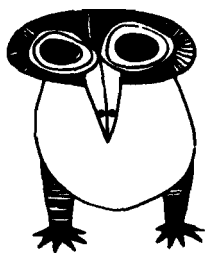


HIGH WATER

POEMS

by APISAI ENOS



PAPUA POCKET POETS

Port Moresby 1971

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COVER DESIGN BY GEORGINA BEIER

MOON

Nothing is tender and soft
like a handful of glittering grass
cuddling my back with gentle fairy fingers
The mountains, packed onto each other,
sit with mighty bottoms and golden heads
puffing blue clouds from bamboo pipes ;
they cast dark shadows
on the sloping kunai grass.

The river Fly flows to the sea
not chattering like starlings do around their nests
nor giggling quietly like midnight lovers
but silently, like a bracelet of silver
it seems to encircle the earth.

The scent of frangipani
is heavy under the coconut palms
and bats play their love games
against the moon.

Steal away, then,
steal away tonight
to the dance of fireflies.
Fly away
let me love you
with moonlight touch.

LOVE IS A RAINBOW

Rainbow

you make me surrender

to tenderness

cobweb splendour

my heart is captured

by distant mirage

in evening vapours

like bird of paradise plumes in sunset

like tuturliu blossoms on a tree

you bloom against the hills

but like flicker of eyes

you disappear

a lily that opens in the day

and droops in the evening

Even now you lifted me

with pulse of joy and honey

now dark sheets of cloud

are drawn across the sky

hiding you from sight

Behind the blackness in the sky

I still imagine your brightness

illusive rainbow

still you echo in my mind

still giving me faded pleasure

like a song to sing

in a minor key.

LOVE MAGIC

Shining through the dark southern shadows
a glow of light speculates
like a distant star blinking
spirit breeze, southern breeze
sneaking in over the village
 skipping along
 murmuring low
 whispering love
 round, round it goes
 kissing lips
 teasing minds
 sneering
 on it moves
 sweetening hearts
 riggling
 tickling
 whispering
 Oh Ya Madit !

Oh Ya Madit, her eyes blurred
weeping low, longing, dreaming
thinking deep, ah !
Her lips dance to the rhythm of the air
lai, eao, iai, eao, iai, eao, eao
whispering love, whistling gently
topipitopipo, topipi-topipo, topipopipo
faster, faster her eardrums vibrate
tinbuk, tinbuk, tinbuk, tinbuk

the heart beating
hungering for the southern breeze
now moving with the spirit breeze
 Ia Madit ! Spirit breeze
 spirit breeze, Ia Madit eao
 coming, coming,
 eo go-go eao
 spirit breeze, Ia Madit
 on and on till dawn
 brings you
 lures you
 Ia Madit
 through the night.

ESCAPE IN THE WIND

Posana !

Posana resting on the hill top.

The hot and cold air
fusing here like a river and its tributary
on their way to the sea
make her sneeze
she bites her thumb.

Posana

alone to seek
alone to find

below

a mighty bush fire
rushing feet and beasts
shaking the earth like trampling elephants
and flying creatures vibrating the air
like supersonic planes
Diffusion, terror, confusion
whirlwind, firerange -

Posana,

fresh like evening star
playing a solitary bamboo flute
strolls, crawls
downhill to the waiting lover.
Posana stretched on the tapa cloth
deep in the forest beside the river
the artist breathes
colour texture tone and life into her mind.
Her peace unfolds like petals.

Then

broken silence

dancing beasts

whirlwind firerange -

Posana

defy

escape

caught up in the whirlwind

ride the wind to win.

INGAL

Ingal !

I cannot please you
but I can evoke your names
 you are the rainbow
 nature's finest work of art
 angel among angels
 none to equal you on earth
 not even the Philipino girls
your body all soft

 gentle
 slender
 slim

elusive spirit

 meek and mild
you dissolve between my hands
all to nothing like wind to nowhere
 Yet perfect like love
 your eyes sparkling like dew
 spectrum of all colours

in morning sun rise

Crystal clear your body
 transparent like fountain
 your delicate hair soft like Iba blossom
You drink the sweetest of honey
as you fly from tree to tree
flower to flower
and feed on delicate petals

When the world is asleep
you travel on like fragrant midnight breeze
If I could catch you
you could give me love

luck
fragrance

and magic

but you are sensitive to the lightest sound
you sniff the faintest whiff of air
like a frightened wallaby beside the lily pond,
you evade me

yet I feel the warmth and calmness of love
that shine from your eyes when you sit and rest

Oh Ingal,

no one could ever make you hate
for hatred has flown out of your heart
the source of love and peace.

NEW GUINEA

New Guinea, beloved New Guinea

What do they say about you ?

The rugged
the impossible
the broken bottle
the hostile
the Saturday made
the waste land
the hot island
the tomb of death
the forgotten isle

The land of thousand tribes and trials
primeval forests of termites, leeches and cicadas
hidden valleys and mountain crags of old
deep gorges and rugged ranges
fast rivers flowing to endless swamps
land of killers and cannibals and sacred corpses
of mountain raiders and mangrove snipers
land of fevers and dreaded diseases
molten lava and sulphureous ashes
of coral beaches with lashing fishes .

New Guinea !

Land of proud warriors of courage
Land of ancestral spirits
entangled in myths and incarnations
land of haus tambaran, dukduk and eravo
land of kovave masks and gope boards

land of hiri, kula ring and fire dance
land of a thousand faces and facets
I hardly know you !
New Guinea, dazzling with diversity
wild, rugged, yet tender

New Guinea, whispering with love
murmuring, dove like and gentle.
Land of swaying palms
frangipani
orchids
hibiscus
rock mosses and water lilies
beautiful like a bride
with a veil of bird of paradise plumes.

New Guinea !
my fathers sang to the kundu drum
my fathers danced to the garamut
on the banks of your mighty rivers
the Fly
the Sepik
the Purari
then as now they watched the sun retreat
to the gentle sound of jews harps
and tilatilo flutes
mumbing magic formulas
as the last glitter faded on the hills.

Awake, awake, awake,
wake up New Guinea !

Destruction !

The sky is falling !

Flying creatures inhabit the earth
a mighty bush fire rages.

Hofza, Jate, Iko, Gamu and Kaia !

God of thunder

god of lightening

spirits of the air

do not destroy me !

Let me not die in this whirlpool of blood
save me before dawn !

Be quiet New Guinea

ancient cocoon

be still !

Don't you know that I am your husband

betrothed to you in childhood

promised to you in the womb ?

I have come to celebrate our wedding

I have come to elope with you

into better times.

UNITY

Old wrinkled womb
 mother of
Gamas
 Markhams
 Wabags
 Arowes
 Kaviengs
 and Chimbus

you who brought forth
 Manus
 Sepiks and Tolais
 Gogodalas

Kiwais Keremas Dobuans Huris and Motus
 and all those others
who scattered and dispersed
 who know not their father and mother

Your pregnant stomach burst
 scattering your children like seeds from a pod
over your bleeding body they scrambled
 and crawled like wriggling worms
 each claiming his part

Though your blood is their blood
 your flesh their flesh
 your mind their mind
they will not acknowledge their kin
 and like delta islands they drift
further apart in pools and streams of blood

Awake mother
from the coma of birth
and as your clouded eyes regain vision
and your trembling hands steady
pull them back by their navel cords
into the warmth of your bilum
keep them safe under your tapa cloth
let them recognise each other at last
on your breasts.

..

TRUTH

Flowers grow
in the depth of the sea
stars twinkle in daylight
and the birds
talk like men.
Those rocks are not dumb
they have life like we
Cats can fly
and fishes walk the earth.
Man can renew his life
like the snake
by shedding his skin.
Don't you know
that pigs are bats
that dogs are lizards
that wizards are cracodiles
and women mate with the moon ?

HIGH WATER

Listen to the rain drop
the underground water
mountain water
tickling
trickling
dripping deep
in the heartbeat
of the massive ranges
black razor edged mountains
with purple peaks
they clutch each other
in perpetual mockery
wild like a tightly packed
formation of warriors
ready to die . . .
high water
of the mountains
seeking the plains
there is no straight path for you
as the crow flies
those rocks defy you
yet you cling from outcrop to precipice
you grind them down
explode them like laughter
like spider's silk you fall
like a poem gliding across
black boulders
convoluting now through plunging ravines

where prawns and crabs gather
carelessly bouncing off the stones
you spray the beauty of creepers
and ferns that mimic cliff shapes
the mountain air is trapped
in the solitude of the whirlpool
and the water echoes
the rhythm of rushing feet
like a long column of highland men
seeking the life in the cities below
and as the sun faces the west
the high water
through dark caves
through witches tombs
over the foot prints of ghosts
and the splintered shapes of spirits
until at last you break out
to cast your hope
upon the glitter of the silver moon
and the tumbling stars scattered over your breast
and you awaken to the wagtail
proudly displaying himself
as if he were the only bird in creation
but you laugh, to see him upside down
reflected in your water
only the kingfisher understands the trick
and in the sudden warmth now
you mate with the dragon fly

and on you must flow
naked through the choking jungle
arrived you have
but at ease no more.

VOID

Blossoms

fade in my hands

mists

gather, scatter and fade

friends

come and go

girls

love and betray

I eat and drink

soon hungry for more

drink sugar and honey

but my tongue wants more sweetness

I travel where I want

and I long for elsewhere

I have what I wish

yet my inside is void

Yet on and on

it pushes

it pulls

it drags me

and I know

if I could fill the void in my heart

I would be dead

a living corpse

no more to discover

invent

create

MEDITATION

The grass sleeps

quietly

the hills stand high

casting shadows

here and there

the leaves stir

the frogs beat

their kundu drums

in ponds yonder

owls hoot

lonely dreams

somewhere

she stands

fixing her eyes

on the moon

she stretches her hands

into the air

longing for warmth

and the kuk bird

who carries the message

of my love magic

HATELOVE

Deep inside love
there is hate
sometimes we love
a girl for more than she's worth
but it cost no more to hate than to love

The over-ripe guava
bursts in our stomach
the worm wriggles
pain grows
in the sweetness.

TROUBLESOME BRIDGE

Troublesome bridge of time
you filter and transmit our lives
you change the course of mankind
along the road

Troublesome bridge
we flow along you from East to West
from North to South
across the globe

Troublesome bridge
spun high above our heads
we're scattered by the current below
struggling

Troublesome bridge
you do not lead us across
like leader or luluai
you do not know us.

Troublesome bridge
we struggle against what we don't know
soon we'll gather on the other side
of troubled water.

FOUR MICRO POEMS

Nature

befriended by the East
intimidated by the West
spring that brings
no dreams

Long shadows cast
upon the pool darkening
birds flutter and fly
soon sing no more

Coconut palms in the wind
I breathe hard
suddenly I remember
flower gardens -
fading sunset
no less sad

Frangipanni blossom
you reach beyond all
sweet fragrant
you are left without bee