of Ullumelli, and his men were thrown into the water, their canoes pulled apart by the strong wind and huge waves.

Mwalo passed the word around among his men not to rescue any Ullumelli. The Ullumelli people called out for help, but the chief of Palme and his men kept sailing. Kana the chief of Ullumelli cried out to Mwalo for help, but Mwalo said mockingly: "Am I a son of a chief? If you know this why didn't you respect me and keep away from my wives . . . I will marry your wife, my men will take your men's wives and children. I will burn Ullumelli and it will become a place of ghosts and wild vines. It will become a feeding ground for pigs and possums." The Palme canoes sailed away, leaving the struggling Ullumelli men to die in the sea.

When the Palme approached home the women and children from both villages were waiting on shore to welcome their husbands and fathers. The cone shells were blown as each canoe nosed ashore. The chief of Palme saw wondering faces among the children and women of Ullumelli who did not see any of their canoes at the shore. Mwalo told them their men had started out a day earlier, but parts of their canoes had been seen on the way and it was possible they had all died. The women and children of Ullumelli returned to their houses and wept over their loss. They waited and waited but their men did not appear and at last they gave up hope.

One morning, the chief of Palme held a meeting and all the men were called together to listen to him.

"Today we will go down and take all the widows, young girls and children from Ullumelli. Do not treat them hard! You may marry the women and keep the children. When the village is abandoned, I will set fire to the houses. Ullumelli will no longer exist."

The men went down to Ullumelli village and took all the women and children back to Palme. Two days later Mwalo set fire to Ullumelli village and burned all the houses with everything in them. Jealousy had come between the two chiefs and it had led to the destruction of the relationship between Palme and Ullumelli villages. ●

MY ROAD of STRUGGLE

by Horiawi Himugu

THIS STORY TOOK FIRST PRIZE ($50) IN THE PRIMARY-SECONDARY SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SHORT STORY CONTEST 1973

The year was 1963 and I was six years old. I was small but strong in mind for my age. I remember sitting high up in one of the many mountains of the Huli land one gay morning, when I made a wonderful decision which changed my life.

The valley below was vast and flat and the view was pleasing to the eyes. As I sat there my eyes caught sight of a shiny object far away. Then I remembered the whitemen. I had heard many strange things about the whites. Some said the whites had no fingers on their feet, others had told me that they had double eyes, one pair on top of the other, and some had told me that the whites could take their teeth out and fit them in again. With great fear others had told me the whitemen had a magic thunder stick which could kill things far away; just with a sound. There would be a loud sound, and an animal would fall dead.

My young head was curious. I wanted to see a whiteman for myself. I had been told the shiny object far away was his house.

The birds in the trees sang sweetly. My dog, my only companion, looked up at me then down the valley many times and it seemed he was telling me to go on.

I patted my dog goodbye and tightened the knot of my string bag. The next minute I was descending into the valley to the whiteman's house.

One or two people who met me on the track looked at me questioningly, seeing so small a boy puffing along alone.

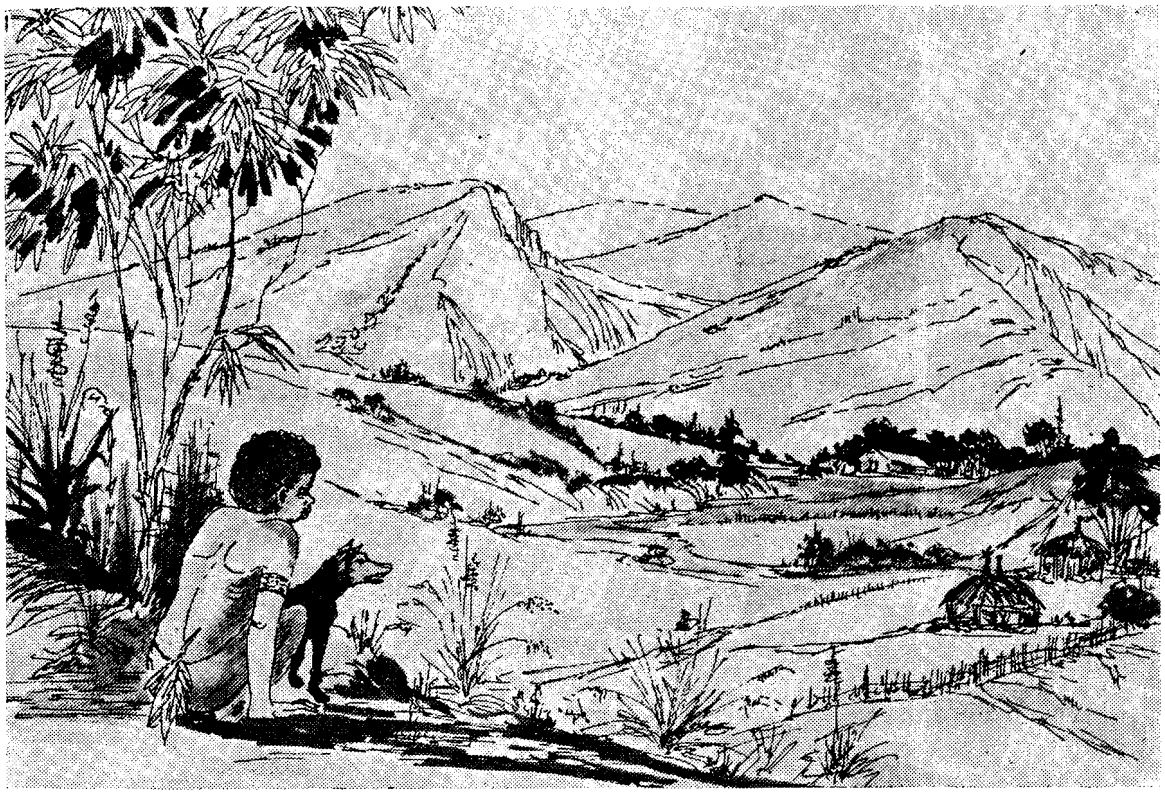
I knew I had reached my destination when I heard voices. I crept silently behind some bushes and peeped over. There was a big clearing and in the middle was the whiteman's house with clothes hanging on a line outside.

Around the house were many small boys with their parents. A little farther away I saw native men finishing a long house, after the style of the whiteman's home. I later learned it was to be a classroom. I went closer and just then a whiteman came along with an interpreter who asked the boys to say their names.

I felt a surge of courage. I too went forward and gave my name, and he wrote it down.

When this was finished he told us to come to the station every day for lessons and he would teach us his language. He said that we were to be called "school boys". That was how I started school and a new life.

I went to school every day but my parents were not happy with this. Sometimes they didn't give me food and said I was useless to them. They said I did not help



I was curious to see whitemen and decided to go to their house.

them in their gardens or carry firewood, or look after the pigs. Often I was chased out of the house. Sometimes they went to pig feasts and brought home pig meat, but ate it themselves. I was told that if I did not stay at home and look after the pigs I did not deserve pig meat.

Life was hard for me. But my teacher told me that if I did well at my school work, I would be able to go away to a high school at a place far across the mountains. Such thoughts were my only comfort and made me work very hard at school.

One cold and misty morning I came to school earlier than before. I lit a fire to warm myself and cooked some raw sweet potatoes. It was the day I was going to sit for my Standard Six Final examination.

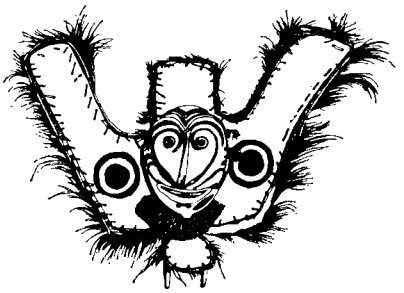
Later, when my teacher told me that I had passed my exam easily with an 'A' in every subject, I was overjoyed. At last I had achieved what I had set out to do. Now I could go to high school and away from those who had been cruel to me. But this was a great worry. I had no money, not one cent, but I had to have $33 for the high school fee. My father said getting education was useless and had no money to give to me.

I made up my mind to go and work on a road building site and carried stones from the mountain side. It was very hard and tiring labour. Many local men and women also worked there. We started at 7.30 in the morning and had only a fifteen-minute break before noon. We finished at 5.30 in the afternoon. What I feared most was that the policeman would kick us if we showed any sign of weakness. Our pay was 20 cents a day. I worked the last two weeks of my holiday and got two dollars. I sold my string bag and local clothing and some people gave me some money, never more than 50 cents from any particular person. Thus I collected $34 and I was happy.

With the money I bought pairs of shorts and a shirt and a tee-shirt which I packed in a small carboard box and the extra dollar in my pocket and that was all I had in the world.

The plane took off and I had my last look at the Huli land. I was happy to go away. Perhaps my parents were sad though they used to be cruel to me.

I am in high school now, no more cruel parents, no more rough life, but my own poorness makes me ashamed. But I cannot help it. I will remain dressed in tattered clothes with patches. I don't care what others say of me, except the headmaster who occasionally remarked, what about your school uniform which you should have bought by now? I only reply that I have no money to buy it, nor a white shirt to go with a school uniform. At first I thought it impossible for a person with a background such as mine to ever advance very far. But my outlook is changing now I am at high school. If my clothes are very poor my mind and thoughts are becoming richer all the time. I dream that one day I will become a great leader of my country. ●



POET'S CORNER

With Jack Lahui

I am sure readers of "Papua New Guinea Writing" have been awaiting publication of the winning poems in the 1973 Poetry Competition.

Due to space limitation, I have not been able to include in full the winning poem in Section One. Printed in full is the First Prize winner in the Pidgin Section; also Second Prize winner in Section One — First Prize winner in the Primary Section — and First and Second Prize winners in the Secondary Section.

Other prize winners will appear in later issues. I feel sure you will admire the quality and the manner of expression as did those who judged them.

Those readers who made this year's competition a success and others who sent in contributions, especially poetry, for publication in "Papua New Guinea Writing" during 1973, I wish you every good wish for Christmas and the New Year.

Jack Lahui,
ASSISTANT EDITOR.

$25 FIRST PRIZE-WINNING POEM IN SECTION THREE, FOURTH ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITION

MANGO TREE

By Mari Lalai

Here I stand proudly
near the busy road
where the children pass by
Laughing, shouting, singing.
Here they pick my fruits.
The fruit, I give proudly
while I stand watching
the children pass by.
Days go by
Still I bear and provide
fruits for the hungry children
to pick and bough, shout and sing.
But now I grow older
Fewer children come.
How lonely I am
Waiting, waiting, to die.

$50 FIRST PRIZE-WINNING POEM, SECTION ONE, FOURTH ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITION

NOKONDI

By Henginiki Riyong

"Oh, man of tomorrow
Oh, the rebuilder of the village
From my short stomach you came out
With my short hands you were fed
The blood that fell
The umbilical that was cut
All were under my care.
Man of tomorrow
Man of the future
You are after whiteman's pants
You are after white man's meat.
Pigs are your possessions
Shells are your wealth.
Whites are ancestors of your fathers
Whites are the spirits
Leave them alone, leave them alone.
I cry from my deep sorrowful heart
I cry unto you
Come and hide under my wings
Come and sit under the shades on my trees
The very soil you were made from
The village you were brought up in
All are crying for you
When you come back
Do not be surprised.
My sons and daughters,
The bushes and the thorns
Will be the rulers of the village,"
Cries the lonely village.

$25 SECOND PRIZE-WINNING POEM IN SECTION ONE, FOURTH ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITION

LAMENTATION OF A DESPERATE

By James Sam Giglma

It's a long, difficult long road
To grand papa's land
A narrow winding
Steep and high
Slippery wet to tramp
Rocky-hard to hike.
Miles beyond the blues
Lies grand papa's land.
Pity me, oh pity me.
Where's mama and papa gone?
Don't tell me they have left me
To live the world myself.
How far can I go?
The road is stony, muddy, it's rough
It is difficult.
How far can I go?
Where's papa to guide my way?
Where's mama to feed my empty tummy?
Oh pity me.
No one likes me here.
Sad to weep
Here by the brook side
Sad to think
Here under the pikus,
Where I was born loose and wet.

$25 PRIZE-WINNING POEM IN PIDGIN IN FOURTH ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITION

EM PAPUA NEW GUINEA STILE

By Peter Kama Kerpi

Buang Taxi trak
Goapim tri mile hil
Nois bilong trak
Olsem kilaut pairap
Me sidaun, mi ting ting;
Na engin pairap insait long leva,
Na mi pilim bodi guria
Na sek sek wantaim trak.
Buang Taxi trak
Goapim tri mile hil
Mipela planti sidaun, ting ting, tok tok.
Olsem kain bilong yumi.
I gat kain kain pasin;
Sampela luk olsem Chimbu,
Sampela luk olsem Tolai,
Sampela luk olsem Goilala,
Sampela luk olsem Kerema.
Tasol mipela WANTOK.
Buang Taxi trak
Goapim tri mile hil
Tupela manmeri sidaun kona
Luk olsem ol kain bilong ofis; save manmeri.
Meri lukim man, na man insait long bel
I tink i tok, "Mi dai long yu switwan".
Meri maus wara na nek sigrap em laik kis.
I ting long bel meri em tok,
"Wet nait pastaim bai mi mekim save long yu".
Buang Taxi trak
Goapim tri mile hil
Klostu long mi tupela lapun manmeri,
Kaikai buai na luk luk nabaut, spet nabout,
Olsem kain bilong yumi.
Wanem samting tupela mekim,
Taim tupela bun tait? God save.
Nau tupela bun selik.
Buang Taxi trak
Goapim tri mile hil
Wanpela mangi, lik lik mangi tru
Kusi kapsait long nus.
Tasol Papa i no wari
Ai wara kapsait.
Mi ting Papa i no baim ice cream bilong em.
Papa i no luk sore.
Mi ting em bel kaskas long kain
Bilong ol pikinini; ikrai long taim bilong maket.
Buang Taxi trak
Goapim tri mile hil
Tupela spak man I tok tok
Na pasim ai long ol meri.
Wanpela i tok,
"Wantok wantok anytaim,
No waries anytaim vi spak.
That's our monies O.K.
Mi drink mi ken daunim any man.
Dis our country, Somare i bos".
Tupela mekim kain kain tok
Mipela les long tupela, mipela kros,
Tasol bia kisim tupela pinis.
Buang Taxi trak
Goapim tri mile hil
Mi sidaun, mi ting ting, mi amamas,
Long wanem, pasin bilong yumi, i gat stail bilong en.
Kai kai buai, tok tok, spak, kus kapsait,
I gat stail bilong em.
Em stael bilong yumi,
Em stael bilong Papua New Guinea.

$25 FIRST PRIZE-WINNING POEM IN SECTION FOUR, FOURTH ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITION

THE SANGUMA BIRD AND MESSENGER

By Peter Sagom

The moon was shining dimly through the clouds
displaying weird shapes and figures on the muddy soil.
There were no other noises in the bush except the crickets
but there were some murmur and laughter
from the young ones playing with others.
Suddenly the messenger gave a long whistle
that gripped the marrows of their bones
and another until it sounded three times.
Then it was gone.
The young ones scattered into different directions
thinking not of the precious fun just before
the incident.
Fear and silence reigned in the village.
People whispered in groups
walked in groups
and some probed for the consequence in silence.
While others repeated the feared words
SOMEONE WILL DIE.
Barely three days after, a man died
as was foretold by the MESSENGER,
the SANGUMA BIRD.

$15 SECOND PRIZE-WINNER IN SECTION FOUR, FOURTH ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITION

UNITY IN THE MIST

By Duberey Gipey

Possessed with the events of yesterday
like shaking leaves we stand today
with wild rumours of 'morrows' schemes.
Like a sea of mountains it seems
Shaking our bones as if we're cold
Cause mysteries of 'morrows' remain untold.
Yesterday's symptoms haunt today's faces.
What rope will tie the Chimbus?
Oh what rope'll tie the Kukukukus?
What magic water'll wash away all hatred?
Oh what water'll quench our thirst
and banish the barriers of the past,
tieing the Sepiks, Goilalas tight and fast
Bringing them as brothers of one womb,
the womb of the land they once roamed?
It isn't in the blood but somewhere,
Somewhere in infinity is a word called UNITY.
Oh the word in infinity
Come bring us unity; bring us mutual justice.
Drown all injustice
And tie us like firewood
Tightly and firmly as we should.
Everybody big or small
Come tie us with a brotherly love.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

WRITERS' DAY: 1974

SATURDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER

Organised by Your National Literature Bureau

To Honour all of Papua New Guinea's Writers

REPORT:

WRITERS' DAY was held on Saturday, 29th September, this year to honour all of Papua New Guinea's writers. Mr Ebia Olewale, MHA, Acting Minister for Information at the time, said Writers' Day was an important occasion in Papua New Guinea literature development.

The idea of a special day to honour writers grew out of the annual ceremony at which winners of the creative writing competitions were presented with their prizes. We at the Literature Bureau decided something more than a presentation ceremony should be conducted and so we introduced Writers' Day in 1972. Writers who attended told us it was a good idea; they appreciated a day being set aside for them. The Literature Bureau expects to conduct a similar function each year in the future.

This year the guest speakers were Mr Vincent Eri, who is Papua New Guinea's first novelist and Acting Director of the Department of Information and Extension Services, and Mr Apisai Enos, one of Papua New Guinea's foremost poets.

Mr Alkan Tololo, Director of Education and Chairman of the National Cultural Council, spoke to the gathering and presented the prizes to the winners of the annual creative writing competitions conducted by the Literature Bureau.

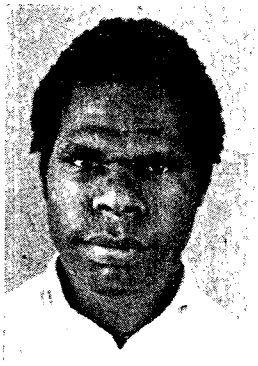
Excerpts from their speeches are on the opposite page.

Winning writers this year took away a total of $610 in prize-money, the highest amount since the competitions began in 1969. For a complete list of the prize-winners in this year's competitions, turn to page 20.

Everyone interested in creative writing and the development of literature in Papua New Guinea will understand the importance of Writers' Day. Writers are very special people, particularly to an emerging nation where there is a tremendous need for communication. The growth of creative writing in this country has been extremely rapid. Competitions have been important to this development. Deeply involved as I have been in the creative writing competitions during the past six years, I know they have given great incentive both to established writers and to beginners. Every person who writes something and sends it to the Literature Bureau could one day become recognised as a writer. We honour our writers on Writers' Day each year.

ROGER BOSCHMAN

Benjamin Umba



BENJAMIN UMBA took the prize ($50) in the Tertiary Section of this year's National Short Story Contest. His story was called "The Unwanted Child". Benjamin has won prizes in our contest before. While at St Fidelis College he won the $50 prize in the Secondary Section in 1971. The story, "While They Were Walking Through Dawn", was serialised and broadcast by the A.B.C. He is now at the Holy Spirit Regional Seminary, Bomana.

WRITERS' DAY SPEAKERS

MR. ERI

There is a famous saying: "The pen is mightier than the sword." But since many people in Papua New Guinea do not read or write, a better saying for us would be: "The spoken word is mightier than the written word". Many young people read and write but it is the old ones who make decisions.

Our literature is largely in the recording stage: putting down traditional legends. This is important work; we must record the thoughts of the old while they are still with us. But as it is now, the old people are not enthusiastic about having their stories written down because when it is done, they hear no more about it. Serious efforts must be made to let our old people take part in and enjoy the literary work being produced. This could be by presenting plays in the villages and by broadcasting stories and poems.

Rapid change in our country means we are accepting new ways without time to understand them. This is another area for the writer, whose influence will help mold the thinking of the community. Because he has this influence, he has tremendous responsibility. At this stage of literary development our writers are dealing with difficult issues which should be brought into the open for the benefit of the public. There are quite clear stages of literary development culminating with those of nationalism toward the end of colonialism and writers must deal with the more argumentative issues.

MR. ENOS

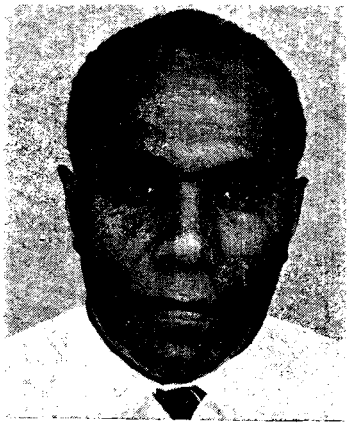
Literature is a forum of human expression — expressing feelings and emotions, dreams, visions, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, ideals, values and morality, wit and stupidity. The creative writer is the creator of literature. Since man is a dynamic living thing, literature also is a dynamic form which springs from within man.

The role of literature and the creative writer in Papua New Guinea's society has changed with time. Oral traditional literature served the old way of life well and now it is our heritage, pride and identity. Cultural diversity means each culture has its own unique literary tradition, its own form, style and identity.

Due to the language diversity in our country, communication is a problem. This means we must use Pidgin and Motu more extensively as languages of literature. We must write in various languages, keeping the diversity in our literature.

The role of the creative writer is to give pride and vision to our cultural heritage, exposing the diversity as a richness and individuality which must be maintained as the basic force of creating unity in our country. Uniformity is a destructive device which will destroy rich and interesting cultural diversity.

A writer must be himself, expressing views directly with force and vision. He must take a responsible part in the development of our contemporary society, keeping in mind that his people rely upon him to speak for them with honesty and conviction.



MR. TOLOLO

Every day changes are taking place in this country, not only for the literate but the illiterate as well. Our writers have a strong influence among the people. The difficulty is their writing can only influence the educated ones who can read their work.

It seems to me our writers are catering for the educated Papua New Guineans. It is their responsibility also to consider those who can't speak English. Perhaps a Tolai writer could use the Kuanua language so the Gazelle people could benefit from his work.

We should try, writers especially, to provide ideas at all levels. As Director of Education I note most writers tend to write something for the education system. They should also provide for the majority of people, the adults; we can make life interesting for them if we provide some of these materials in the simplest language. This may be English, Pidgin, or another language in which the writer feels he can best express himself.

There is much to be written about this country, and it is the educated Papua New Guinean, with the assistance of the older people, who can make a good collection of national literature for future generations.

COMPLETE LIST OF
WRITERS' DAY WINNERS
TURN TO PAGE 20

HOW THE THINGS OF THE WHITEMAN CAME TO MY VILLAGE

by Hapunake Waka

This story actually happened in my village in the very early days after the arrival of the whiteman. A well-known family lived very happily at a village called Samerigi in the sub-district of Erave in the Southern Highlands District. The family consisted of four sons and two daughters. The names of the boys and girls in order of their birth were Wala, Hapu, Waka, and the girls Wama, Wili and the last boy named Doin.

In 1956 the eldest boy Wala decided to leave the family to go to Kikori on the coast to barter with the people there. To get there, my people spent a week walking before reaching Kikori. The people of Kikori already possessed things that the whiteman had brought into our land, and they traded with my people in exchange for smoked tobacco leaves. Smoked tobacco was our only item of barter in those days.

Wala said goodbye to his family and left for Kikori on. the expedition. He took with him a bag of smoked tobacco to exchange for pearlshells, knives, axes and clothes. The people of Kikori were in possession of some of the whiteman's things because they had been the first to be contacted by them. The people in the mountains had not yet seen or heard about the whitemen.

Wala said goodbye to his family and left for Kikori with some older men who were ready to take him down the Purari River. After a month at Kikori, Wala was surprised to see the things the whitemen owned and they appeared very strange to him. A few days passed and Wala was called to a whiteman's office and told that he could be his domestic servant for three pounds a month and everything free. Wala was very excited about this and agreed to take the job and stay on. He was taught how to wash clothes, hang them up to dry and then neatly fold them. Some items which his employer gave him were knives, axes, salt, tinned fish, meat, clothing and plates. For a time, Wala was well satisfied, but eventually the thoughts of home made him long to return.

He asked his master if he could take leave to visit his village and relatives. The whiteman agreed, and Wala prepared for the journey. His boss bought him a suitcase in which to carry all his gear. Wala also bought more clothing, knives and axes. And so Wala departed for his village. After five days walk through the thick jungle, he arrived at home. His family welcomed him by beating kundu drums. He showed them all the things he had brought back. He was very happy to be back home with the wonderful things brought to his people's land by the whiteman. Many asked questions about the whiteman and Wala was able to give them interesting information. This made some of the village people anxious to go to Kikori. The idea excited them and they talked endlessly about it.

Wala's relatives were very happy to see the things he had brought back. Most of them were completely new to them. Wala told his family that he had worked for a whiteman who had given all the things free. After explaining this to his relatives, he told them to sit around and he would show them some other amazing things. They were astonished when Wala produced a small key and pushed it into a hole on the bottom of a small box-like object. It was a metal lock which gave way at the twist of a small key. They had never witnessed such strange and magical things before.

From his suitcase Wala took out shorts and shirts — a pair each for his brothers and father. The gift for his mother was some calico to put over her head. The delighted family ran out of the house to show their gifts to others. Later, all the neighbourhood gathered to see what else Wala had to show them. Wala pulled out a mirror and a lot of people ran away in fear. On seeing their own images they thought they were looking at their own spirits. Some even killed their pigs because they thought they were going to die after looking at their own spirits. They had not seen or heard of mirrors before and were confused.

That was how the very first things of the whiteman came into my village, and how my village people reacted to the experience. ●

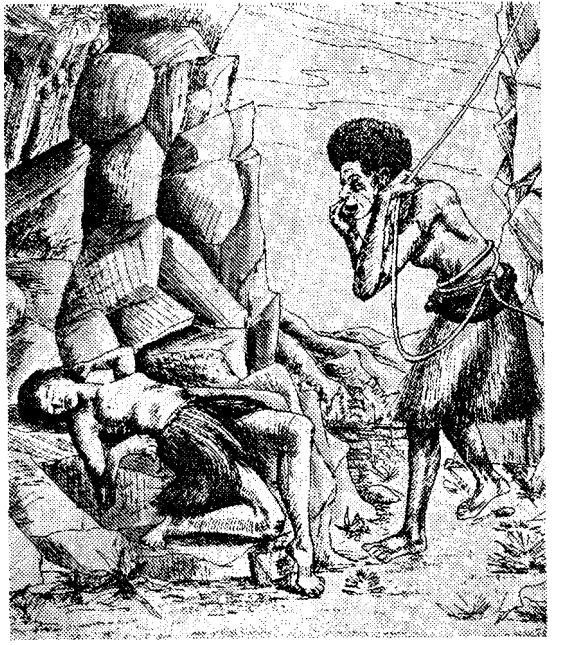
YOU CAN HELP US . . .

Writers sending their contributions for publication in 'Papua New Guinea Writing' can help us by enclosing a short note about themselves. We like to know the name of the writer's village, the names of the primary and secondary schools he or she attended, and the school form or job at present occupied.

If the contribution is used, this information will be used in the section called 'About the Writers' or the one called 'About the Poets'. It would also be helpful if story writers would enclose a photo of the type seen on page 22.

A STRANGE REVENGE

by Mary Paulisbo



At the bottom of the gully she found her sister's broken body.

A long time ago in the village of Hiak on the northern shores of Misima Island there lived a man named Didiko, his wife Bwanenamelia and his sister-in-law Namenamelia. They were a happy trio in the eyes of the village folk. Didiko treated Namenamelia as his own daughter, often taking her to the gardens on the mountain side with his wife. They lived this way until Bwanenamelia became pregnant. As is the custom of the people Bwanenamelia stayed home while her baby grew bigger in her body. So Didiko had to go to the garden with the younger sister Namenamelia. It was planting season, so each day Didiko and Namenamelia carried baskets of yam and taro seeds to their new garden on the hillside to be planted. Thus they worked in the garden from morning to sundown.

One day in the garden Didiko tried to make love to Namenamelia but she refused and was sad to think the man she had looked upon as her father had made advances to her. But the silly girl, due to her shock and shame, did not mention this to her sister when she went home.

So day after day Bwanenamelia sent her sister with Didiko to the garden and every day it was the same; Didiko always tried to make love to Namenamelia and each time, much to Didiko's annoyance, Namenamelia refused him. At last the frustrated man attacked and killed his sister-in-law and rolled her body off a cliff into a gully below their garden. He left his baskets and went quietly home, quite shaken at his own deed. In the village Didiko found that Bwanenamelia had given birth to a son. When his wife asked him about her sister, he told her that Namenamelia had come home earlier. However, when she had not appeared by late afternoon, Bwanenamelia became worried. Just as the sun was setting she went to the garden in search of her sister.

On her arrival in the garden she called and searched among the garden plants. By chance she thought to look over the cliff into the gully and to her horror she saw her dear sister mangled and torn at the bottom of the gully. She quickly cut a vine and fastening it around the trunk of a tree, climbed down hand over hand courageously swinging between the sharp rocks below and the jutting rocks above. Bwanenamelia at last arrived breathless at the bottom and soon reached the body of her beloved sister.

After crying over the body she took a sharp mother-of-pearl shell and cut open her sister's body. She carefully cut out the heart, wrapped it lovingly in a green leaf and put it in a bag that hung around her hips. Bwanenamelia swore to have revenge on Didiko for being so brutal. Then she climbed to the top of the cliff and went home. When asked by Didiko if she had seen her sister, Bwanenamelia gave a sad sigh.

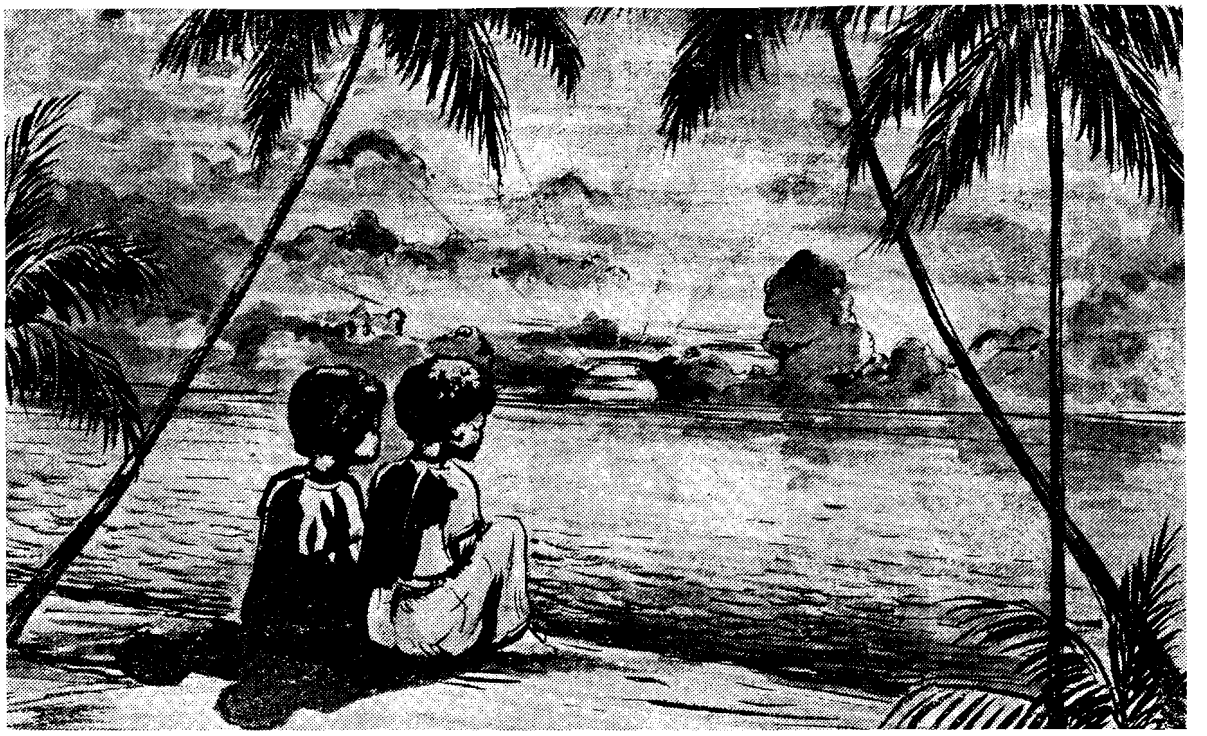
Without Didiko's knowledge she hung the bag, which contained her sister's heart, high under the rafters of the house. Every day while Bwanenamelia sat and fed her child, she would stare at the bag and urge the heart of Namenamelia to grow. One day while Bwanenamelia sat feeding her child, she heard the gurgling of a new-born baby from the bag under the rafters. She smiled secretly knowing that her sister had been reborn through her will-power to have revenge on her husband. And so Namenamelia grew up again as Bwanenamelia's adopted daughter in the eyes of Didiko and the villagers.

The years went on until one day when all the men in the village went to cut a log for a canoe Bwanenamelia dressed Namenamelia and her son. Then she took them onto her verandah and began chanting an old war song and calling Didiko's name.

Didiko heard his name and ran out of the bush to see what the commotion was about. All the women in the village were shocked to see Namenamelia again and were screaming her name.

As soon as Didiko arrived at the edge of the village, Bwanenamelia took her basket and put it on her head. Then, calling her sister and her son, she walked slowly to the edge of the sea, calling Didiko's name as they went along. Didiko saw them and ran to stop them but they were already under the waves. Didiko swam out and saw his wife, his son and his sister-in-law sitting in a circle on the sand under the water. He dived desperately to reach them. He dived time and again but each time he got to the bottom the sand would blur his vision and he would swim to the surface again. He struggled hard but each time he dived he drank more and more salt water until in the afternoon he was found floating on the surface.

So at long last Bwanenamelia had her revenge and to this day outside the village of Hiak, you can see three stones under the water, like a mother and two children sitting in a small circle. ●



That night there was a calm, rich beauty on the tropic shore.

THE UNFINISHED SENTENCE . . . .

by Philip Pake

Twilight was merging into night and the throbbing beat of pop music could be heard from Mr Mala's place, the headmaster of her school. It was Sunday, the day of the barbecue. After church Paula's thoughts were swiftly diverted to the coming evening.

The day seemed longer than usual and she found the hours crept by slower than she had expected. She grew more impatient as the day wore on. When evening came she brightened up. She took a long bath and put on the dress mother had made for her, sleeveless and short, in a gay and colourful pattern of mixed blue and yellow. Most of the other girls going to the barbecue were also ready.

As the girls walked along the path under the shady coconut trees, Paula looked anxiously beyond the barbecue place.

They walked in silence and drawing nearer discovered the boys were waiting for them.

A record player was blaring out Australian pop-music and greetings were exchanged as soon as the girls entered the neatly mowed lawn from the entrance. The lawn was surrounded by woven coconut leaves. A bit nervous, Paula looked across to find Naku walking across to meet her. Paula thought he was nervous when she found that he was very polite. When she had first come into the First Form at school she was too shy to express herself or say anything before the boys. But as she grew up she became less nervous and shy.

When Naku drew nearer, she switched her mind swiftly to him.

"Hello Paula, you look very glamorous in that dress," he said.

"Hello, Naku, thanks for the compliment and I must say you look handsome in that outfit. Your shirt looks very nice."

"Thank you! Remember that afternoon I walked home from town and met you and Susie at Kreer Market?"

"That was Saturday afternoon, wasn't it?" replied Paula.

"Yes and I bought this shirt in the store opposite the main road. Will you be willing if . . . . ?" He stopped suddenly and did not finish his sentence. He seemed embarrassed.

"Go on, what were you trying to ask me?"

She queried to herself why he had not ended his sentence.

She pretended to be disappointed and inside her heart she recalled the unfinished sentence and completed it with Naku's wanted words . . . ."Er, if I ask you to take a walk with me?"

She hesitated, but before she could say anything, Naku added, "Let's forget it. Now why don't you tell me where you bought your lovely dress?"

"I didn't buy it, my mother made it and gave it to me on my fifteenth birthday."

"Have you ever used it before?" asked Naku.

"No!"

"So you kept it for this barbecue, did you?"

"How did you know that?"

"Well, don't you girls always reserve dresses for occasions like this to attract boys?"

"Are you trying to tease me?"

"I think so!" After some hesitation they laughed together.

"Come along then, I'll take you to our seats."

She followed him in the direction where tables and chairs had already been organised.

"Here we are Paula, sit in one and look after the other for me. She took the seat and thanked him.

"Now if you don't mind I'll get along and help our boys with the preparation of food."

"I don't mind," she said smiling thinly.

"I'll be back as soon as the food is ready to be served," he said and walked to the cooking place.

Not quite settled down, she looked around anxiously to see where Vinel would be. As soon as she caught sight of her with Robin under the Guava tree, she got up and walked across to them.

"Hello Robin, hello Vinel."

"Hello Paula," Robin and Vinel replied.

"Who are you with?" Robin inquired.

"Naku invited me," said Paula.

"Where is he then?"

Paula was just going to answer Robin's question when Mr Mala was heard in the crowd of boys and girls.

"Good evening everyone. On behalf of the boys, I'd like to welcome the girls to our barbecue. I believe you have been shown to your seats and introduced to each other. It won't be long before the food is served. After eating, we will dance until half-past eleven, when the barbecue will end." He added, "By the way there are plenty of cold, soft drinks."

The food was then served which the boys and girls found appetising. While they were eating, Paula stole a glance at Naku. He seemed to be worried about something. Paula tried unsuccessfully to read his thoughts. They were silent, but all the other boys and girls were happily eating and chattering.

Paula brightened up when a pop record was played and blared out from the twin loud-speakers.

"You look very happy Paula," Naku remarked.

"It's my favourite song called 'Molina'," she replied.

"If it's your favourite, then would you like to dance with me?" They joined other students. She looked happy but Naku was only pretending to be happy. She wondered if he was worrying about his unfinished sentence given earlier that evening. They danced on but he grew more silent. Then when the fourth tune was over, Naku spoke the words he had been longing to express to Paula.

"Shall we take a walk?" She nodded in agreement.

Night had closed in. It was now easier to slip away unnoticed. They walked slowly towards a lone mango tree beyond a lawn and flower gardens.

Far away sparkled the myriad lights from the town of Wewak.

"Where are we going Naku?" asked Paula, hoping they would not go too far away from the barbecue area.

"You won't mind me taking you down to the beach?"

She didn't reply and was silent, perhaps thinking about what might happen, but nevertheless liking the idea. This was another chance for her. She told Naku that she would walk with him to the beach.

Descending a path to the beach they wandered along until they came to a smooth shaded patch under a clump of young palms. The sand was crisp and sugary underfoot. An outgoing tide had marked a wavering ripple of leaves, fronds and sea stalks. Among the seaweed were tiny, delicate shells washed up on the beach by an incoming tide.

That night there was a calm rich beauty on that deserted tropic shore. Paula and Naku sat down. By now the moon had crept well above the horizon, sending its golden rays to touch the coconut fronds waving against each other as waves lapped on the beach.

The barbecue place was a gay scene. Girls and boys twisted and danced to the free beat of the tunes. Vinel looked around to see where Paula could be. She searched in all directions, but finding her nowhere started to look for Naku.

It was approaching a quarter past eleven, the last songs were to be played. 'Farewell Aioni Bamahuta' was Vinel's favourite farewell song.

Paula and Naku lay in close embrace on the warm, soft sand. The round ball of the moon was creeping higher in the sky. The shadowed grove was very silent in the darkness. A light breeze whispered through the palms.

They completed the last part of their journey by moonlight, strolling along the beach path, cold and glittering, with the shadows of the palm trees like black fingers across their path. The lights of the school quarters were twinkling a welcome. But Paula, caught in an enchanted state of happiness, had lost all thought of time and dormitories.

Finally they parted in the shadows and slowly she opened the door of the dormitory. She felt unsteady and almost unable to think of anything except the boy who had taken her alone to the beach. A sound brought her back to an immediate state of alert. She held her breath. There was a sudden flood of light from a torch. Then came the prefect's angry voice.

"That you, Paula?"

"Yes."

"Where have you been? Do you know what time it is? Why did you run out on the party without a word?"

"I didn't think."

"But where have you been till this time of the morning?"

"I went for a walk," replied Paula.

The Prefect looked horrified. "Alone?"

"Yes I was alone."

"Now please get into your bed and I will talk to you tomorrow."

The room fell into a deep silence.

The Headmistress sent for her the next morning. Paula suddenly felt that she couldn't face the Headmistress and that she needed help. But who could help her? She alone had to face the consequences, if she still lied and said she had gone to the beach alone! ●

Blind Ambition

by Confucius Ikoirere

Ruth sat in her swivel chair in her office in Port Moresby. She was the Senior Supply Officer in her department. She had progressed from a mere clerk to a senior position in the department in quite a short time. Ruth had always been confident of herself but recently things had begun to bother her. She was being quickly trained to assume more responsibility because an expatriate was leaving. She was reading through a file when a knock came from the door and the clerk entered.

"Mail's in. Three for you."

"Thank you," she said, accepting the mail.

She was sorting the mail when there was another knock and the Director entered.

"Good morning, Ruth," he said.

"Good morning Mr. Smith."

He sat down on the visitor's chair and said: "About the Port Moresby section. We fouled up the supply somehow; they're not at all happy."

"I know," Ruth replied.

"Why didn't the material get out on time? I have seen four letters and a number of telegrams; now it is a bit late."

"It was the printers — they didn't keep their deadline," she explained.

"What did you do about it?" he asked again.

"I phoned and phoned. They said this afternoon, then in the morning, and it never got started, it seemed."

"Are you going to have the same trouble again?"

"I don't know, I . . . ."

"Look," he interrupted. "There's a driver sitting on his backside down there supposedly earning a salary. Get him to take you down to the printers, see the manager, tell him who you are, smile your best smile if you have to, but tell him we want a cost reduction because he was late — say a third off. Tell him we'll work through Australia next time, if he can't do what he says."

"But we can't do that!" she exclaimed.

"Do what?"

"Work through Australia. You wrote the policy letter yourself — support local enterprise even if it does cost more," she explained.

The Director smiled mischievously and said, "The printer is not to know that, is he?"

"No," she agreed.

"Good. Any problems?"

"No. I think most of the other things are all right. I would like your approval on some letters later."

"I'll be out this afternoon, but send them in."

"All right," she said.

"I'll leave you to it," he said as he left the office.

Ruth got up and walked around the desk dejectedly, then picked up one of her drafted letters. It read: "Dear Philip' she said to herself, 'thank you for the letter I received today. I would like to answer it but there are too many files, my head aches and the Director is beginning to lose faith in me.' She smiled sadly.

Ruth's mind kept wandering as she sat in the visitor's chair trying to read one of the dozen files they had just brought in. She had started to lose concentration recently. She was beginning to find her work difficult and she became frustrated too often.

Her mind went back to that day when Mr Jones had come in to invite her to his going-finish party and had promoted her at the same time to take over his position as Second Director. She remembered the letter she had written Philip after that.

'My Dearest Philip,' she memorised, 'please excuse me for not writing as quickly as I know I should. Work is very hard, and I don't sleep well. Sometimes I go right through the day like a bow ready to fire an arrow. Today my number two boss accused me of trying too hard and promised me a promotion. It was like being kissed on the hand and kicked in the shins at the same time. But they are very, very kind to me and I sort of love them for it, my bosses. I would hate to let them down. But I might break into pieces and be of no use to anyone.'

Her reverie was interrupted by Mr Smith. She looked up.

"Oh, Ruth. Have all the reports come in?"

"Almost."

"What's the picture?"

She got up from the chair vacating the seat to him and went behind her desk.

"I did it last night. We seem to be 12 per cent down on last month's figures."

He thought for a moment then said, "This month is usually a bit grim. Send out a circular, I think; tell them to pull a bit harder — you know what's wanted. Another thing — draft an apology to the New Guinea Mainland Division about the orders that never came."

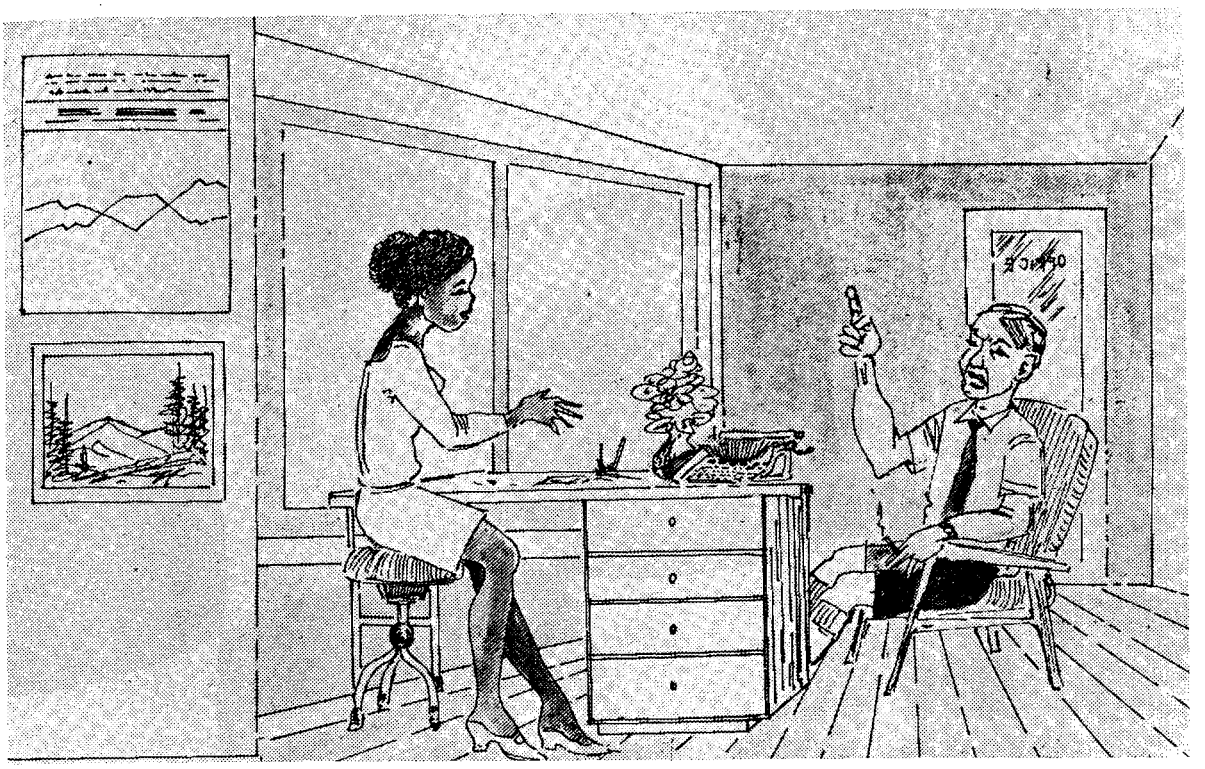
"I'm sorry about that, it was my fault."

"Happens to the best of us; you should have known. Use the airlines next time."

"Yes."

"And last Friday's figures are all confused. What's happening to you, Ruth?"

"I'm sorry."



"Tell him we want a cost reduction because the job was late."

"Look, if you can't add up, use a machine. Don't take it for granted the typists will check additions just because they sometimes alter your English."

Ruth nodded.

"I'll be back tomorrow afternoon. I expect Higgins will call you in the morning. Tell him we think his whole supply policy is impossible for our needs. Let him down easily. Okay?"

"Yes Mr Smith."

"Good. I'll be off now. See you tomorrow."

When he had gone, she picked up a writing pad from the drawer and wrote as she said the words bitterly. 'Dear Philip, because I have not got a steel backbone and a sharp intellect. Because of many things. Because I cannot be hard and direct and angry. Because there are only 24 hours in a day. Because I can feel my insides twisting up. Philip, tell Papa I am coming home. If you tell him I think he will understand.'

Her mind then drifted to the beautiful morning when she had stood on that lonely road with her father, waiting for the truck that would take her away from home. She remembered her old mother too. She had not been able to come and see her off. She was very old now. Ruth's thoughts returned to her father and she recalled his words.

"Listen, Ruth," he had said. "Listen, today you have your chance. Today is the day you make your decision. But it is not just for you. Look at your Mama. She has changed since you were born. For her you must do what she believes in. It is what I believe in too."

"I know, I know," she remembered saying a bit impetuously. "It has been easy till now. I never found it hard. I could always see what was wanted. I always gave the teachers what they wanted and I could see too how some of the others just couldn't. And now the fight begins. I have always been truthful. Papa - oh Papa," she had cried embracing him, hot tears springing into her eyes. "I don't want to stand up alone. I need some help."

"Sweet child," he'd said, stroking her back. "Ruth, you are a woman. And you are not alone. You have us."

And then she had given vent to her sorrow, crying and burying her head in his arms.

"And now I go. I am crying, because I love you, and because I have learned what they call ambition."

Ruth shook herself out of her reverie and spoke softly to herself. "Ambition? Yes ambition! I was blind. It was a blind ambition, and I am coming home again, father. Home to where I belong — to you and Philip and old mother. I know you will understand." ●

NEWS ABOUT THE COMPETITIONS

THIS YEAR'S WINNERS ANNOUNCED

IN THE

THREE LITERARY COMPETITIONS

POEMS

Section One of the Poetry Competition was for poems in English. First place in this section went to Mr Henginike Riyong, a student at the Goroka Teachers' College, who received the annual Peter Beckett Poetry Prize of $50 for the entry, "Nokondi".

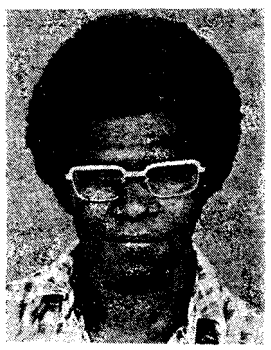
Second place was taken by Mr James Sam Giglma of Port Moresby for his poem, "Lamentation of a Desperate". He received $20, donated by the Literature Bureau.

The Third Prize, $10 donated by Mr and Mrs Alcorn of Lae, went to Mr Russell Soaba of D.I.E.S. for his poem, "The Music Died".

Judges also gave Special Mention to an entry from Pat Modakewau of the University of Papua New Guinea.

In the Pidgin Poetry Section, First Place and the $25 Donald Maynard Pidgin Poem Prize went to Mr Peter Kama Kerpi of the university, for his poem, "Em i Papua Niugini Stile".

Second place, and $15 donated by the Literature Bureau, went to Mr Martin Aking of St. Xavier's High School, Kairiru Island.



RUSSELL SOABA
Poetry Prize Winner

The Third Prize of $10, provided by the Literature Bureau, went to Mr Alex Wangnaki, also of St. Xavier's High School, for his poem, "Mi Tasol".

Judges gave Special Mention to a poem called "Putim Skin", by Mr Thomas Kali of Holy Trinity Teachers' College, Mt. Hagen.

Section Three in the Poetry Competition was for entries from primary school students. All the prizes were donated by Sr Pierce of the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service.

First Prize, $25, went to Mari Lalai of Imuagolo Primary School, Rigo, for the poem, "Mango Tree".

PETER KAMA KERPI
Pidgin Poetry Prize Winner

Second prize, $15, went to Ori Taisu of Kerema Primary School, for the poem, "Our Playful Times".

Third Prize, $10, went to Pae Anieckek of Ohe Hill Primary School, Garaina, for the poem, "Butterfly".

In Section Four, for entries from secondary students, the First Prize, $25, was donated by a person who wishes to remain anonymous. It was taken by Mr Peter Sagom of Brandi High School for his poem, "Sanguma Bird and Messenger".

Second Prize, $15 provided by the Literature Bureau, went to Duberey Gipey of Lae Technical College.

Third Prize of $10, also from the Literature Bureau, went to Mr Silas Kiafuli of Goroka High School for his poem "The Widower".

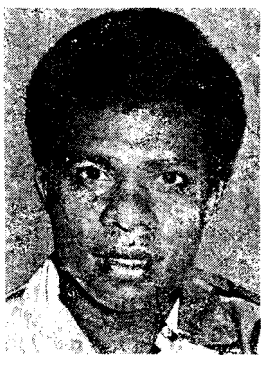
PLAYS

In the Play Competition, Section One was for One-Act plays.

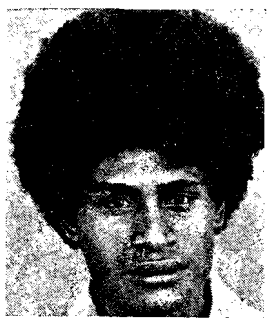
First place went to Mr Mesia Novau of Mt. Hagen High School for his play, "Another Cup of Coffee". He received $50 donated by Mr Michael Zahara of the Department of Law.

Second place and the $20 prize provided by the Literature Bureau, went to Mr John Wills Kaniku of Kila Kila High School, for his play, "Sinedoubalili".

Third prize, $15 from an anonymous donor, was also taken by Mr John Wills Kaniku for his play, "Suisui Mwaneda".



MESIA NOVAU
One-act Play Winner



JOHN WILLS KANIKU
Three Play Prizes

In Section Two, for two and three-act plays, the First Prize of $50, donated by Mr Michael Zahara, went to the winner of two other prizes, John Wills Kaniku. His entry was "Dance My Dance and I'll Dance Yours".

Second Prize, $25 provided by the Literature Bureau, went to Mr Michael Koran, of Semin, via Mendi, for his play, "The Ring".

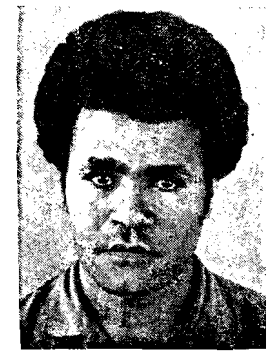
Third Prize, $15 donated by the Literature Bureau went to Mr Westin Seta of the University of Papua New Guinea, for his play, "The Long Night".

STORIES

In the Fifth Annual National Short Story Contest there were three sections with one prize in each.

In Section One, for entries from Tertiary students and adults, the winner of the $50 prize donated by the Literature Bureau was Mr Benjamin Umba, of the Holy Spirit College, Bomana. His story was called "The Unwanted Child".

The winner of Section Two, for entries from primary and secondary students, was Horiawi Himugu of Awaba High School, Western District, who received the $50 Annual Roger Boschman Prize for the entry, "I Found My Way Hard".



REX OKONA
Pidgin Story Winner

Section Three was for entries in Pidgin or Motu, with a $50 prize donated by the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The winner was Mr Rex Okona of the University of Papua New Guinea for his story, "Hamamas Long Tete Tasol".

....AND THE NATIONAL FILM AWARD

Papua New Guinea's Second Annual National Film Award was won by a group of film makers who are members of the Port Moresby Filmakers' Workshop. They won the gold trophy cup for the BEST FILM and also the 8mm movie camera donated by the Oceania Indent Agency for the entry most relevant to Papua New Guinea. The winning film was produced by Russell Hill and titled, "And Lo — The Wheel Cometh". It showed how the introduction of wheels and engines into Papua New Guinea has altered the lives of the people.

The Third Annual National Film Award, 1974, will be open for entries on 1st January. For further information, contact the Literature Bureau, Box 2312, KONEDOBU.

ABOVE: Jack Lahui, Assistant Editor of 'Papua New Guinea Writing', with the gold trophy cup donated by Roger Boschman and awarded for the BEST FILM of 1973.

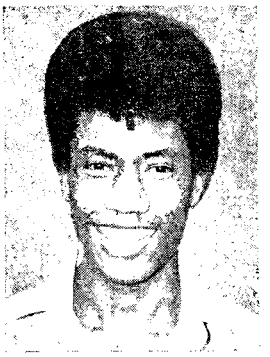
RIGHT: Ernest Sabbath, Papua New Guinea's first Film Director, with a camera used in the Dept. of Information and Extension Services Film Unit. He was on the judging panel for the National Film Award.

About the writers

James Sam Giglma

JAMES SAM GIGLMA comes from Kup Village in the Chimbu District. He attended the Kondiu Primary School, which later became a High School. Later he attended Catholic Seminary College, Alexishafen, near Madang. He is now employed by the Public Service and attached to the Department of the Chief Minister and Development Administration in Port Moresby. James was the winner of second prize in Section 1 of the Poetry Competition conducted by the Literature Bureau this year.

Confucius Ikoirere



CONFUCIUS IKOIRERE comes from Dobu Island in the Milne Bay District. He obtained his primary education at Esa-Ala ond later Logea Island and his secondary at Cameron High School near Alotau. As a Community Development Officer he was stationed in Madang in 1972. He hos just completed a year of In-Service Training at the Administrative College of Papua New Guinea. His story first appeared in Kandere Chronicle.

Hepunake Waka

HEPUNAKE WAKA comes from Samberegi Village in the Erave Sub-district of the Southern Highlands District. He obtained his primory education at the Asia Pacific Mission Primary School near Mt. Murray. From 1970 to 1971 he attended the Awaba High School in the Western District. He is now doing his second year of a course in commerce at the Port Moresby Technical College.

Micah Pitpit

MICAH PITPIT comes from Lou Island in the Manus District. He attended Boisen High School and later Manus High School. In 1970 he entered the University of Papua New Guinea. Micah has just completed a two-year local Magisterial Training Course at the Administrative College. He will be stationed near Maprik in the East Sepik District.

Mary Paulisbo

MARY PAULISBO is from Moveave Village in the Gulf District. She completed her Queensland Junior in 1959 and trained at Port Moresby Teachers' College. She is now teaching at Panoeti Primary School via Misima in the Milne Boy District. An earlier story was published in the Australian magazine, "Overland".

Horiawi Himugu

HORIAWI HIMUGU comes from the Bundu Sub-District near Koroba in the Southern Highlands District. He took his primary education at Goala Primary School. In 1970 he began attending Awaba High School where this year he completed his Form Four. Horiawi's story won the Roger Boschman $50 prize for the best story in the Secondary-Primary Section of this year's competition.

Siwid Gipey

SIWID GIPEY comes from Sappa Village near Morobe Patrol Post, 80 miles south-west of Lae. He attended Morobe Primary School and entered Bugandi High School in 1969. He has just completed his Preliminary Year at the University of Papua New Guinea.

Philip Pake

PHILIP PAKE comes from Waromo Village in the Vanimo Sub-district of the West Sepik District. He attended both Lae and Baro Catholic Mission Schools in Vanimo. Later he attended St. Mary's and Wewak Compound Primary Schools. He then went to Brandi High School near Wewak, where he has just completed Form Four.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

These people wrote to tell us what they think about

'PAPUA NEW GUINEA WRITING'

Dear Sir,

I write in response to your editorial, "Pidgin for Literature?" (September, 1973). Since Pidgin is a vital language of communication and more importantly, of poetry and other forms of *expressive* communication, it needs and deserves a literature to express and to nourish it. This is happening and will continue to happen. If your excellent magazine stood behind it in this development, it would possibly happen faster. I have no doubt that your magazine's commitment to Papua New Guinea literature will automatically overflow into a commitment to Pidgin literature, at least to be consistent.

However there is one very important mistake that you are making, and so long as you, and other agencies which publish in Pidgin, continue to make it, development of Pidgin literature will be slowed. You are not following the correct orthography of Melanesian Pidgin as approved by the Director of Education, the Administrator, and the Minister of Territories, in March 1956. As long as your magazine, Government agencies, and newspapers continue to spell differently, and as they like, Melanesian Pidgin will remain a "toy" language, free for everyone to play with. Furthermore, so long as you refer to Pidgin as "Pidgin English", people will continue to regard it as a corruption, or "baby" English, or an English for the less intelligent, and it is *none* of these things.

To your other questions, "Should there be more stories in Pidgin, and should there be an English translation?", I would answer, "If they're good", to the first, and "yes" to the second, particularly if there is a wide circulation in Motu areas.

Finally, I would emphasise again that no literature can develop so long as there is not some degree of unity in how the printed word should appear. I present no argument for altering the grammar or syntax of articles without the permission of the author. That area must be free for creative development and experimentation. But I urge you to take the question of correct spelling very seriously. I am sure I do not stand alone in my irritation with those who continue to regard Melanesian Pidgin as a "toy" language, thereby retarding its development.

DOUGLAS W. YOUNG, S.V.D.,
Catholic Church,
SARI.

This is an excellent letter, bringing forward some important points on the use and future of Pidgin in self-governing Papua New Guinea. Now we want to know what other readers think. Do you agree with the above letter? Write to us! We will publish some of the opinions expressed.

— Editor.

Dear Sir,

I have just received my copy of "Papua New Guinea Writing" for the first time. I extend to you my thanks for the hours of very interesting reading, and re-reading.

MRS. A. HAYDEN,
Kerang,
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

Dear Sir,

I was impressed last week by the drawings on the cover of the magazine which contained writings by Papua New Guineans. I am very happy about the idea of young people reading the stories and getting some ideas on how to write. This way I think we will soon have a lot of good writers who would be equal to some of the great writers of the world.

ANDREW O'GUU,
Lae Technical College,
LAE.

Dear Sir,

Since you have cancelled your complimentary list, I should be grateful if you would enter our subscription to receive all future issues of 'Papua New Guinea Writing'.

LIBRARIAN,
Flinders University,
SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Dear Sir,

I have received the second copy of "Papua New Guinea Writing" magazine.

I have enjoyed very much reading it as I have with the previous issues and felt that our magazine is improving in quality tremendously. Congratulations on your wonderful work. It is also thrilling to see the wide range of readers and contributors to our magazine.

Surely it is a big credit to our emerging nation.

NOKI MAKAP,
University of Papua New Guinea.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for No. 10 June 1973 copy of "Papua New Guinea Writing". I enjoyed every bit of it and also other friends read it too.

Would you please let me know when my subscription expires so that I can renew it early because I do not want to miss any copy of "Papua New Guinea Writing".

GABRIEL G. BUKU,
Local Court,
ALOTAU.

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on your fine magazine which helps to unveil some of the mysteries of your very interesting country and its people. I direct special congratulations to the poetry section of your magazine and the truth and warmth conveyed by your Papua New Guinean poets to an appreciative Australian.

MRS. J. CONSIDINE,
Mildura, VICTORIA.

Please write and tell us what YOU think! Your letter may appear in the next issue.

Thanks to our ADVERTISERS

● *'Papua New Guinea Writing' sells at 20c per copy. This retail price does not cover a third of the actual cost of production. Advertisers make vital contribution towards the publication of this important Papua New Guinea Literary magazine.*

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