

IN THIS FIRST EDITION

**Winners of the Tingting Bilong Mi
2020 Essay Competition**

**Why I think the PNG government should/not
buy PNG authored books**



Sumatin

A magazine of Papua Niuginian

writing



Also in this first edition:

Tribute to Sir Mekere Morauta by Prime Minister James Marape

Tributes to Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare

Ples Singsing

A space for Papua Niuginian creativity

**Ples Singsing – A
PNG Writer’s Blog is
the official website
of
Ples Singsing Writers
& Associates**

Sumatin MAGAZINE

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Produced by Ples Singing Papua Niuginian Writer's Blog

Welcome dear readers

Ples Singing

A space for Papua Niuginian creativity

Ples Singing Writers & Associates (PSWA) is the registered business name for the Ples Singing Masterminds Group (PSM) and Ples Singing – A PNG writer's blog.

PSWA serves as a not-for-profit organisation with the objective of supporting and promoting PNG creativity in literature and the arts.

PSWA activities, such as the production of Sumatin Magazine and the Tingting Bilong Mi Essay Competition, are arranged on a project basis, where all funds accrued are expended, and products delivered on a cost recovery basis.

PSWA has three levels of interaction

Our writer-colleagues who may be nominated as associate members are referred to as Wanwoks of Ples Singing.

Our friends in PNG and overseas, who provide advice, assistance and advocacy, are referred to as Wantoks of Ples Singing.

All PNG writers are welcome to participate as colleagues without formal associate status.

Sumatin Magazine is published by Ples Singing Writers & Associates.

Editorial committee: Michael Dom, Caroline Evari, Betty Wakia, Gregory Babilis
Editor-in-chief: Michael Dom

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Future editions will be available by mail order subscription made to our account Ples Singing 7021847228, Bank of South Pacific, Waigani Branch.

For advertising interests or further information contact us by email to plesingsing@gmail.com

On behalf of Ples Singing Writers & Associates

It is an absolute pleasure to present to you, in the first issue of Sumatin Magazine, this fine selection of Papua Niuginian writing.

We run Ples Singing – A PNG Writer's Blog, where many of these articles have been published over the last two years, since its inception in October 2020. Some of the articles were syndicated from our wanwok blog, Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG Attitude, while others are original. We believe that the writing gathered here from various authors forms a very valuable collection.

The 2020-21 period was defined by the Covid-19 lockdowns, nevertheless the confinement was conducive for some creative people who had opportunity to explore their internal worlds for new inspiration and insights into the human experience.

Ples Singing welcomes all Papua Niuginian writers and artists. We look forward to reading from you. If you have work that you would like to have published or promoted, please feel free to connect with us to find out how we can be of service.

Sumatin Magazine has one simple objective – presenting the best writing in essays, stories, poems, novels, criticism and reviews, that we come across every year, without bias. Our aim is to spark imaginations, to start conversations and to remark boldly about our lives as Papua Niuginians. We trust that other writers, readers and thinkers will join us. *Ples singsing i sanap pinis, em nau yumi ol wanwok na wantok iken bung. Welkam!*

The next issue of Sumatin will be our first e-magazine. We also plan to provide a limited print run of magazines, where and when funds may become available. *Em tasol.*

We wish you pleasant reading!

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Advice from Dr Evelyn Ellerman at the inception of Ples Singsing Blog

Congratulations on this new venture!

IT'S A FUNNY THING ABOUT NATIONAL LITERATURES. It seems as though they find their own time to blossom. Like Papua Niuguineans, I live in a former colony, Canada, different circumstances but many of the same challenges. We achieved our political independence in 1867, but it wasn't until almost a century later, 1967, that we awoke as a culture.

There are many reasons for this, but the influx of many European cultures through immigration, added to over 60 pre-existing indigenous cultures, meant that it took us a long time to figure out what the collective term "Canadian" meant. It happened with a bang in the 1960s, centring on a year-long celebration of our first century as a political entity.

I was in high school at the time and remember the very day in 1963 that I was able to walk into a bookstore and actually buy something written by a Canadian author; just one book. But it was in the window. I couldn't believe it! It was a poetry anthology called *The Blasted Pine: An Anthology of Satire, Invective and Disrespectful Verse - Chiefly By Canadians*. It changed my life. I began to look for more books about my country and gradually they appeared, mostly because our national

broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, made a point of introducing us to authors on the radio, and because one publisher, McClelland and Stewart, made a point of publishing Canadian authors and sending them on tour across the country for us to meet them. Publishing and distribution are essential and this is how it was for English Canadian writing at that time.

But there is another factor that is crucial to growing a national literature: children need to grow up reading about the world through the eyes of their own culture. Throughout my entire schooling, the children's readers, the textbooks and all the cultural references were foreign. When I entered university in 1966, there was no university program anywhere in the country for studying Canadian literature. It was next to impossible to even find a single course in Canadian literature. I know because I looked.

Today, it's a different story. Today, if you were to ask people about Canadian literature, they would be able to list their favourite authors. But, when I first went to university, and well into the 1980s, whenever I talked about Canadian literature, people would laugh and say, "What Canadian literature? You're joking."

"Children need to grow up reading about the world through the eyes of their own culture"

So, it is critical to reach children and youth, so that they grow up knowing who they are as a people.

But that was then – the chief publishers and distributors of literature used print and the radio, much as Papua Niuguinea literature did when it started. Come to think of it, this was at basically the same time as Canadian literature: the mid 1960s. People in Canada started with publishing their poems in newspapers and magazines and read their work aloud on the radio. Then publishers came and went for book length works. Publishing is always a problem, as it is difficult for local or smaller publishers to compete with the big houses.

Today, Papua Niuguinean writers, and other writers around the world, are using the internet, which is a wonderful technology for publication and dissemination. A colleague of mine once told me that his first books were all printed in the usual way. Then, he decided to publish a book using an open access online platform and suddenly, he found that he had ten times as many sales because of the

reach of the digital platforms, as well as a rapidly developing network of readers and fellow writers. My advice to any writer these days is to explore all the possibilities of such platforms. In my view, the internet not only provides an almost limitless audience for creative writing, it has actually given poetry a new birth, because it is such an oral/aural technology. The internet has re-vitalized the genre by enhancing what is at the core of all good verse: the music of the spoken word.

I applaud the efforts of Michael Dom, Caroline Evari, Betty Wakia, Gregory Babilis and all the other writers and friends who are responsible for this new blog. I believe it will provide a cornerstone for the community of writers from Papua Niuguinea.

Sincerely,

Dr. Evelyn Ellerman
Retired Professor of Communication Studies (University of Alberta, Canada)

Her research interests are in Colonial Book Cultures, in particular the ways in which book cultures were purposely developed in late colonial situations. Dr. Ellerman is also interested in developing theoretical models that can describe and explain the processes of literary decolonization.

Orature is in our tradition

GREGORY BABLIS

“Papua New Guineans must unite to create their own history. Papua New Guineans must speak to establish their own history. Papua New Guineans must write to establish their own history. Papua New Guineans must dare to create to make their own history.”

Bernard Mullu Narokobi, 1980

HISTORY is one of the oldest forms of knowledge among academic disciplines. It should come as no surprise that it is also one of the most diverse forms of knowledge, for what is history but the functional abode of all human knowledge and experience.

The principal tenets and guiding framework that might govern the discipline of history operate at such a high level that it becomes ambiguous and may even seem invisible to specialised practitioners of different branches of history and especially to practitioners of other related disciplines within the social sciences, like anthropology, archaeology and sociology.

The truism that everything and everyone has a history cannot here be undermined and it is when one understands this simple, albeit platitudinous, statement that one can truly

appreciate the task that a historian of anything is faced with. Historicity is an omnipresent quality ineradicable in all things. Writing a history of anything must then employ an interdisciplinary approach if it is to make a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge of the subject.

***“In essence the aim of Ples Singing is to broaden the scope of how history is written in PNG and encourage oral history, orature and other traditional forms of cultural expression as legitimate ways in which PNG’s past can be historicised.*”**

In essence the aim of *Ples Singing* is to broaden the scope of how history is written in PNG and encourage oral history, orature and other traditional forms of cultural expression as legitimate ways in which PNG’s past can be historicised.

This entails creating and promoting a Papua New Guinean historiography in the form of audio and video recordings and a strict observation of other traditional forms and sources of history. It goes without saying that the turn to the medium of writing since the early 1930s is now a form of expression of our Papua New Guinean ways and Papua New Guinean literature.

It is important to promote a sense of history among Papua New Guineans that our historical movement is worth actively recording and is imperative for the future development of PNG and understanding itself within the global context.

It is not enough to just assume that traditional societies had no sense of history, or to deem them inferior to ‘hard evidence’ dug out of the ground devoid of context; rather, it is better to analyse

our traditions and customs to understand our past and how it can facilitate the writing of our own histories through our own research models, cultural frameworks and forms of expression.



Gregory Bablis is Principal Curator of the Modern History Department at the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby. He is currently on doctoral studies at the University of St Andrews. He previously administered at the University of Papua New Guinea Bookshop, where he was part of a renaissance in publishing and book selling. Gregory is the Historical and Cultural leader of Ples Singing Writers & Associates.

Re-thing and reclaim our own approaches to express our story

MICHAEL DOM

IN HER REVIEW OF MY POEM COLLECTION *26 sonnets* ([available for free on PNG Attitude](#)) Professor Konai Helu Thaman of the University of Hawaii provided a task to Papua Niuginian writers which I believe is central to our current dual objectives which are to, firstly, make our own contributions to national literature and, secondly, establish and maintain a national literary society in some manner, perhaps as Phil Fitzpatrick [expressed](#) in June.

In my thinking the two objectives we have are rolled into one very doable task within what Konai instructs us is our responsibility as writers, readers, poets and pundits.

“We need to re-thing and reclaim our own approaches to appreciating if not attempting to find solutions to issues such as community conflicts and contradictions, education, environmental degradation, politics, social and interpersonal relationships, many of which are directly linked to existing inequities and injustices in our various island nations and are linked directly or indirectly to the current, fashionable ideology of globalization.”

I have been thinking about what it means to “re-thing and re-claim our own

approaches”. Although I am sure that Konai and Professor Steven Winduo of University of Papua New Guinea, both eminent writer-scholars, would be able to provide a detailed and deeply thought-out expression of these terms but here I provide my own *liklik tingting*.

It is my understanding that to “thing” means ‘the act of naming, identifying, presenting and placing’ the elements within our own environment, of our lives and society, in our collective consciousness, in the context of our material and imaginary world – the world of Papua Niugini culture.

We have names for the objects and subjects within our own cultural milieu and we should ‘take back’ this societal activity, recover that act of “thing-ing”, we should “re-thing”. By doing so we can re-claim the process by which we define ourselves; as one people.

We reclaim our history, our society and our cultural knowledge and traditions, and by doing so we are able to reorient ourselves in the modern world; as one nation.

In a true sense, this reclamation of our own nationhood is also what Hon. Gary Juffa first propounded in what the Marape Government has now placed



A small sample of PNG literature; historical collections of poetry, writer-scholar literary discourse, modern literature collections, the first PNG authored novel, and a popular travel magazine.

as their revival slogan ‘Take Back PNG’.

Writers and poets may often comment on politics, a long-standing tradition for which, in the *Pasefika* context, it was argued that;

“To some extent literature cannot divorce itself from politics. George Orwell is by and large correct maintaining that “There is no such thing as genuinely non-political literature, at least of all in an age like our own, when fears,

hatreds and loyalties of a directly political kind are near to the surface of everyone's consciousness.” The statement has particular relevance for South Pacific literature. There is an inherited political element in it because it has emerged as part of a counter ideology to colonialism”.

Subramani, South Pacific Literature, from Myth to Fabulation, (Suva, 1985), 154.

The *taim bilong ol masta* are gone but today we often

speak and write about so called neo-colonialism, and the repercussions of global politics and the world economy on our national predicament.

As a poet it seems to me that the environmental slogan “think globally, act locally” has taken over all other facets of human society. So, what does this mean to us in PNG literature?

Whereas, our political leaders’ immediate objectives are directly within the political and economic

agenda of *Papua Niugini*, writers and poets must “re-thing and reclaim” the cultural and intellectual territory of our nation in order for our literature to flourish, through the application of our rich cultural heritage.

This task also includes giving back our own names, using our own languages and expressions, and reviving our own metaphors, metonyms and allegories.

While in today’s modern world the agenda of politics

and economics have achieved a status above all else, and are the main drivers of many global conversations, *Ples Singsing* harkens back to a *taim bipo*, when the well being of our own society was central to our discussions before stepping into the domain of relationships with other tribes or nations.

Hausman emi ken istap olsem Paliamen, tasol Ples Singsing em hap bilong olgeta man, meri, pikinini na tumbuna long bung wantaim.

The *Ples Singsing Papua Niuginian Writer’s Blog* is created to encourage and facilitate this process to “re-thing and reclaim” our own stories, poetry and drama. Here we may interact with each other through our writing, in literature which expresses what it means to us to be *Papua Niuginian*.

“Writers and poets must “re-thing and reclaim” the cultural and intellectual territory of our nation in order for our literature to flourish, through the application of our rich cultural heritage”



Michael Dom is a research scientist in animal agriculture. He has published six small collections of poetry. Michael is the Strategic leader of Ples Singsing Writers & Associates



Coming soon!

Tok-singsing: danis bilong yumi iet

Poems written & translated in English, Tok Pisin & Motu

“Michael’s prolific output in both English and Tok Pisin has exemplified his love of writing and his ability to convey his thoughts and feelings to those who read his works. He speaks from the soul. His thoughts connect and find traction with those who read them.” **Paul Oates**

Some ideas on strengthening PNG literature

PHIL FITZPATRICK

Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG Attitude, 28 august 2011

THE WRITERS' WORKSHOP in Port Moresby sponsored by PNG Attitude and the PNG Post Courier and hosted by the Australian High Commission is not far off now and the time seems ripe to float a few ideas.

The grand theme of this first workshop is the future of literature in Papua New Guinea.

As one of the organisers of *The Crocodile Prize* I've been pre-occupied with the subject for a while and have evolved, for better or worse, a few ideas which I want to share in the hope of kicking off the debate.

The first and most urgent thing that needs to happen is the establishment of a new Papua New Guinea Literature Board.

If the government cannot be convinced of the value of such a board, the alternative would be a Papua New Guinea Literary Foundation.

The establishment of a board, while allowing for a sound funding base, might be open to political meddling, propaganda and other problems, such as those now bedeviling the National Museum and Art Gallery.

The establishment of a foundation would be dependent upon finding a couple of large sponsors, not an easy task as the quest for sponsors for *The Crocodile Prize* demonstrated; we got there, but only just. The risk here would be not so much political as commercial interference.

I reckon K1million would be needed to set up the organisation. Running costs might be in the vicinity of K300,000 a year.

"The first and most urgent thing that needs to happen is the establishment of a new Papua New Guinea Literature Board"

I would envisage a small group of trustees, a director and deputy director, and a small staff. The trustees and staff would be gender even.

Given the limited opportunities for publishing in PNG, the organisation would have a small publishing arm.

This is not a difficult thing to organise these days. Small publishers in Australia often operate from home offices. My publisher has an office on a yacht moored in a marina in Cairns.

The publishing arm should aim to produce about six books a year, probably Papua New Guinea's capacity at the moment.

Given the paucity of bookshops in PNG, I think the organisation should be equipped with an online store to market its products. This would include the ability to provide both print-on-demand hardcopy books as well as e-books.

The capacity to produce this sort of material already exists in PNG through companies like the Birdwing Group and Moores.

With the gradual introduction of internet facilities in schools, the publishing arm should be able to feed into the education system and effectively bypass the monopoly on overseas school literature that presently exists.

I've thought long and hard about the idea of the physical distribution of hard copy books in PNG and have come to the conclusion that it is unfortunately too hard, unreliable and cumbersome to work effectively.

While the organisation should have an editorial committee there needs to be some clear and unequivocal rules about the type of material published. This is a very difficult subject but here are some observations.

In the process of organising the literary competition, I researched and perused previous literary endeavours in PNG, particularly from the halcyon days of the 1970s.

I found a lot of the works to be fairly heavy going, politically themed and academic in nature; in other words, boring.

I think this was a product of the momentous times and the fact that the impetus for publication was coming from the University of Papua New Guinea. All credit to Ulli Beier and his compatriots, but most of the stuff was not what your average reader in PNG now wants to read.

There was no real development of what could be termed 'popular fiction' at the time. Here I'm thinking about the sort of stuff you see in airport bookshops around the world; spy novels, crime novels, fantasy novels and so on.

While I'm not advocating pulp fiction as an ideal for PNG, I think a healthy middle-of-the-road approach somewhere between Harry Potter and the academic stuff might be a good idea. In other words, exactly the sort of material that we have seen in *The Crocodile Prize* contest and which appears in the anthology. I think we are on the right track there.

A key function of whatever organisation evolves should be the perpetuation of *The Crocodile Prize* and the continued publication of an annual anthology of original work.

I think we have demonstrated that these are easy enough to organise, get plenty of support from writers and readers, and are a worthwhile thing to continue doing.

I have other ideas but perhaps this is enough for starters.

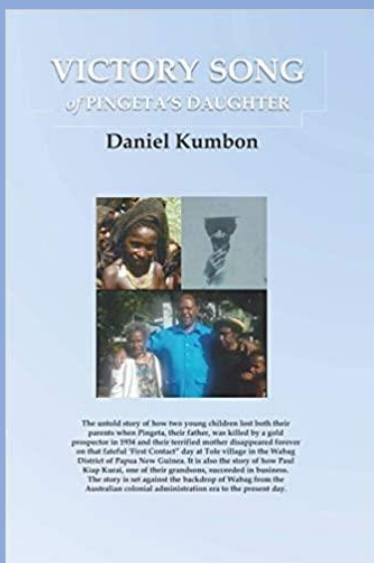
There is plenty of willing help in Australia and the wider world and accepting this help for a while should not compromise national pride.

Australian writers in particular work for a pittance and are used to doing things on shoe-string budgets. Most of them write for the love of it and are happy to

share their experiences and expertise. This asset should be capitalised upon by PNG.

Affiliation with the Literature Board of Australia and the Australian Society of Authors might be a good idea too.

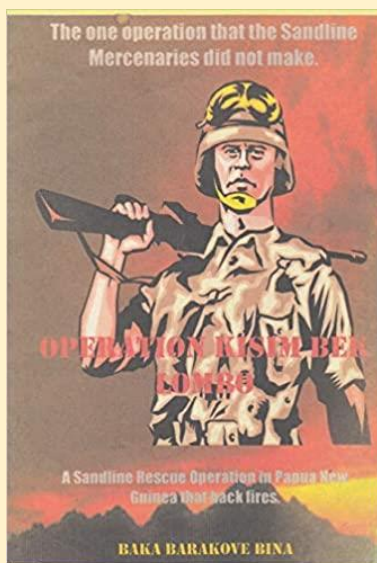
If you have thoughts on the subject now would be a good time to make them public so we can go armed to the workshop ready to get things moving.



DANIEL KUMBON

In a dramatic scene in the award-winning 1983 documentary film, 'First Contact', a man charges down a hill with spears in his hands ready to kill somebody. The man's name is Waipu Pingeta. He was re-enacting a violent scene to demonstrate how his father – Pingeta, the Piao Kumbin chieftain - was killed when he charged down this same slope to attack Michael Leahy, his brother Daniel and their gold prospecting party of policemen and carriers camped at Tole in June 1934. But before Pingeta could plunge his spear into anyone, Michael Leahy picked up his rifle, strode across to a roped boundary line and, in his own words, "put a soft-nosed bullet through his guts". Pingeta's terrified wife disappeared for ever when she saw her husband killed by a loud bang. She left their two young children - Waipu and his sister Tukim to their fate. This is the story of how Tukim lived to compose a victory song when a son was born to her. It is also the story of Wabag in the early stages of the Australian colonial administration era and the work of missionaries as experienced by Tukim's family. It also reveals strange stories. Such as the time when two supposedly Baptist church preachers tarnished the efforts of the early missionaries by smuggling guns into the region and storing them in private armouries in their homes in two of the most volatile provinces in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. And how one of them conned Police Commissioner Garry Baki to win a K7 million security contract before PNG hosted the APEC conference. By Daniel Kumbon, 406 pp, independently published, November 11, 2020

Available online at Amazon, Paperback from \$21.65 or PGK77.02 (postage not included)



BAKA BARAKOVE BINA

A Sandline International operation under the name of Executive Outcomes has been engaged in Papua New Guinea by the Government of the country to assist in a military operation to stem the rebellion on the island province of North Solomons aka Bougainville Island. Executive Outcomes sources manpower from the African continent to assist deliver this program. The Africans are ex- soldiers who sell their military skills and come over to Papua New Guinea as mercenaries. Executive Outcome has another agenda too. They want mining concessions and hope that they can get concessions to the Bougainville copper mine. The Papua New Guinea Defence Force however has issues with this as the directive and engagement of Executive Outcomes contradicts and subverts their constitutional roles. The Defence Force men however are limited to what they can do. Soldiers who are sympathetic to the Defence Force and the country try to do something. They commandeer the hierarchy of the Defence Force, call upon their traditional mystical beliefs and traditions including 'time travelling' to hijack Executive Outcomes operations. They freely use long abandoned supernatural powers that their ancestors practiced. They call up and have comical use of people and concepts that were not thought possible. They have one item that is to their advantage. They hold for ransom the head of Executive Outcome - Hughes Curry. The Papua New Guinea soldiers call up their ancestral mystics in Sangumas, Dukduks, E'hahos, Kukurais, Songans, Maimais, Ghewos, the occasional walking Sepik Carvings and if that is not enough the poor Samarai 'time traveller' to fly in the favourite nut 'buai' and perhaps to a feast unlike any. A possible feast on manbones.

Available online at Amazon, Paperback from \$23.14 or PGK82.33 (postage not included)

A

successful Crocodile Prize children's story

KEITH JACKSON AM



The Award for Writing for Children in the Crocodile Prize was sponsored by the Paga Hill Development Company

WRITING for children is a much tougher assignment than writing for adults.

Simplicity of sentence structure and vocabulary are not so simple in creation. They require technical discipline – and an understanding of what children want.

In the Crocodile Prize, we've set an age of around 12 as the maximum you should be aiming for in your writing. Your story should not be longer than about 800 words and it needs to be on a subject that engages children of ages up to that.

And what do these children like? They like to laugh, they like to be excited, they like to see problems solved, they

like to learn, they like to see embarrassment successfully resolved and they like to see heroes (protagonists) who are like themselves.

And these young readers want you, the writer, to be in touch with the world where they live. In other words, your stories will mostly have a Papua New Guinean theme and offer situations and experiences that your readers know first-hand.

This means that the Western 'fairy tale' approach is unlikely to be suitable unless it is cast strongly within a Melanesian context.

When you write for adults, you can select the best word from the many you know (or your Thesaurus has to offer). You can choose the sentence structure that is best, even if it is complex.

But when writing for children, your words must be accessible - your audience must be able to understand it and engage with vocabulary, structure, content and ideas.

That said, you should feel to introduce new and harder words and ideas so long as you provide contextual support. This means making sure meaning is able to be understood from surrounding text and content.

Here's an important point. Your story should be fun to read aloud. And it follows that a useful way of testing the merit of what you've written is to read to a child.

The plot of the story should be straightforward so devices like time jumps, flashbacks, shifts in point of view will need to be explained within the story or avoided altogether. And, for the most part, your story should be linear – moving logically from beginning to end.

It should also move at a rapid pace, not dwell too much on detail or scene-building.

The plot needs to be strong, the characters memorable and there will be excitement (and a problem or two) and humour.

When young characters solve problems with clever solutions, they stand in for the young reader, who will enjoy their aptitude.

Next to last, learn to love revision and rewriting. At any level of creative writing this yields better results.

And finally, to reiterate, always remember you are writing for young Melanesians, so offer them a story that is meaningful to Papua New Guinea. So much of what they are offered in books is derived from other cultures. It's a real thrill to read a story about themselves and where they live.

One reason we're working so hard to make the Crocodile Prize a success is to provide Papua New Guineans with the joy of reading about themselves and their own culture and society.

So good luck with your writing.

The Crocodile Prize Papua New Guinea Literary Awards ran from 2011 to 2016. It was initiated by Australians Keith Jackson AM and Philip Fitzpatrick in 2010, with the collaboration of Papua New Guinean writers and expatriate supporters, including Commodore Reginald Renagi, Marie Ellingson, Russel Soaba, Bob Cleland & family, Professor Lance Hill, a host of ex-kiaps and many others.

The Essay. What is it?

“Essays should be more personal, speculating and ruminating as if the author is thinking out aloud. It should appear to be a set of free associations made by an active and cultivated mind”

PHIL FITZPATRICK

WHO CAN REMEMBER the dreaded monday afternoon announcement, “I want a five-hundred-word essay on what we have been discussing on my desk by Friday morning, no excuses!”

Essays are the bane of every high school student’s life but what exactly are they?

They come in many forms and can be a few hundred or several thousand words long.

Essays are an odd but specific form of writing. They can range from the serious to the frivolous and can be didactic and moral but should also be informal and flexible and certainly never preach or pontificate.

A good essay doesn’t have to be conclusive or structured logically. It should leave the reader uncertain about how the argument will develop and what is going to be said next.

It also doesn’t have to be conclusive. It can raise an issue and then simply speculate about it. It can canvas facts and evidence without over exerting their authority.

An essay doesn’t have to be strident or contrived and set out arguments in logical order like a lawyer might do in court.

Essays should be more personal, speculating and ruminating as if the author is thinking out aloud. It should appear to be a set of free associations made by an active and cultivated mind.

If that doesn’t sound like what your high school teachers demanded perhaps, they didn’t understand exactly what they were asking.

The word essay comes from basic French verb, “*essayer*”, meaning “to try” or “to attempt”. In the sixteenth century Michel de Montaigne first described his attempts to put his thoughts into writing as essays.

In the twentieth century the English writer and essayist, Aldous Huxley, said that “the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything”.

Within that realm he includes the personal and the autobiographical and the objective and the factual.

At the personal level anecdote and description are important. At the factual and objective level themes and data from which general conclusions can be drawn are important.

The best essays are usually a combination of the above elements but may also include abstractions that don’t directly relate to either personal experience or facts.

Structured and formatted essays, in the sense that your high school teacher meant, are a relatively recent invention. Their main function is to improve the writing skills of students.

In that sense they are a constrained form of the essay chiefly used to judge the mastery and comprehension of students over the particular subject they are studying.

The formality of school essays, while useful in gauging a student’s ability to understand a subject, are necessarily an aberration that can constrain the kind of free-wheeling expression practised and promoted by writers like de Montaigne and Huxley.

If you want to see what a good essay looks like you can go to masters like George Orwell but in the Papua New Guinean context one of the best exponents was the late Francis Nii.

What both George Orwell and Francis Nii excelled at was adding a political context to the form.

Neither of them did this overtly and neither of them engaged in any form of propaganda – although that in itself was a subject they occasionally wrote critically about.

Orwell wrote two hugely popular and influential books late in his career, *Animal*

Farm and *1984*, but his greatest writing was done earlier in the form of his essays.

If you want to read a good example, try his 1946 essay ‘Why I write’. You can read it by following the link below.

<https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/why-i-write/>

If you want to read an essay by Francis Nii I’d recommend his award winning 2013 essay, ‘If Dekla says Papua New Guinea is Eden, then it is’. You can read it by following the link below.

<https://www.pngattitude.com/2013/08/if-dekla-says-papua-new-guinea-is-eden-then-it-is.html>

Alternatively, you could read his whole collection by obtaining a copy of *Man Bilong Buk: The Francis Nii Collection*. It’s available at Amazon Books.

If you follow these suggestions, you will discover that reading essays is a delightful pastime and, funnily enough, entirely different to what you might have experienced at school.

In 2020 Ples Singsing A Papua Niuginian Writers blog initiated the Tingting Bilong Mi Essay Competition

**Why I think
the PNG government
should/should not buy
PNG authored books**

This competition was aimed at young writers, youth between the ages of 16 to 36, attending secondary and tertiary institutions across the country.

We posed a question for them which had been and continues to be an issue that affects our national development and their own futures, through the progress of literature and literacy.

Three years ago, we were waiting on the Prime Minister to receive a petition signed by over 300 writers our readers that the PNG government should support local publishing by buying books from PNG authors. In 2020 instead, we wanted to hear from our people.

“At [Ples Singsing A Papua Niuginian Writer’s Blog](#) we believe that supporting “PNG Authors for PNG Readers” is a practical way to “Take Back PNG” because we will be giving back to PNG those stories (fiction and non-fiction) that already belong to us and that encompass who we are and what we value in our society.

Promoting PNG writers means rewarding PNG readers and encouraging PNG thinkers.

It is also important that PNG writers and published authors understand the thoughts and opinions of their audience. This means that we need to hear different opinions and gather more suggestions about the cause of our petition.

We want to read essays from our youth, students in secondary schools, technical, vocational and teachers’ colleges, and universities. We believe that hearing from you is the best way to determine the value of our cause and decide the way we want to achieve our goal.” Michael Dom

In 2022 we are proud to present the winners in the first issue of *Sumatin* MAGAZINE!

Winning entries of the Tingting bilong mi 2020 Essay competition

First prize: Illeana Dom

Illeana, who recently turned 19, has a Simbu and Eastern Highlands heritage but was born and raised in Port Moresby. She is currently in her first year of university. Illeana's previous writing experience was limited to producing work for school assignments and she had never written competitively.

Local authors need the recognition and support of the PNG Government

THE LAST TIME I entered my now former school's library was in November of last year during one of the last Language and Literature classes of my high school career. Whilst making my way slowly through the non-fiction section that contained the small range of books authored by Papua New Guineans. I noticed that the majority of the books present, were the same ones I'd seen since Year Seven. Taking a peek to the other side of the library, to the fiction section it was quite obvious that the shelves were dominated by novels written by international authors. Not even a section of the shelves had been devoted to Papua New Guinean stories and tales. This lack of PNG authored books, I quickly realised would be the shared reality for most of the schools in PNG. By looking at the situation from this point of view we can clearly see the lack of importance and attention that the Papua New Guinean Government has put on locally authored books. Without a doubt, the PNG

Government needs to support our local authors by publishing and purchasing their written work so it can be read and appreciated by fellow Papua New Guineans and the world.

Every few years containers of books are shipped from Australia to PNG for distribution to schools and colleges around the country. Back in 2010, a combined total of 539, 000 books arrived in Port Moresby and Lae destined for primary schools and teachers' colleges. "These were textbooks funded by the Australian government through the AusAID programme in consultation with the Department of Education through its curriculum division. The cost involved was reportedly about K20 million to purchase, ship, and distribute." (Winduo, S. 2010, February 19. Book floods without PNG authors, *The Weekender*). Twenty million kina is quite a large sum even if it was spent on providing resources needed for

educating the future generation of literate Papua New Guineans. Imagine if half or even just a quarter of that money was reserved solely for the purchase of PNG authored books and resource materials. Local authors would have their time to shine and make money off their written work. If there was government funding allocated to purchase local books and reprint Papua New Guinean classics, local authors would have the support they need in order to write literature, novels, essays and poetry that expresses our national identity. Most PNG writers today are only able to publish their books using their own finances and if lucky, through charitable sources. To this day, many Papua New Guinean writers are having their books published mainly by international publishing companies overseas with little to no support from the PNG Government. Why does the government spend millions of kinas only buying books from overseas when we have local authors that write just as

well as any other author from the United States and Australia? Shouldn't we be promoting local writers and their books just as we do local singers and their songs? It makes no sense to put aside PNG authored books that are worthy to be read, shared and taught from.

Western culture is taking over our society. The Generation Z and even the Millennials of this world spend most of their time endlessly scrolling through social media and their main struggle these days is keeping up with the latest Tik-Tok trends. In this day and age people seem to read books only when the situation calls for it and not just for leisure. More than ever, we need people, especially teenagers and young children to be reading our own stories. Stories that we as Papua New Guineans can relate to and learn lessons from. We need to be reminded of who we are and just how special and different we are from the rest of the world. School libraries around the country need to be filled with PNG literature for all Papua New Guineans to access. However, first the National Library should be able to pay local authors to have their books distributed so that each party can benefit from this transaction. This depends entirely on the Government working together with the PNG Education

Department. Additionally, programmes and projects need to be set up by the government in partnership with institutions to help our current and up and coming writers. Through this support, the books they write and publish can eventually be used in schools and institutions as teaching and reading materials. Many local writers badly want to contribute to the education of the future generations of Papua New Guinea but are just not been given the chance to do so. Moreover, local government funded bookshops need to get on board with supporting local writers as well. 'Bookshops and stationery shops also add to the woes and wounds of the local writer when they are unable to sell books by local authors, fail to pay for the books they ordered from the authors or publishers, and when they care less about the local literary scene.' (Bariasi, A. 2019, July 5. Author wants more PNG books written and read, *The National*). The Crocodile Prize, a national literary competition whose aim is to provide support and exposure for writers, poets and essayists, became as successful as it is today with the support of companies and individuals who believe that literature is extremely necessary for the development of a national identity. Although there was support from

individual government departments, such as the Minister for Culture, Arts and Tourism, there was no actual government funding or support. This can serve as inspiration because just imagine the amount of local talent and knowledge that could be tapped into and shared, should the PNG Government decide to support local writers and purchase their books.

It is up to the government along with its departments to make sure the literary talents of this great nation do not remain hidden. If the novels, essays and poetry of our country men and women were to truly acknowledged, our *tumbuna* (grandparents) stories and beliefs would not be altered with and eventually disappear down the generations. They would remain with us, forever and true in the pages of books.

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Second prize: Mathisah Turi

Mathisah is 15 and was born in Victoria, Australia, of East Sepik and New Ireland heritage but grew up in Port Moresby and likes to say she's from Gerehu. I am currently in Grade 9 at Kopkop College. "I'm that kid in class who talks about books just as excitedly as anyone would talk about their favourite rugby player," Mathisah says. But she has never read a PNG-authored book.

Why the PNG government should buy PNG authored books

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN AUTHORS? I cannot even name an author that I am familiar with, and neither can an average Papua New Guinean. This is in itself, an issue, when we talk about the quality of books we produce, and the authors who write these books. Further, it raises the question of whether Papua New Guinea has a publishing industry or not. The only books authored by Papua New Guineans on our shelves are in the fiction section - biographies and compiled children's stories, which is not

something you will find a teenager or anyone reading for fun.

Children have the wildest imaginations. We believe in whatever we are told and whatever we see. We thought we could fly if we had a cape tucked into the back of our shirts. We thought fairies lived in flower gardens. And red-eyed monsters would kidnap us if we didn't sleep. Our minds are filled with so much wonder and creativity. To quote Russell T Davis, "all kids invent stories. They

imagine games of War or Doctor Who and Daleks, or the wonderful logic of Off Ground Touch. But then hormones and kissing and sports take over and storytelling is put aside; or maybe people simply focus on telling the story of their own lives. But the best writers, I think, don't forget. They carry that childlike lunacy with them forever, its joy and its danger," Russell T Davis wrote this in his foreword for the book, the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, a book that has sold over 15 million copies, which was written by Douglas

Adams. There should be many authors like Douglas Adams in Papua New Guinea, if not in the cities, then somewhere in the Highlands or on a small island of Manus. If not a professor, then a young child just learning how to read and write. If we celebrate rugby players and singers then we can celebrate our authors. If we can build stadiums and music studios then we can at least put up a publishing company, library or bookstore. Many will question if we should put so much effort into our publishing industry, when many of us can hardly speak proper English. To buy PNG authored books is to recognize our literacy and illiteracy ratio.

According to Macrotrends, as of 2020 our literacy is at 61.40% which is not something to be proud of, neither is it something that should discourage the growth of our publishing industries. We should continue to write, and publish if we want more people to read. If we buy our own books, instead of another country's we would be building our country by ourselves. We could truly be independent, in the sense that we don't depend on our former colonizer, Australia, for simple things like books. And when our literacy rates do improve, more will know how to read and write. More authors will be born. We should prepare for their arrival now. More beautiful childlike minds will find their way to the spotlight if we turn it on for them.

In this day and age, it's shocking to find a child or teenager sitting somewhere with a reading book in his or her hand. Instead, they're staring at phones, scrolling endlessly through their social media accounts. As a teenager myself, I do not want to have to be on social media. I want to be able to find a good book, preferably Papua New Guinean authored and read till my eyelids grow heavy. Papua New Guinean youngsters should be excited over PNG authored books just as they get excited when Justin Olam puts a try. I know I am not the only young Papua New Guinean who just wants to find a good supernatural or science-fiction or thriller book to read. Or to daydream the most ridiculous stories, to write down later. Papua New Guinea has so much to write about. We can write fictional stories about witchcraft in the highlands which is so rampant, the Sanguma

(witch doctors) of the East Sepik, the witches of Milne Bay, or East New Britain's Puri-puri (magic). I for one would love to read such stories. However, it is sad to say, the day a fictional book on these scary yet exciting phenomena of PNG, is published is bleak.

The main reason we will not be seeing these fictional books published anytime soon, is because of the fact that our almost extinct publishing industry has been taken over by social media. Social media has taken over to the point where a new form of the English language is being invented, for example the shortening of words, such as 'you' - 'u' or abbreviations like 'I don't know' - 'idk'. Also, this may sound condescending but the grammar of our social media posts are embarrassing. And so is the grammar of our newspaper articles. (tru tok) The level of English spoken every day by Papua New Guineans let alone the leaders of our country is enough to make you cringe. This is a serious issue, if we are talking about PNG authored books and PNG fictional stories.

Not only is social media affecting the ability of young Papua New Guineans to write proper English, it is also filled with absurd innuendos, rash content, to name a few. This is filth, as far as I am concerned, and is detrimental to our reading and writing culture. We consume so much rubbish on the internet and social media that it affects how we write at school. It leaves us wondering where we are headed as a country with this level of understanding of basic grammar. It is a serious problem especially when English is our national language.

Lack of PNG authored books is caused by the many issues that have been discussed – the influence of the social media, poor level of the English language, the lack of reading culture and the dying publishing industry in the country. Given these issues, the Government may have very few options to buy PNG authored books.

The Government's move to buy PNG authored books is a good choice for our publishing industry. If we buy PNG authored books and make them easily available then our people should read

and write better, with the encouragement of our authors. Reading enriches the mind with knowledge. And knowledge is power. Papua New Guinea is filled with so many smart, strong and persistent people, who are fully capable of accomplishing so much if they are given enough resources. We can feed ourselves; we can talk for ourselves; we can grow ourselves and we can write for ourselves. We can write our own stories and our own history.

The people of Papua New Guinea were discovered almost 5 centuries ago. From then on, we have been under several colonizers. They are the source of our history. This is not to suggest that their recordings are false or untrue, there is simply more to our history; other perspectives. If we are unable to keep artefacts or war relics then we should keep stories. There is still much we do not know about ourselves, especially with so many culture and language barriers. But acquiring that knowledge is not impossible. This is why we need to buy PNG authored books, because our authors will tell our stories, about us, for us. Our country is such a colourful and mysterious place, with the help of our authors we can write down our legends and myths and keep them for the generations after us to read, and marvel over. These stories are our identity - we are branded, "the land of a thousand tribes," or, "the land of the unexpected". What would we become without our stories? Before they vanish along with the minds of our elders, we must write them down and tell their tales. There are still so many unanswered questions, whose answers lie lost our myriad of language differences.

With over 800 languages, Papua New Guinea is arguably the most linguistically diverse nation on earth. This is something that gives us a sense of pride in being a Papua New Guinean. It is unique but also worrying. Our languages can only last so long before all is lost to the western culture. Slowly but surely, they will cease to exist. We must save them before they are lost. And the best persons to save our cultural heritage are our authors. They will be our translators and teachers. They will write our culture either fictional or non-fictional that will be read by all Papua New Guineans and

other countries. It will bring people together and keep cultures and traditions alive.

However, given the state of our publishing industry, writing the history of our 800 languages may be impossible. Our authors have yet a long way to go. The issue of authors being inadequate is multifold - before the government talks about buying PNG authored books, it should look at the contributing factors that hinder the progress and birth of Papua New Guinean authors. Perhaps it should focus, on improving our speaking and learning the English language at school, which is the foundation of becoming an author, Papua New Guineans reading culture also needs to be encouraged. And books should be made available for everyone to read, elder to toddler. And

more importantly the government should prioritise the publishing industry if it is to buy PNG authored books.

Fiction or non-fiction, books bring us into a new world and a new perspective. It brings smiles to the lips, and tears to the eyes of its reader. You do not need to be a genius to write a book. If J.K Rowling can write a book then why cannot a teenager or a retired lawyer who lives in Papua New Guinea. It is written in the bible that nothing is impossible with God. The bible is probably the only book most Papua New Guineans have read. We should take its advice, set the bar higher, and buy PNG authored books because we can read and write, we can speak better English, and we can be independent. Let us show the world our hidden gems not

underground but in the minds of our people.

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Third prize: Issabelle Vilau

Issabelle is 23 and comes from a mixed parentage of East New Britain, Eastern Highlands, Morobe and Jiwaka. She has an identical twin sister. She expects to graduate from UPNG in April as a Bachelor of Business Management. Her specific area of interest is public health but she is currently, unemployed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Issabelle has enjoyed writing since primary school and says the skills she has acquired have proven beneficial in her educational career and other formal and informal settings.

Encourage and promote a home-grown PNG literature

LITERATURE is one of the significant indicators that can be used to measure the progress and development of a country. Literature not only teaches a country's population to read and write, but provides an avenue for individuals to learn, grow and tell their unique stories with each other. Literature also allows people to share their experiences, develop knowledge and skills, provide information, educate and enlighten readers. It is a term derived from the Latin word, literature meaning "writing formed with letters" and it is also used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. (Esther Lombardi, 2020). Literature most often refers to imaginative creative work, such as poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction and, in some cases, journalism and song.

This critical essay is going to discuss the notion 'Why the PNG Government should buy PNG authored books. The PNG Vision 2050 envisioned that the country would be a Healthy, Wealthy,

Safe and Fair society by 2050. Thus, the government formulated and implemented several policies to achieve these milestones. One of which is the Tuition-Fee Free Policy, which was used as a strategic approach for development, to achieve The PNG Vision 2050. The Tuition-Fee Free policy was implemented to ensure all children in the country will have access to education. However, despite the efforts of the government, the illiteracy rate in PNG remains one of the highest in the world.

An effective approach the government can use to address this issue is through literature. Literature can be described as the 'Soul of a Nation', because of its ability to tell stories of a thousand generations and its ability to unite people of different backgrounds, cultures, traditions, gender and race. By supporting a sustainable, home-grown PNG literature, it can have a powerful and effective influence on education, and can assist in focusing people to

create a safe and progressive society. (The National, 2019). Thus, in late 2019, PNG writers, and their supporters made a petition to the government to recognise PNG literature in supporting local writers and improve the illiteracy rate in the country. This essay will discuss the three main reasons why the government should buy PNG-authored books: to develop a reading culture in the country, promote national identity and encourage and support PNG writers to expound on their writing abilities.

The first and foremost reason for the government to buy PNG authored books is to promote and develop a culture of reading in the country. During the 2019 Annual Book Fair at the National Library in Port Moresby, a senior academic raised his concern, about the lack of interest among Papua New Guineans in developing a reading culture. The University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) Prof Steven Winduo said that the biggest problem in the country is that we have not developed a

culture of reading, which raises serious concern for students' academic progression. If students cannot develop the habit of reading, they cannot thoroughly understand the concepts taught to them, thus affecting their ability to learn. In the Post Courier 2018, Mr Winduo said, "I teach at UPNG and my students don't write good English. I see them sitting and telling stories all day but when it comes to writing, they are very poor." This statement by a university academic might seem dramatic, but that is the sad truth that most PNG students face as a result of lack of reading.

The lack of reading culture among student has a direct impact on their ability to learn effectively. The National Education Department 2015 literacy report states that the PNG literacy rate is low at 63.4 percent (Post Courier, September 2018). The then education secretary Dr Uke Kumbra said that the country's literacy level is relatively low which urgently requires government intervention. The main strategy used by the government to improve literacy in PNG had been the introduction of the Tuition Fee Free Policy to educate school children from elementary to secondary. The education system of the country had seen some reform to improve its literacy rate, including the reform of the Standard Based Curriculum, infrastructure development, system strengthening and the use of information, communication technology (ICT) among others (Post Courier, 2018).

However, those reforms were ineffective in addressing the lack of reading culture in the country. For students to improve their writing they have to be good readers. As Mr Winduo puts it, "You cannot be a good writer if you cannot read: you have to complement your writing with your reading". Students who tend to read a lot have a higher vocabulary, are better at comprehending what they have read and they possess better communication skills, such as writing.

These benefits of reading provide students with important life skill to navigate interpersonal relationship, participate in programs and workplace meetings, and in writing memos and reports later on in their lives.

Therefore, it is important that the government should buy PNG authored books and distribute them to schools and universities to promote and develop a reading culture in the country. When students started reading at early age, they will have a strong intellectual foundation to build on. For PNG students, reading PNG authored books provides them with an avenue where they could effectively relate to - whether that be through the experiences, background, or culture and tradition. Young students enjoy reading about something that they are familiar with. Distributing PNG authored books to primary schools will encourage young readers to read and develop a reading culture as they grow older.

The next reason why the government should buy PNG authored books is to promote National Identity. Every country and nation have a story to tell, and these stories form the basis of how we think, behave, communicate and live our lives. Papua New Guinea is a country with such diversity, including 800 plus languages and thousands of clans and tribes. The unique diversity of the country can provide a platform for the promotion of our National Identity

Ours is a culturally diversified country, with hundreds of different customs and traditions. People from different cultures and backgrounds, often find it challenging to relate to one other and some have difficulty understanding the culturally-driven behaviours and motivations of others. Therefore, when individuals who do not understand how culture shapes behaviour of a person, they tend to misinterpret the actions, beliefs and the interaction with others. (Schall. M. J 2019). Fortunately, literature acts a medium that reflects human nature and provides a way for us to learn and relate to each other. By reading through a first-person perspective, readers can fully immerse themselves into a different mindset and figure out how individuals from different cultures and background think and feel. When PNG authored books are bought and distributed to schools, students from different cultures and background can read and better understand the different cultures around the country. Currently most books that students read are written by authors from other countries. If the government can invest in PNG Literature it will

provide materials for students to read about their own country, their own people and their own stories and issues, and it will prove to be a source of national pride and national identity. (The National 2019). In essence, stories keep culture alive. They preserve culture and pass it on from one generation to another. By supporting our local authors, we help to preserve our unique culture by telling our different stories to help unite our culturally diverse country and promote our National Identity to the world.

The last important reason why the government should 'Buy PNG-authored books' is to support PNG writers to expound on their writing abilities. When the government buys from PNG authored books, they are not just helping the writers themselves to make a living doing that they love, they are also supporting the art of writing as a whole. The support from the government for local writers will act as a platform for writers to expound on their writing skills to write more books. In the National Newspaper dated October 21, 2019 a senior academic at UPNG and an author himself expressed his frustration and concerns about writing books. He said that writers can write and publish their books, but asked who is going to read them, as most young people are not reading. Most schools and universities have outdated books in their libraries and those libraries hardly have any PNG authored books. If the government could buy PNG authored books and distribute them to schools and universities around the country, it will allow students to have access to PNG authored books. Having books in the library that students can relate to, will encourage students to develop a reading culture. When those books appeal to and capture the readers' attention, the readers will want to read more, thus encouraging the writers to expound on their ideas and write more books.

The support from the government will not only help the existing writers to write more books, but it will also create an opportunity for students to pursue a career in literature. Right now, in PNG it is considered that people who pursue careers in law, medicine, engineering, commerce and similar fields are likely to be successful in life - while people who are passionate about careers such as literature, fashion design, music,

painting and other art forms are destined to be unsuccessful and have unproductive pursuits. Support from the government to develop PNG literature will help to change this existing biased trend and provide equal opportunities for individuals to pursue their careers in literature and arts, thus, encouraging new writers and readers and developing more authors to tell our unique stories to our countryman and to the rest of the world.

Literature is one of the significant indicators that can be used to measure the progress of a country as it also allows people to share their experiences, develop knowledge and skills, provide information and educate each other. The PNG Vision 2050, is a huge milestone that the country is working towards to achieve. The Tuition Fee Free Policy is one of the strategic approaches that the government is using to achieve this vision. However, the policy has been ineffective in addressing some of the issue in the education system of the country. Fortunately, one of the effective ways that can positively influence education is through

supporting a sustainable home-grown PNG Literature.

This essay has discussed the three main reasons why the government should buy PNG-authored books. The three reasons include: developing reading culture in the country, promoting national identity and encouraging and supporting PNG writers to expound on their writing abilities. If the PNG government can buy PNG authored books, it will encourage and promote the development of a sustainable home-grown PNG literature - thus, creating an educated and a progressive society.

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Most popular essay on the blog: Vilousa Hahembe

Vilousa Hahembe is 20 years old and comes from East Sepik Province. She graduated from Marianville Secondary School in 2019 and is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Economics at the University of Papua New Guinea. She has read a number of literatures published by Papua New Guinean authors over the years as they were part of English curriculum in school. Vilousa says that, "English class was always fun and I believe that's what made reading books and writing essays a hobby of mine".

The Papua New Guinea Government Should Purchase Books Written by Papua New Guinean Authors

LITERATURE is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment. It most likely is the earliest form of history in Papua New Guinea. The diverse ethnic groups throughout the country have their own stories, legends and myths, songs, drama, drawings, paintings and artefacts. These are pure native literature that has been passed on from one generation to the next until this time and era. They have been recorded and preserved by the elders and transmitted verbally and visually to the youth, with the aim to teach them life lessons, moral code and ethics, heritage

and strength. The influence of western culture and their invention of paper has allowed for this preserved history to be translated, written down and vastly shared. Papua New Guinean authors have emerged and transformed through creativity of literature and have published great work. However, these authors have not been given enough recognition by the government of Papua New Guinea, due to the fact that they are competing with the work of more advanced authors of the western world. Hence, the question stands 'should the government purchase Papua New Guinean authored books?' most people might think otherwise. However, this

paper intends to elaborate as to why the government should purchase Papua New Guinean authored books.

Firstly, Papua New Guinean authored books will have a positive impact on Papua New Guineans to read and write literature more proficiently. The skill of reading and writing literature is something that is still difficult to grasp for many Papua New Guineans. For them to know that the books they read are written by Papua New Guinean authors, will give them motivation and determination to learn how to read and write, so as to one day write a book of their own. Some of these Papua New

Guinean authored books are written in tok pisin (pidgin) and have simple English translation. As English is a foreign language, many Papua New Guineans find it convenient with the use of the pidgin language to help them understand better. Understanding to read and write will help them in the long run excessively. They will be able to write stories, articles and essays which will eventually enable them to read English written books and understand them profoundly. They can also write books themselves and further inspire their peers to read and write as well. For this reason, the Papua New Guinea government should purchase Papua New Guinean authored books.

In addition, Papua New Guinean authored books promote cultural heritage. The authors capture the customs and cultures of the various Papua New Guinean native habitants in their work. Their different practices and beliefs are shared with the readers in the content, along with Papua New Guinean history. For example, the book written by Ignatius Kilage titled 'My Mother Calls Me Yaltep', is the story of how a highlander from the Chimbu province was recruited by the so called 'White Men' to work in their plantations at Rabaul, East New Britain Province, during the colonial period. The book describes the sacred traditional practices of the chimbu people such as; courtship, marriage and bride price ceremonies. It defined the value of respect, strong family ties, love and unity of people. It also showed as the Papua New Guineans say "Pasin Wantok" between the highlanders and the coastal natives. With the influence of the western world rapidly percolating into the fabric of society, it is vital that the youths of this generation be reminded of their cultural identity. Associating with such books will teach them morals, virtues and their traditional values. Therefore, it is only fitting that the Papua New Guinea government purchase Papua New Guinean authored books.

Furthermore, integrity is upheld and originality is promoted through Papua

New Guinean authored books. Copyright violation is an issue within the creative industry. Originality of the work of the Papua New Guinean authors must be protected and security ensured. When the books go unrecognized, it is easy for these authors work to be copied and claimed by the other writers who aren't Papua New Guineans. Schools throughout the country do not have many Papua New Guinean authored books in their libraries and as a result causes a disadvantage for their students to have access to prodigious Papua New Guinean history. Papua New Guinean author Daniel Kumbon stated in his article, "I belong to a group of emerging PNG authors, essayists, poets and social commentators who have steadily published books in the last few years due mainly to the Crocodile Prize annual literary competition. But not many people including students ever get to read any of these published works. The education department has made no effort to ensure schools in our country have PNG authored books on the shelves of their libraries, which would ensure suitable titles for students to read." (Home: PNG Attitude, 2019). The Papua New Guinea government recognizing the work of these authors will ensure credibility and promote their literature to be featured in school libraries and public libraries throughout the country. And so, the Papua New Guinea government should purchase Papua New Guinean authored books.

Moreover, social awareness is provided through the published literature of Papua New Guinean authors. Papua New Guinea is a country with a diverse economy but yet, it is still struggling to reduce certain social issues in its societies. For example, domestic violence, sorcery killings, sexual abuse etc. Families try to protect their sons and daughters from the harshness of reality but at some point, they will soon venture into the world on their own, and they need to be made aware of such dangers that lurk around. Some Papua New Guinean authored literature is purposely constructed to spread

awareness to the readers about the social issues in Papua New Guinea. Thanks to technology, authors have also created blogs and websites and have published their work online. With majority of the population having access to digital gadgets, the availability of such information will be made aware to them. The truth is not to frighten but allow the readers to think critically and feel inspired to help victims of these issues. Also, they will learn how to steer clear from such situations and know where to seek help. As these social issues are rapidly occurring, it is crucial for the people to be made aware and stay informed through the help of information gained from the published works of these Papua New Guinean authors. Therefore, the Papua New Guinea government should purchase Papua New Guinean authored books.

In conclusion, the literature of Papua New Guinea is very valuable. It contains knowledge and the history of Papua New Guinea. Most Papua New Guinean authors are great writers that are not given enough credit and recognition of the books that they write by the government. The purchasing of these authors works by the government will give them credibility and promote these books to be shelved in libraries at homes, schools and public libraries. In this way it will encourage people to read and write as they know more about these books and have access to them. Young Papua New Guineans will learn the tales of their ancestral bloodlines and they will be reminded of their cultural identity. The people will be aware of social issues and best protect themselves and their families. Also, with the recognition gained from the government the originality of the authors work will be protected and the integrity of Papua New Guinea will be kept true. Therefore, given the supporting reasons, the government of Papua New Guinea will do best to purchase Papua New Guinean authored books.

The TBM Essay competition returns in 2022 under the auspices of a grant provided by the Commonwealth Fund to Ples Singing Writers & Associates.

Tingting Bilong Mi 2020 Essay Competition judges

THE COMPETITION was judged by an experienced group of professional writers and benefitted from the sound advice of Big Pat Levo and Keith Jackson AM.

Fiona Hukula is a researcher and advocate against violence. Fiona enjoys reading PNG literature and believes that reading is an excellent way to help us think about the world around us. She believes that all children should be given the opportunity to read books. Fiona is a volunteer with the Rainbow Project – a reading group for children of West Papua refugees.



Ed Brumby spent nearly 10 years in PNG - as a teacher in the East Sepik and then editor of the School Papers and graduated from UPNG in 1972 with a BA in linguistics and literature. He then, variously, wrote and produced print, video and multimedia educational materials for Aboriginal and immigrant children in Western Australia, at the Hong Kong Polytechnic and Shiga University, Japan and, for ten years, was Director of Educational Services at Deakin University - and CEO of Deakin University Press. Ed retired in 2012 after spending 12 years designing, marketing and arranging certified and bespoke education programs for insurance professionals in China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. He now mentors several PNG writers and plays his classic guitar



Caroline Evari works as a World Bank Team Assistant where she was recently interviewed for International Women's Day 2020. "Caroline Evari began writing at the age of six. She is now the author of 28 children's books and has published her own book of poems, *Nanu Sina: My Words* (reviewed here by writer/blogger Tanya Zeriga Alone), all while supporting the World Bank and its nine projects in Papua New Guinea and raising two sons".



Big Pat is the pen name for the *Post-Courier's* Weekend Magazine editor Patrick Levo. The Lofty amateur fisherman has been baited in the news media for the three decades, principally at the *Post-Courier*. Lofty's principal offence is making people laugh loudly, and sometimes cry, through his humour column *Adventures of Big Pat*.



Philip Fitzpatrick is now retired and writes as a hobby. He has written numerous novels, including the Inspector Metau series, as well as non-fiction books. He spent many years working in Papua New Guinea, first as a kiap and then as a social mapper. He also spent many years working with Aboriginal people in Australia. He was the co-founder of the Crocodile Prize Literary Awards and was director of Pukpuk Publications, which published works by Papua New Guinean writers. He lives in Tumby Bay in South Australia, a short walk from the beach and a couple of good coffee shops.



Kela Kapkora Sil Bolkin was born in the Galkope area of the Simbu Province. Galkope was heavily colonized by the Catholic Church so he became an 'altar boy' and soon went on to study for the priesthood. However, he quit after completing his philosophical studies and attended the UPNG where he completed a BA degree. He also has a Masters degree in Public Policy from the Australian National University. His job with USAID ended in November 2020 and he is now scavenging the scouring streets of Port Moresby. He started writing since 2011 and his first book was published by Crawford House Publishing in Adelaide and launched at the PNG High Commission in Canberra in 2013. He also won the PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum Award for Essays and Journalism.



Betty Gabriel Wakia is a writer, blogger and women's advocate, with qualifications in education from University of South Wales and Tianjin University of Technology and Education. Betty, along with Caroline, contributed to the milestone publication *My Walk to Equality* edited by Rashmii Bell. She is a volunteer assistant teacher at New Erima Primary School, where she has launched a student writing program which is also promoted by Ples Singing.



Keith Jackson AM is a retired journalist and public relations guru, and is the principal host of PNG Attitude blog. He launched the PNG Attitude blog in 2006 to enable Australians and Papua New Guineans to engage in public discussion on political, social, economic and literary matters. The blog has spun off the Crocodile Prize literary awards, Pukpuk Publications (which has published over 50 titles), the McKinnon-Paga Hill Fellowships for writers and the Walk to Equality project, publisher of the first collection of writing by PNG women. All are not-for-profit enterprises.



Coming soon!



The published collection of essays from TBM 2020. Edited by Michael Dom and Ed Brumby. This book ensures that the valuable thoughts in the essays may be perused by other scholars and serve to inform our political economy.



*Ples Singasing
recommends the
T-bone steak!*

**Get yours at Waigani Central,
Waigani Port Moresby**



Primary school students writing to support their school

BETTY WAKIA

THIS YEAR, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT has transferred the functions of schools in the nation's capital to national capital district commission (NCDC). Governor Powes Parkop believes that this will improve the level of education and will also solve imminent problems currently faced by schools in Port Moresby. One such school that is dealing with the imminent problems in NCD is the New Erima Primary school which had performed well despite the challenges it faced. The school is an eight-level school and one of the largest primary schools in the country, with more than 2000 students and 43 teachers. Currently, the school is planning to upgrade to New Erima Academic school and decided to take grade nine next year and grade eight students will either do grade nine or be enrolled into Technical Education System (TVET).

So far, students in grade 5, 6, 7 and 8 have used their writing skills to help the school by taking part in the School Writing project. The School Writing project is a first voluntary project ever. It is currently being carried out at the New Erima Primary School because we've seen that standard of education has dropped and most students are not encouraging to read and write and this has leads them to speak poor English. To avoid this situation, schools must immediately start implementing a school writing plan to encourage students to write and publish their school anthologies so that students can read their own works.

The School Writing project has sent their documents to NCD Governor Powes Parkop by asking him to help support the programme and still waiting for their feedback from the office. In the School Writing project, students are



encouraged to write essays, short stories and poems regarding what they are facing during the Covid-19 pandemic, teenage pregnancy, HIV AIDs, Tribal war, Culture and traditions, Violence against women, their beautiful places and other topics.

In this Kids Kona section, we will feature some of their writing as well so hope you enjoy reading their story.

The following four stories are from a school writing project coordinated by PNG writer and author Ms. Betty Wakia at the New Erima Primary School. Korina Posikei from New Ireland and Liceanne Utah is from Bougainville. Both girls are in Grade 8. Jeremiah Munini is from Enga Province and in Grade 7. If you would like to support this initiative or donate any used books to the school email the coordinator on bwakia@gmail.com.

"The School Writing project has sent their documents to NCD Governor Powes Parkop by asking him to help support the programme and still waiting for their feedback from the office"

Betty Wakia, the editor of the soon to be published book collection of student essays, acknowledges the Principal of New Erima Primary School Mr. Yalo Kipungi, and his teaching staff. Special thanks to Mr. Peter Wemin, Mrs. Rose Havae, Mr. Israel Harrisol, Ms. Theresa Karepo, Mrs. Jenifer Teine, Ms. Linda Nelson, Ms. Roina Tendike, Mr. Hebale Tomalia, Ms. Julie Tom, Ms. Ellie Lom, Mr. Momase Willie, Ms. Morina Kaulo, Ms. Dorcas Steven, Mrs. Delma Ghandia, Mrs. Bernadette Palma and Ms. Misenda Minao.

In search of Education in the city

WILLIE TIWIAS

THIS IS THE REAL STORY of how I struggle to come to Port Moresby in search of education. I come from a small village called Taingama in the Manyama District of Morobe province. My village is on the border of Morobe and Gulf province. Taingama village is located right in the jungle where there are no road linking to schools and villages. The place where the school is, you'll walk one whole day to get there.

In 2008, the PNG government introduced an Elementary school in our village. They start developing the place and build new classrooms and teacher's houses. Teachers came from within Morobe province to teach at our new Elementary school and were very pleased to teach us. I did my Elementary at our new school and our teacher thought us in our own language. Three years in Elementary school, in 2010 they selected me to go to community school but the community school was far from my village and people from that village didn't want to get students from other villages. So, I stayed home for five years.

During those five years, my hard-working parents do their best to find a place for me to stay and go to school. Until my parents found a nice family from other village who's willing to look after me and go to school. My parents took me there and I started going to school.

In the Taingama village, we have a small market where we sell our produce goods.

My mum usually sells garden food every day at the market. The coins that she earns from the garden food, she'll budget it all for my school fee. She doesn't buy herself a soap to wash, salt or oil for cooking. My heart breaks when I see my mum doing that.

During the Christmas holiday in 2017, I make up my mind and told my parents that I had to look for part time job somewhere. I left them, walked through dense forest until dark, and slept under big trees. I woke up the next morning and kept walking. I met some people on the road and walked with them. We came to a small village and slept with them. The next morning, I walked with people I met on the road to a place where a large river flows. There we saw speed boats carrying people to other villages. From there, the people I came with got on a boat. I try to ride with them, but the skipper told me to get off the boat because there was no space left for others.

So, I walked alone on the river bank and came across the garden. I was so hungry that I was looking for the garden owner but couldn't find it. So, I kept walking until I saw people packing betelnuts bags onto their boats. I was hungry and couldn't stand it anymore, so I went and sat down. I asked one of them that sat next to me, where they were heading to? He told me they were heading to Port Moresby. I got on with



**Willie is from Morobe province and he's in grade 7 (orange).*

them and we followed the river down to Malalawa. From there, we got on the PMV and came to Port Moresby.

It was the first time I came to Port Moresby and they left me at Gerehu. I got on the bus to Gordons, go down to Erima and sleep with some people. While staying with them, I looked for some part-time jobs. I asked around and they got me a job in the chain store at Erima. I work there and got K600 fortnightly. I was thinking of going back to the village but people I stayed with told me that they would be able to find a school for me here. So, I stayed with them and they found my space at New Erima Primary school. I did my grade 5, 6, 7 and now I will be doing my grade 8 this year. I'm grateful that I came these far.

The Huli Wigman

CHRISTINA SAMUEL

Man and woman usually do not live together. As a result, boys lived with their mothers up until the age of eight and then reside with their fathers who taught them how to build fence, house and hunt for food. Young men are reared to be self-sufficient braving the surrounding jungle along for extended periods as a rite of passage to manhood. At around 14, teenage boys attend wig school. Only virgins are accepted into wig



Photo: Chief Muduya in New York City

school as their purity is said to be more amenable to magic. Each placement is the cost of a pig.

At wig school, a wig master oversees the grooming of hair to ensure that each boy creates a strong foundation for the Huli wig, a unique design of woven hair. The boys are inaugurated into the school with a ritual to cleanse the body and soul. They are then placed on a diet, which typically omits spicy foods and

pork fat, to promote healthy hair growth. In addition, the wig master casts magic spells to spur growth along. For the next eighteen months, the boys sleep with a headrest to prevent their hair from being flattened. It's then cut off and wig specialist weaves it into the shape that form the basic structure of the much-lauded Huli wigmen headdress. Finally, the wigs are adorned with feathers from the Bird of Paradise, yellow everlasting daisies and possum fur among other items.

It's not uncommon for Huli wigmen to grow multiple wigs over many years as long as they're crafted before marriage. Some are used in everyday life while others are saved for special ceremonial events. Ceremonial wigs usually have spokes at the side reminiscent of the Bird of Paradise wing span.

When it comes for celebration, the Huli wigmen dedicate much time and effort preparing their sacred spectacular costumes. Ambua, the yellow clay they paint their faces with, is sacred and sets the Huli wigmen apart from other tribes. When students finally graduate from wig school, they paint faces with ambua and go in search for a wife.

Christina is from Jiwaka province and she's in grade 8 (purple).

The Island of Bougainville

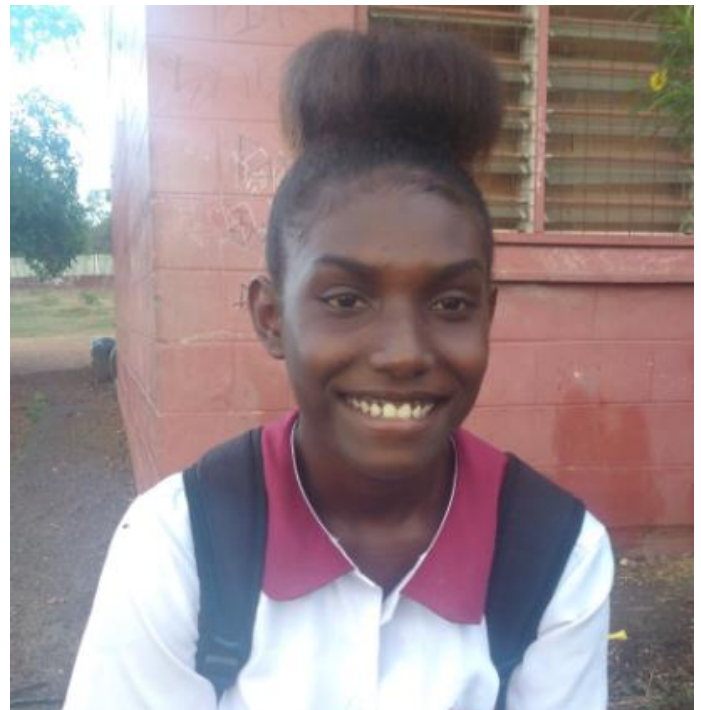
LICEANNE UTAH

BOUGAINVILLE IS AN ISLAND named after the explorer Captain Bougainville. It is the largest island in the Solomon Islands. It is also one of the 22 provinces of PNG. It covers an area of about 3,880 square miles and has a population of about 62,500 people. The island's main products are cocoa and copra.

Arawa is the capital of Bougainville. French navigator Louis Antoine de Bougainville discovered the island in 1768. In the 1880s, Bougainville was partially occupied by the Germans. Australia gained control in 1914 and Bougainville became part of New Guinea's territory in 1920. Japan captured Bougainville in 1942 and in November 1943, US marines landed on the island. Since 1975, Bougainville has been called North Solomon and it is still one of the provinces of PNG.

The most spoken languages on the island are English and Tok Pisin. There are total of 23 different dialects spoken on the island.

Regardless of the ethnic group they belong to or the different languages they speak, the pride of its provincial colours certainly receives respect in the province. Colour red, black, white, green and blue are the official colours of the province.



Liceanne is from Bougainville and she's in grade 8 (purple).

These colours are common among paintings that the majority of citizens prefer to use during its provincial or cultural day celebrations. Therefore, in order to show the pride of the province, these colours are design into the provincial flag. Besides other additional features such as the special upe or the large shell that men wear after leaving their homes.

This unique object is worn by men during special events. The red and white upe headdress is superimposed on the cobalt blue field of green and white kapkap.

The flag of Bougainville is a symbol of Autonomous Region of Bougainville. It was first adopted in 1975 by the secessionist Republic of

North Solomon. Blue represents Pacific Ocean, white represents beautiful sandy beaches and green signifies the Bougainville's rainforest. The white inside also represent the sunrise, black signifies the skin colour of the Bougainvilleans, the upe signifies the manhood, while the two designs on the upe represents a mother holding her child.

The island is covered with tropical rainforest and it is enshrined with flowers, trees and various spices from the forest. The island is boasting with 26 species of hibiscus flowers and the black orchid found only in Bougainville. The mountain ranges are located in the centre of the island and rivers flow from these mountains to the South Pacific Ocean. A long stretch of white sandy beaches surrounds the island. The mainland of Bougainville is surrounded by many small islands and atolls such as Nissan, Mortlock, Nuguria and Carterets Islands. The southern part of the island has numerous rivers flowing down to the Pacific Ocean. Hundreds of caves have also been discovered on the island, which is very exciting for tourists.

Today, Bougainville has two airports, the first and the larger one is in the town of Arawa and the smaller one is in Buka town. There is another town located in the South Bougainville called Buin. The small town is where our Solomon Island friends come to sell their valuable items such as necklaces, Solomon laplaps or lavalava, sea foods and many more. Bougainville is open to anyone who wants to travel to the island. It's free if you want to discover a beautiful island or get a vacation on the island's white sandy beaches. To track beyond the mountains and discover a large waterfall or check out the area where the previous Bougainville crisis occurred, take a PMV ride to the mainland of Bougainville. Here you can find a lot of interesting objects, ancient artefacts and island stories.

Bougainville is said to have its own currency, but it has not yet been confirmed. Whether that is true or not, some people have confirmed that the new Bougainville currency are fake. It is made of paper, not real paper. To be sure, PNG currencies are used throughout Bougainville. The island has experienced many things in the past, and now the province is trying to become a country on its own. I think that Bougainville citizens living in Port Moresby and other parts of the country will have a passport to travel to the island and will create its own currency at that time. Many people complain about the province and its development tends. The process is still in progress, and every Bougainville is waiting for good news. The vote has been completed, and most people want the island to gain independence.

This means that the island will soon be declared its own country. Our ancestors fought for this and now the greatest news is about to be announced soon. May we look forward to the best and God bless the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

Global impact on Coronavirus

MOSES SINE

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC is an ongoing global pandemic disease of 2019. The outbreak was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei province, China in December 2019. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a pandemic on 11th March, 2020. The virus originated in the seafood wholesale market in Wuhan, China. Most people think it has been infected by bats. The virus that caused the outbreak is known as SARS-COV-2.

The Covid-19 is mainly spread from person to person during close contact. In most cases, it is spread through small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing and talking. According to the Chinese government, Wuhan city and the entire Hubei province were immediately under strict lockdown on January 23rd to stop the spread of the coronavirus, which has killed more than 78,000 people worldwide.

The first Covid-19 case was discovered outside of mainland China in Washington, USA. The US government ordered a strict nationwide lockdown. Countries like France, Thailand, South Korea, Canada, India, Russia, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom were also lockdown. The rest of the world joins forces to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

We in Papua New Guinea got locked down starting in March 2020. All schools and most businesses were closed. People immediately felt the effects of unemployment, hunger, fear, chaos, confusion, family separation, travel bans and this had a great impact on the country's economy and other countries in the world. People have described the economic impact as one of those felt during the time of the great depression.

The scientist suggestion some preventive measures, including washing hands, covering your mouth when coughing, keeping your distance from others, wearing a mask in public places and monitoring and self-isolation of suspected infected persons. Personally, this experience made my own Enga people question whether this is the end of the world. My grandmother and cousins said that the Lord will return and take us to heaven. I felt the same too.

In my opinion, I think the virus does not come from animals. The Chinese government had created it in a laboratory and shifted the blame to animals. I mean, can you believe that the coronavirus came from a small flying mammal that killed millions of people in just a few weeks? Besides, we know that the Chinese used to be good at keeping dirty secrets, so I think the Chinese are hiding something from the rest of the world. Supporting this fact is that a Chinese doctor who treated the first coronavirus patients was suppressed by the government and eventually infected and died.

Currently, our country is in a post Covid-19 state. After three months of strict lockdown, it has returned back to normal. Students are going back to school, companies are open, domestic flights are open and people are travelling. Only international flights have been banned to travel. The local economy is trying to pick up, people are socialising but with a new normal, such as washing hands frequently, covering your mouth when sneezing or coughing. It is great to see this country progress again.

For some countries, they are still fighting against the Covid-19 pandemic. We do feel sorry for them and pray that God will save people from this deadly virus. This experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has changed our way of life. The Covid-19 pandemic has created history in our generation, and it will take a long time to forget this pandemic experience.

Moses is from Enga province and he's in grade 7 (blue).

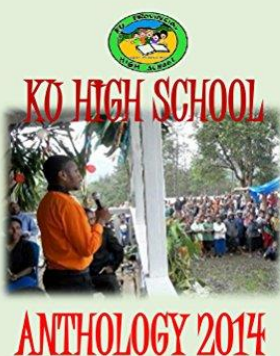


Coming soon!

**New Erima Primary School
Anthology**

Essays, Short Stories & Poetry

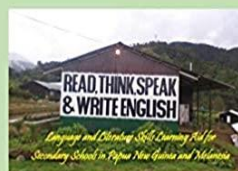
"The forty young writers whose work is captured in this book are a small drop in the ocean of bright, talented and enthusiastic young children across our country, who are willing to 'give it a go' – to try their hand at writing by thinking deeply, broadly and creatively about the things in their lives that they find remarkable and important." Michael Dom



This is an anthology of short stories, poetry and essays written by students from Ku Provincial High School in Simbu Province in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. It is an initiative of the Simbu Writer's Association and local high schools. A different high school hosts a literary competition each year and produces an anthology. Edited by Francis Nii, 122pp, independently published, October 21, 2014
Available online at Amazon
Paperback \$11.35/PKG 40.35 (postage not included)
Kindle \$1.00/PKG3.56



**Reading Comprehension
Textbook**



FRANCIS NII

Late Francis Nii was an award-winning Papua New Guinean writer. In this volume he had compiled a collection of short stories, essays and poems and attached to each comprehension exercises for the use of secondary school students. Not only does the volume have an educational value but it also captured the author's unique writing. By Francis Nii, 180pp, independently published April 6, 2015
**Out of print – Limited availability online at Amazon
Paperback only – price not listed**

HOPIS Book Week kids create stories in school

CAROLINE EVARI | Extracted from Niu Briten Drum, September 2020

SINCE 2014, Higaturu Oil Palm International School (HOPIS) has worked in collaboration with established and celebrated writers from Australia to be resource persons for five consecutive days of reading and discussing their books to students and running writing workshops for students and teachers.

In 2020, despite the Covid-19 lockdowns, six writers took part, Papua New Guinean writer Caroline Evari, Albert Nyathi from Zimbabwe and Tina Clark, Phil Kettle, Claire Saxby and Dannika Patterson from Australia. Here are three of the stories that were created as part of this special week of events.

Who Stole Serah's Potatoes?

By Stage 1's, Grade 2's, Ms. Tatai & Ms. Evari

Serah had a little garden full of cabbages, spring onions and potatoes. Every morning she would visit her garden to water her vegetables.

One morning when Serah came to harvest her potatoes, they were stolen.

"Oh, no!" Serah cried. "Who stole my potatoes?"

Could it be the old man who sells betel nuts beside the road every morning?

Could it be the old lady who bakes kaukau over the fire every morning?

Who could it be?

Could it be the dog that barks at her every morning?

Could it be the rooster that crows every morning?

Who could it be?

Serah looked to see if there were clues to help her find the thief and saw wet footprints and followed them.

As she doubled her steps, she saw smoke rising through the trees and sensed the smell of baked potatoes.

Who could this thief be?

As she got closer, she could see a figure busy baking potato over the fire and could hear little giggles.

“Got Ya!” Serah shouted as she grabbed the thief.

But to her surprise, it was only her mother and little brother Smith.

“Oh mother, the next time you harvest my potatoes, please let me know,” Serah said as she laughed.

That afternoon Serah, her mother and Smith sat around the fire and enjoyed the potatoes.

Zach's First Race

Story and picture by GeeMelina Sanggo, Jason Tuam, Oren Nasusu & Warren Varika



Zachy was chosen to represent his school in an interschool racing competition on Saturday in Zootopia. He went home and told his family about the good news and slept early that night.

Three! Two! One! Then the referee blew the whistle to begin the race.

“Run! Run! Run!” the crowd began to cheer.

Zachy's heartbeat began to go faster and faster as he raced.

Soon his body began sweating. He looked to his side and there was his mother calling out to him.

Wake up! Wake up! His mother's voiced echoed straight into his ears.

Zachy open his eyes and jumped out of bed in shock. His mother was standing beside his bed.

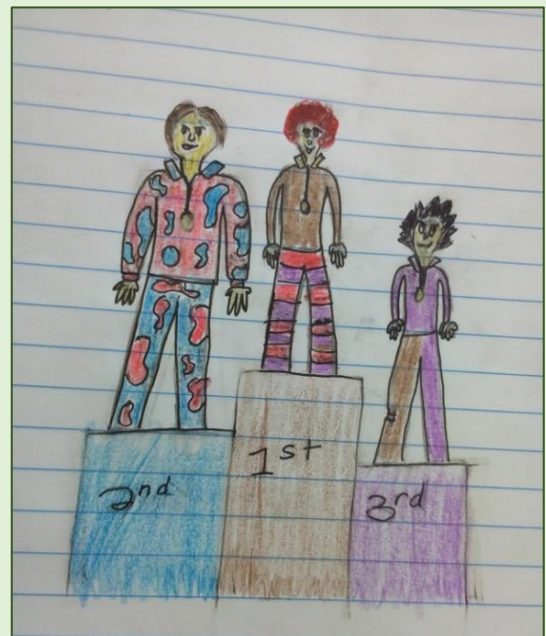
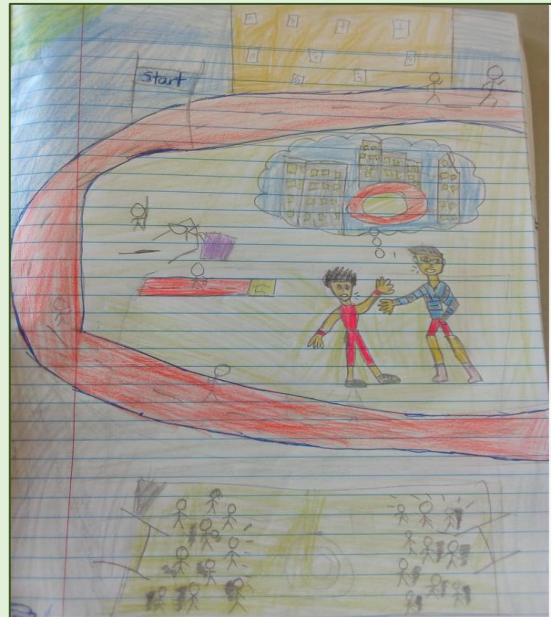
That meant he was only dreaming. He quickly walked out of his room to get ready.

"It's haling outside", said Zudy his small sister.

"Oh no, how can I run the race while it's hailing", said Zachy in a sad voice.

"Good news, I got a phone call from the host of the race that the race has been rescheduled to tomorrow", his dad said.

"I'm sure you'll do well, just rest today and make us proud tomorrow", said his mother.



The next day Zachy raced with all his strength and came second. His family cheered for him as he walked up to receive his medal.

That was the most memorable day for Zachy and his family.

The Frogs and the Storm

Story and picture by Josh McCarthy, Grace Papi and Dzhario Moso



A family of frogs lived happily in their little home in a lake called Heart Lake. It was their home for many years.

One evening as they were getting ready to go to bed, they saw thick black clouds forming in the sky and the lightening began to strike.

The clouds got darker and soon the rain started falling.

The booming sound of the thunder echoed over the mountains.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The frogs became so scared as Heart Lake started to flood. The frogs quickly hid in a safe place as the storm



continued through the night
destroying their little home.

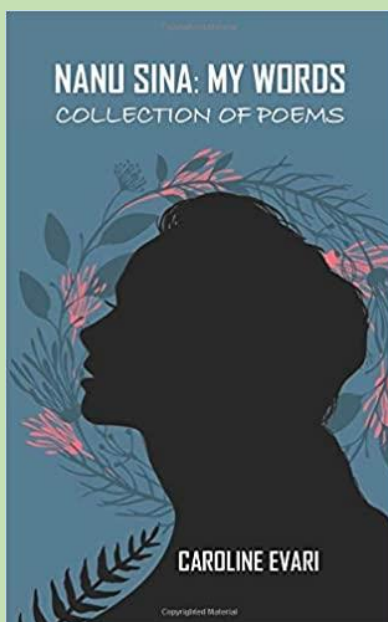


The next morning when the storm passed, the frogs came out of their hiding place to find their little home shattered.

The frogs were very sad but began to search for a place to build a new home. They found a new lake that was created by the storm.

It was a much better lake than Heart Lake.

The frogs rebuilt their home and lived happily again.



‘Nanu Sina: My Words’ by Caroline Evari, independently published (May 3, 2019)

“Nanu Sina or My Words in the Musa Language of the Oro Province is the title of this book of poems by Caroline Evari – a Writer, Blogger, Author, Mother and Wife living in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. The book is published by local publisher, JDT Publishing.

The book contains Caroline’s reflection of life and living, growing up and coming of age. The book of poems has 82 pages, containing 60 original pieces that are categorized into 4 sections; Conflicts, Relationships, Hope and Family.

A copy of this book and others that she has written can be found on Amazon.com. Caroline has also contributed to the 2017 My Walk to Equality: a first all-women’s Anthology from Papua New Guinea.”

Tanya Zeriga-Alone, EmNauPNG’s Blog

Eulogy in honour of the late Sir Mek

JAMES MARAPE MP

Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea |
Edited | Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG
Attitude

I delivered this short eulogy in honour of Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta at his funeral service on Friday. It is short and succinct. No number of words can adequately describe this huge persona - JM

WAIGANI - I stand today sadly to offer tribute to this great man who selflessly gave his life in service to Papua New Guinea.

To his dear wife Lady Roslyn Morauta, to his son Dr James Morauta, to all four surviving siblings, to all relatives of Kukipi and Uritai villages of the Gulf of Papua, we, the people of Papua New Guinea, including Port Moresby North West Electorate, offer our sincerest appreciation to you all for allowing your dear relative to serve us all in PNG.

For this, we in sadness and tears offer our condolences and share with you all in mourning this huge national loss.

The late Sir Mekere served his country with highest distinction right from the formative years of the 1970s, with national figures like Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Sir Charles Lepani and the late Anthony Siaguru.

This famous ‘Gang of Four’ plus other pioneer public servants assisted the founding fathers of our nation by laying the foundation stones.

His imprints on our national life remain. He took huge steps along the way - in the public service, the private sector and politics from 1975 until today.



The late Sir Mekere Morauta a KCMG PC (12 June 1946 – 19 December 2020) and Prime Minister James Marape

He made history by easily transitioning from public service leadership to political leadership where he reformed and strengthened key institutions of state at the same time fighting graft and corruption.

During his maiden prime ministerial address to parliament on 14 July 1999, Sir Mekere stated that corruption was “systematic and systemic” in PNG.

And fighting and removing corruption was the reason for his return to politics in 2017.

He died doing what he loved, serving his country. For this, we Papua New Guineans will be forever grateful to this towering icon of good leadership and we say thank you to his family and tribes for lending him to us.

Sir Mekere Morauta was a larger-than-life personality in our country’s short history. He was a reformist and, despite

serving as prime minister for only three short years, his impact transcends time and is intergenerational.

Again, to the family, thank you for lending this great *Lauri* to us in the rest of PNG. To Sir Mek, rest in peace, your Kukipi and Uritai tribe has conferred on me the same name, *Lauri*, and I promise to do my best for them and rest of PNG too.

You have run a good race, you have fought a good fight for your country, rest now, Sir. We will miss your physical presence but your counsel and advice will forever ring in our minds to guide us to make our own contributions to develop PNG.

Sir Mek, goodnight for now and we hope to see you on that golden resurrection morning for the eternal life our Jesus promised in the Bible for those who die believing in Lord Jesus Christ.

Sana - the end of an era



Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, April 9 1936
(Rabaul) – February 26 2021 (Port Moresby)

A PHILOSOPHER'S STONE & THE SEPIK ALCHEMIST

Sana, a noble peace maker

DR ANDREW MOUTU

Director of the National Museum & Art Galler | Official website of the National Museum

HE came to Ludwig and his wife Painari Kambe on April 9, 1936 in Matupit in East New Britain. A gem of sorts, more precisely a philosopher's stone, which is capable of turning base metals into gold and silver, was ushered into this line of a Murik pedigree.

His father Ludwig Sana, had been serving as an officer with the native police in Rabaul at the time. On his debut, the Tolai bestowed on him the name ToPalangat which translates into an idea of firmness and clear road and a pathway. It seems as though the ideas of width and breadth, meanders and corridors, origins and destinations were already there in anticipation of a journey to create a national destiny.

On the eve of the Second World War, the young Michael, had been taken back home to the littoral world of his Murik Lakes, a tidal estuary where barrier beaches divide mangrove lagoons at the mouth of the Sepik River. During the war, he was educated in a Japanese run school in his Karau village. His first sense of foreign grammar and numerals were in Japanese.

As the war came to an end, he went west to Wewak to attend primary school in Boram. Then from Wewak he went back further to the east to receive high school education in Dregerhaffen where he was exposed to the people and languages of the Finschaffen area of Morobe. A songang was nourished!

By 1957, he had gone on to matriculate at Sogeri which gave him qualifications, of Melbourne standards, to become a teacher in primary and secondary schools. It was there in teaching that he first encountered institutional racism through a dual salary system which discriminated locals. He returned again

to Sogeri for further training between 1962 and 1963 and then switched in his teaching career to become a radio journalist where he moved back to Wewak and served as a broadcaster.

His journalism gave a direct insight into the political machinations of his time. He was attentive, listening and learning the ropes of the trade. He then took up training in public administration at the Administrative College (Adcol)—now the Pacific Institute of Leadership and Governance—in Waigani. His inimical view and resistance to racism grew to a fervent nationalism that he inspired with bravado, charm and wit.

His superiors became apprehensive of his activism. To pacify him, they organized a calculated shift in his career from journalism to public administration.

It was at the Adcol that he and his Bully Beef Club members started and laid the foundations for Pangu Party in 1967 with a view to attain self-government and independence for Papua and New Guinea.

In the following year in 1968, two great Sepik leaders of the Araphesh stock, Pita Simogun and Pita Lus, convinced and passed on to him the spears of leadership and to dream of a nation with a path to independence.

By then his own father, Ludwig Sana, had retired and returned home to establish the then Angoram Cooperative Society. While preparations for self-government, including the consultations of the Constitutional Planning Committee were under way, the vibrant young leader returned home to his Karau village in 1973 to be fully initiated into heraldry and be appointed as a Sana, a noble peace maker.

For the Murik, peace was not a just an ideal virtue, it has to be institutionalized in ritual procedures and operationalized in a personal way. It was as if peace is likened to gold, this has to be condensed through a process of close interactions and refinements as though it were a therapeutic alchemy.

This was manifested in the style of politics from his heydays to his decline: fiercely nationalistic and purportedly conciliatory. In his own autobiography, Sana's pedagogy of war begins with inviting your enemy to the table for a feast before the fight. He appointed political enemies to posts so they could exercise their interests and aspirations. It is in knowing them that you can work with them in a productive politics of mutual engagement. It was as though the young Somare was always in tune with the ancient Greek poet and playwright, Aristophanes:

“From the murmur and the subtlety of suspicion with which we vex one another,
Give us rest. Make a new beginning,
And mingle again with the kindred of the nations in the alchemy of Love,
And with some finer essence of forbearance, Temper our mind”

Imagine if we get the idea that peace is both a person and a moral persona, Sana? Recall the ridicule of *loci standii* over national security and insurgency, the sandal diplomacy or the spiteful estrangement in the house after the crevices of constitutional earthquakes?

Imagine the art of taking the ordinary and turning it into something precious and extraordinary? Imagine the use of heat and the mixing of liquids to create a new chemical compound? Imagine a negotiation between water and stone

which culminated in a work of art? Water and stone begin as unpromising ingredients of different endeavors. With viscid stews and brittle skins of slag, artists use pigments made from fluids mixed together with powdered stones to give them colour.

If ceramic experts of Kainantu, Makham or Aibom use watery mud (clay) and heat to make their pots then oily mud is the comparable medium with which artists work on in their paintings.

If paintings or ceramics reveal a complex negotiation between water and stone, alchemy is concerned with the final outcome: to turn something as

liquid as water into a substance as firm and unmeltable as a stone.

The means are liquid and the ends are solid.

Alchemists work with mixtures of the stone and the water. They work with a mix bag of diversity. The façade of our national parliament building is adorned with painted ceramics, which is essentially painted oily mud, made out of soil taken from different parts of Papua New Guinea and glazed into an ornamental surface.

Imagine what kind of nation was the Sepik alchemist putting together as he worked to bring a nation of difference

and diversity into unity? Synesthesia, empathy and sympathy, immersion and performance, the embodied encounters of an art experience as much as to politics.

What is the character and quality of the materials we are now using to build on from the legacy of the great alchemist? If you imagine this nation as an artistic collage, then what will we make of the fluidities that surface all too often from our deep undercurrents that threaten unity with schism and disintegration? Imagine the idea of peace as gold?

Alas, Sana!

Poetry to farewell Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare

Sana – You shone as the morning star

Somare son of Somare
Sana son of Sana
Shone like a morning star

Leader of the Sepik
From East to West
and Coast to Coast
Leader of Papua Niugini
From Highlands to Islands
The Protector of the Motherland

Somare son of Somare
Sana son of Sana
Pillar of a new dawn

Chiefs of Chiefs
Of the island of Niugini
Leader of Leaders
Of the People of Papua

Somare son of Somare
Sana son of Sana
A centurion in the night

Father of a thousand tribes
Father of diverse languages and culture
Father of the land of the Unexpected

Somare son of Somare
Sana son of Sana

Fearless Melanesian Seafarer

Courage the power of wisdom
Peace the power of charisma
Unity through power of love

Somare son of Somare
Sana son of Sana
Stately as the Kumul

Rest in Eternal Peace
In the home of your fathers
Live in harmony
With the Chosen Ones

Somare son of Somare
Sana son of Sana
Borne the constitution and
Equally held the decrees of time immemorial
Goodbye and farewell Grand Chief
Lest we forget you
Until we meet again
At the altar of Heaven

Chief Mark Tonar

Chief Mark Tonar is a former kiap from the United Nauro Gor community in the Kundiawa-Gembogl area of Simbu. He is also a former Pangu Pati Simbu branch secretary (1982-1992). He has fond memories of meeting the late Grand Chief Somare during Pangu Party conventions – Sil Bolkin

God had a spear; his name was Sana

A champion of freedom. A man of his time, 50,000 years in the making. A man destined to preserve the dignity of a free people: a thousand primitive tribes.

Innocent, bright eyed; we blinked in the Stone Age and happened in the Modern Era.

Our forefathers could not have prepared us for this. How could they?

But God had a spear – Michael Thomas Somare was your name. SANA. Peacemaker.

Warrior pride was your inspiration. Proud. Unrepentant. Resilient.

Warrior spirit was your strength. Clear eye. Level head. Steadfast to your mission.

Chiefly heart was your power. Gentle. Humble.

Melting tribal boundaries, shifting allegiance to a one nation, a one PNG.

Like a *pukpuk*, you sought no approval for our existence.

Like a *kumul*, you sought no permission to dance.

Like a *kwila*, you flourished despite the sharp axe of loggers.

With vision of a challenging future, you secured our freedom.

A chief looks beyond today and thinks of tomorrow. A warrior fights for the future. A father plants the fruit tree that will feed the unborn.

Truly you are the Grand Chief.

In your death, we glimpse your vision. In your death, we catch your dream.

As one nation we raise our voices with conviction: “O arise all you sons of this land, let us sing of our joy to be free.....”

Our obligation now is to your dream. Because you believed in us; your sons will arise.

We salute you, Papa Somare. We thank you for securing our freedom.

Tanya Zeriga Alone

Sana, Now I Understand Your Dream

Dedicated to Lady Veronica Somare

I could have found a man in a million

But faith has found me millions in a man

I have no idea what was in your mind

I just kept faith in your constant gravity

You raised your country, I raised your family

Sana, now I understand your dream

The more you dragged me into it

The more sensitive I became to watch you

You would come home as if the world ran over you

I always stood by your side to provide comfort

Sending you back to enemy lines fully armed

We both have scars, the wounds walked your dreams

Sana, now I understand your dream

I thought the peak of your dream was independence

I thought after that was all leadership and ruling

I was so wrong to have thought all this

The true peak of your dream happened after

I turned around to speak your victory, only to see your chair empty

You should have told me how we would be in your absence

You are now not here to see the real beauty of our nation

Sana, now I understand your dream

All your children are mourning in unity
Before you departed, you knew you had millions
The importance of Independence was felt when you left
I was privileged to be a fighter alongside you
To see your victory in living your dream
I can't wait to tell you the true success stories
That wait for me, the rainbow of love hasn't failed
Sana, wait for me to tell of your victory

Gemba Raymond Dewane

Sana, Bikman, Lida

O Sana, bai mi tok wanem, Bikman
Anutu tasol save gut long yu
Kamap bilo yu na taim bilo go daun
Em iet i makim pinis laip bilong yu

Papa blo mi iet luksave long yu
Tasol mi bikhet olsem ol wel pik
Na kros pait long laik bilong Anutu
Mi sot long pasin blong yu na wokmak

Ating narapela bai inapim
Pasin na wokmak bilong yu, Sana
Nau mi wari long bai yumi lukim
Dispela wanbel pasin blong Lida

Sapos bel tingting istap wantaim yu
Papua Niugini bai kamap strong tru

Sana, Bigman, Leader

O Sana, what can I say, Bigman
God alone knows you through and through
The time of your rise and of your fall
He alone had marked the span of your life

My own father gave recognition to you
But I was big headed like a wild pig
I was angry against the will of God
I cannot match your ways or your works

Perhaps someone else may match
Your ways and your works, Sana
Now I am worried if we will ever see
This unifying way of a Leader

If our feeling and thought is one with yours
Papua New Guinea will become a strong country

Michael Dom, original tok-singsing and translation

Sana, Tau Badana, Egunalai Tauna

Oh Sana, dahaka baina gwaurai, Egunalai Tau Badana
Dirava sibona mo ia dibana
Emu gini tore bona emu moru diho negadia
Ia sibona ese emu mauri matamana amo ia lau dokona vada makaia

Lau tamagu ese eme ematauraimu
To lau na kwaragu na auaka uda boromana ta heto
Lalogu ehisi bona badu dirava ena uraheni dekenai
Emu kara bona gaukara ba asina ahegeregere dibamu

Reana taunimanima ta ese bia hegegereamu
Emu kara bona gaukarana toa, Sana
Ina hari na helalomu ina laloadai
Bema laloa-tamona Egunalai tauna ta ba ai itaia

Bema eda bona emu hemami bona lalohadai na bema tamona
Papua Niugini Tanobada baine tubugini auka

This Motu translation in Hanuaba dialect was provided by Gou Gari of Hanuabada and Ruth and Clifton Gwabu, Lae 2022.

A brief biography of late Sir Michael Thomas Somare

A timeline of major events – by Linda Murom

Year (date)	Events
1936 9 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Somare was born to Ludwig Somare (Father) and Kambe Somare (Mother) in Rapidik Hospital in Rabaul. Today East New Britain Province Somare is the eldest of six children.
1942	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was six years old when he first came to his village in Karau, Murik Lake His father returned from Rabaul to take up his chieftainship obligation to his Karau people.
1946	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started school in a Japanese run School WWII was fought in Rabaul where father is left him in the village and went back to Rabaul.
1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somare Attended Boram Primary which was the first Primary School to Open in East Sepik at Wewak.
1951	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Somare Completed his class five in Boram Primary
1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sent to Dregerhafen Education Center to do post –Primary course.
1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended Sogeri for a teaching training course. Completed it in one year
1957	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> His first posting as a teacher to Utu Secondary
1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somare transferred to Brandi High School
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Again, Somare Transferred to Tusbab High School
1961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special Political education at Konedobu for six weeks to carry out election and he was sent to Wewak.
1962	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sir Michael Returned to Sogeri for one year to get Queensland form four Certificate
1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sir Micheal was sent back to Madang to taught at Talidig Primary School Somare was sent to Port Moresby to join Publication Section of ABC Radio to edit, write script and short Stories for their Listen and Listen Programme He won a Radio Announcer position in Wewak and work as a radio announcer.
1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sir Michael meet and Lady Veronica and they got married in church. He applied for a scholarship to Administrative College Port Moresby to further his training where he met many like –minded man like himself. This like- mind were, Albert Maori Kiki, Joseph Nombri, Sinaka Goava, Gavera Rea, Jack Karakuru, Cromwell Burau, Bill Warren and Lucas Waka who Form the Bully Beef Club the first Political Forum.

1967	13 th June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Founded the Papua and Niugini Party (Pangu Pati)
1968		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o He was elected into the National Assembly as MP for East Sepik in the first house of Assembly. o Became leader for Pangu Pati and Leader of the Opposition. o The Eight Point Plan was Designed
1969		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Became the Chairman of the Museum Board of trustees
1971		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Pangu Pati Held its National convention in Lae with Candidates and Supporters to spectators attended.
1972		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o April – Sir Michael Somare was Deputy Chairman of the administrator’s council and chief Minister elected. o Under his leadership he establishes the government committee known as the Constitutional Planning Committee (C.P.C) was made up of Members of the House of Assembly’s (MHA’s)
1973	1 st Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sir Michael Led the nation into self-governance. o He went back to Karau village in Murik lake for his final initiation of Chieftainship “Sana” from his grandfather to him. o He signs the PNG-Indonesia boarder agreement behalf of Australia.
1974	9 th July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o He Opens the Papua New Guinea House In Sydney o Set the date for independence to be on the 16th of September 1975
1975	19 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Kina Day, the Day PNG currency was first introduced to the people.
	16 th Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sir Michael Somare Led the nation and the First Prime Minister Until 1980 o Led Papua New Guinea into Independence
1980		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o He became the leader of opposition until 1982
1982		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o His second reign until 1985
1988		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sir Michael resigned from Pangu Pati and became an independent candidate. o Became are cabinet Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1992.
1994		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sir Michael rejoined Pangu but Sacked the following year.
1995		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Governor of East Sepik until 1999
1998		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o His Portrait appeared on the reverse side of the K50 bank note.
2002		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o He won the office of the Prime Minister for the third time
2007		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sir Michael Somare was re- elected into Parliament
2011	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o He was hospitalized in Singapore and declared the post for Prime Minister vacant and Peter O’Neil was the Prime Minister
	12 Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The supreme court of Papua New Guinea ordered that Somare be reinstated as Prime Minister ruling that O’Neil had not been lawfully appointed. o Somare resigned as PM and Political disputes, which turns out to be our Papua New Guinea Constitutional crisis
2012		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Somare support O’Neil therefore ending the Crisis and Forming coalition government.
2017		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sir Michael Thomas Somare retired from politics after 50 years.
2021	26 th February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Died from pancreatic cancer in Port Moresby, at the age of 84

West Papua leader pays tribute to Sir Michael

BENNY WENDA

Facebook | Extracts | Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG Attitude

OXFORD, UK – Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare fought for the dignity of indigenous Papuans. It was an 84-year lifetime in which his story blessed freedom fighters in Melanesia. He was born for a purpose.

West Papua walked in the shadows and its independence leaders embraced the drama and watched with pride as Papua New Guinea surged ahead.

The 'father of the nation' spoke in 2016 on the issue of West Papua, and that statement answered many questions.

Sir Michael has passed on but his assurance keeps hopes alive that freedom for West Papua is within reach.

Our Papuan nation bids farewell to its Melanesian Star who saved the country.

Sir Michael, in his long career, dominated PNG and Pacific politics. And, West Papua was part of the conversation.

He helped build a nation, the Papuan nation, that sits at the meeting point between the Pacific and dynamic East Asia with all the strategic, economic and cultural issues that brings.

Somare was the colossus of PNG's political landscape: chief minister (1972-75) while the country was still an Australian-administered territory; its first prime minister (1975-80); and its third (1982-85) and twelfth (2002-12).

For 17 of PNG's 45 years since gaining independence – more than a third of the period – Somare was its leader.

When not in this role, he was very much the power behind the scenes, kingmaker, sometimes troublemaker and – often – peacemaker.



Standing side by side - the Morning Star and the Kumul

His death unites the Papuan race in grieving the death of its founding father. The Papuan nation mourns his death. But his mission would be complete.

And the challenge of West Papuan independence can be surmounted.

In the late 1960s, Sir Michael lifted the bar beyond the expectations of the international community following revolutions across Africa and elsewhere in the non-European world.

West Papua is the story of Melanesia's nightmare. The independence struggle continued well into 21st century across the border.

It has come back to haunt free countries in the region because West Papua is an essential part of the story of Melanesian liberation.

I thank Sir Michael for supporting West Papua's bid for recognition as a full member of the Melanesian Spearhead group (MSG).

In 1986, Sir Michael joined forces with the founding fathers of the Republic of

Vanuatu and Solomon Islands to establish the MSG.

Sir Michael passed on five years later, but the nuts and bolts were in place then when he supported the United Liberation Movement of West Papua (ULMWP) to bid for full membership of the group.

At the February 2018 MSG Leaders' Summit in Port Moresby, MSG membership for ULMWP was postponed due to a legal technicality.

At the time, ULMWP diplomats met Sir Michael. He had words of encouragement for the West Papua people's struggle for freedom.

This blessing for West Papua is clear. And these last words are amplified forever with the 'father of the nation' gone: "We Melanesians must make the right choices on West Papua".

We remember the undisturbed conversation on West Papua's inalienable right to self-rule he started during the years he was prime minister and continued when he left the public space.

In 1967, the 'angry young man' lit the fire which soared high for Melanesian awakening.

Today, freedom is in the air for Kanaky of New Caledonia and for West Papua.

Across the border from PNG, the 250 Papuan tribes of West Papua join Lady Veronica Somare and her children, and the 1,000 Papuan tribes in PNG to grieve the passing of Grand Chief Sir Michael.

RIEP, Grand Chief of the Papuan Nation.

Benny Wenda is chairman of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua

Australia records gratitude to Grand Chief

SCOTT MORRISON MP

Prime Minister of Australia | Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG Attitude

Motion to acknowledge the life and service of the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare delivered in the Parliament of Australia by Australia's prime minister Scott Morrison on 16 March 2021, as recorded in Hansard.

CANBERRA - Mr Speaker, I move that this House acknowledge the passing on the 26th of February 2021 of Papua New Guinea Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare and place on record its gratitude of his long-standing and respected relationship with Australia and tender its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Mr Speaker, I welcome the [Papua New Guinea] High Commissioner here with us today.

Sir Michael Somare was a towering figure in the history of Papua New Guinea. A driving force in the development of Papua New Guinea's national constitution, the nation's first prime minister.

The longest serving prime minister, holding office for a total of 17 years over four separate terms.

And Papua New Guinea's longest-serving member of parliament, faithfully representing his East Sepik constituency for a remarkable 49 years.

To his fellow countrymen and women, Sir Michael was known simply as 'the Grand Chief'.

It was a title that reflected his immense standing and the deep respect in which he was held.

To Australia, Sir Michael was a longstanding and respected friend, indeed family.

Papua New Guinea, our closest neighbour, is family to us.

The ties are deep, forged at Kokoda, Port Moresby, and Milne Bay and remembered at Lae, Rabaul and, of course, Bomana.

And the many *kiaps*, those young Australians who patrolled and worked with local village communities, walking across their vast and rugged interior.

Because it was once a territory of Australia, indeed as we defended it in the Second World War.

As prime minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael worked with Australian prime ministers Whitlam, Fraser, Hawke, Howard, Rudd and Gillard.

But his connection to the leadership of our country goes as far back as the Gorton government.

As a young man, Michael Somare championed an independent Papua New Guinea.

And he did so work with Australia. Working together.



Michael Somare and Gough Whitlam

It is to the credit of so many Australian and Papua New Guinea leaders in the late 1960s and early 1970s that they came to a shared recognition that sovereignty must rest with the people of Papua New Guinea.

It was right that many years later, Sir Michael along with Sir John Gorton and Gough Whitlam came together received honorary doctorates for their work in delivering independence.

Because on the day when Papua New Guinea became independent, the Australian flag was respectfully lowered. It was not torn down.

One of those who witnessed that significant moment was a future Governor-General of Australia, Michael Jeffery. In 1975, he was a young soldier in East Sepik.



Sir Michael Somare with Bob Hawke



Sir Michael Somare with John Howard

Later he said, "I well remember the Australian flag being lowered in Wewak for the last time and the beautiful Papua New Guinea flag being raised in its stead."

He recalled the positive spirit that surrounded independence. That was, in large part, a credit to Michael Somare. He was not a man who tore down.

He understood that free nations are built on democratic institutions and on what he called 'sana': a word from his own language signifying peace, consensus and inclusion.

Indeed, those were the hallmarks of his public life and are his legacy.

Thanks to his vision, and his commitment to *sana*, Papua New Guinea's path to independence was a smooth one.

The foundations of this new nation were laid in peace.

Sir Michael remained a staunch defender of his country's independence, proudly, but always appreciated Australia's unstinting commitment to his homeland and Papua New Guinea's success.

He carried the Olympic torch when it passed through Papua New Guinea on its way to Sydney in 2000.

We can only hope it will pass through Papua New Guinea again if Brisbane 2032 is successful.

He was also, like so many Papua New Guineans, a rugby league fan. And, unlike so many Papua New Guineans when it came to the State of Origin, he was a devoted fan of the Blues. Something I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition and I on at least that matter can concur.

He was a great man of faith, he was a great man of conviction and

commitment, and he will be deeply missed by his many friends in Australia.

High Commissioner Kali, could you please extend to the government and people of Papua New Guinea, to your prime minister, my dear friend James Marape, the sincere condolences of the government and people of Australia as represented in this people's house.



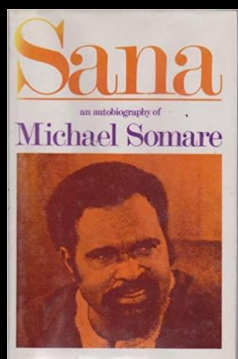
Michael Somare with Kevin Rudd

Thank you for joining us today and thank you to the members of the diplomatic corps who are also with us today, a sign of Sir Michael's standing in the world.

During this time, we are thinking also of Lady Veronica, their children and grandchildren, and the entire Somare family.

May they, in this time of grief, know the peace of God.

And may the Grand Chief rest in peace as a good and faithful servan.



Michael Somare: Sana, An Autobiography

Sana was first published in 1975, the year of Papua New Guinea's independence. It traces Sir Michael Somare life from childhood to politics and his leading PNG to nationhood. *Sana* (peacemaker) is a metaphor for a life lived both in upholding and fulfilling traditional obligations and enabling the transformation to modernity. It begins with a vivid description of the author's early childhood, the cultural and traditional practises that are customary in the Murik Lakes area of East Sepik and specifically Karau village where Somare spent his childhood. Somare, M. (1975). 'Sana: an autobiography of Michael Somare'. Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi. 152 pp. Sold for K50 at the UPNG Book Shop. Out of print elsewhere but may be available through eBay.

Diane Hirima & Minetta Kakarere, Academia Nomad blog

Extracted from <https://www.pngattitude.com/2021/05/sana-the-making-of-a-great-man.html>

CHILDREN'S SHORT STORY

Pie-holed

MARLENE DEE GRAY POTOURA

I LOVE meat pies. I eat them for lunch every day. I love the sweet savoury fillings and the crusty pastry on top. Oh boy!

And I like my pies hot, real hot, a bit burnt on the sides with the lumps of flavoured beef overcooked and tasty.

Today I am at home, not in school. I will stay home for a week.

I have been suspended.

It was because of the meat pie yesterday.

It was lunchtime and I went to the school canteen to buy my pie.

"Hi Sebastine. You want it hot and a bit burnt, yes?" Mrs Morha asked me. She was fat and every day she wore long black skirts with brightly coloured blouses.

"Yes Mrs Morha, the usual, thanks," I smiled at her.

After a minute she gave me a brown paper bag with my hunger remedy inside. The brown paper bag was hot because of the delicious savoury munchkin.

"Hey Sebs," someone called.

I knew that voice.

It was that skinny Konas kid who eats oily yellow flour balls.

His afro hair was yellow as well, just like the flour balls he eats every day for lunch.

The Konas kids all have yellow hair. There were four of them at our school, all sponsored by the City Mission, something to do with underprivileged children.

I can't stand Kenton Konas, also known as KK, yellow top, yellow mop and sun top. He always stares at me, every single lunchtime.

He stares at my pies.

I never give him any, but let him watch me eat the flavoured beef and with every bite I take he swallows a dollop of saliva or two.

Once I punched him for staring at me and I was called to the principal's office. So, after that I just let him watch, me eat.

After KK eats four flour balls, he drinks from the school bubbler, while I drink canned drinks - Coke most of the time, but pineapple Fanta once in a while.

I cannot stand KK.

Even his three sisters hover everywhere in the playground with their yellow tops, bobbing here and there. The Konas kids are like flies that you try to swat, but never seem to go away and keep hovering at the tip of your nose.

"Sebs, wait up," KK called and ran after me as I quickened my pace to go over to the guava tree shade to eat my pie while it was still hot.

I kept walking.

Now, who was he to try to stop me when I have a routine, I repeat every day.

Canteen, hot pie, hurry, eat.

Pathetic little fool, I was not even his friend but a classmate. So why was he telling me to stop?

I quickened my pace. But he was quicker and he finally caught up with me.

"Hey Sebs, how much is that pie?" he asked me, panting.

Oh, I was so mad, I turned around and nearly trampled him.

"Yellow Top! Am I the canteen keeper? Go and ask Mrs Morha, dingdong," I hissed at him. Real stupid nerve, stopping me to ask the price of a pie in the middle of the field.

"Was just asking, Sebs," he grinned ear to ear, following me.

"Look Yellow Top, my name is not Sebs to you, okay?" I yelled, my eyes bulging.

"Hey, we always call you Sebs in class. Even our teacher calls you Sebs," he was smiling.

"Well, smarty pants, they all can call me Sebs. But you can't!" I said angrily.

He was looking at my brown paper bag. Well, he had his eyes on it the whole time, the saliva swallowing hound.

"What are you staring at?" I raged. I was mad, madder than the mad hatter.

"Just looking, Sebs. Don't be mad," he grinned guiltily.

"Yellow Top, my question is: what are you staring at?" I poked his forehead with my pointer. I didn't care any more. I didn't care if I ended up in the principal's office again and got suspended. I didn't care if I flattened Yellow Top. He was driving me to insanity.

"I am just looking," he said softly.

"Just looking? Are you out of your pea brain mind? You cannot realise in your thick head that you are annoying me? Are you so stupid that you cannot get that?" I poked his forehead with my pointer again.

I really wanted to flatten Yellow Top once and for all. This kid annoyed me

every single day, staring at me eating my lunch.

And today of all days, I wanted to escape to the guava tree shade and he was after me, annoying the sanity out of me. With my size, I could flatten KK with just one punch.

I don't want to know this kid or his siblings, with their annoying hair design. Nor did I want to be friends with him or his kind. I only wanted to be left alone while I ate my lunch in peace.

I started walking over to the guava tree shade. Yellow Top was right on my tail again, as if we were together, going for a special lunch, to eat and chat like best friends.

Some kids are just born stupid, aren't they? Real pests.

I quickened my pace.

He quickened his pace beside me.

I quickened.

He quickened.

Suddenly, anger overcame me.

I turned and threw a punch at him and the skinny annoyer ducked like a wobbly giraffe and I missed him by an inch.

"Hey Sebs, cut it out!" he looked confused and upset, as if he was arguing with a best friend.

A best friend who was out of control.

Well, from a distance, onlookers would think that I was out of control, right?

But the truth remains that Yellow Top was the culprit.

"Cut it out, huh. You are the most annoying foolish one in this school. Every lunch time you stare at me. I punched you once and ended up in the principal's office. Then I was warned that if I did it again, I would be suspended.

"Are you doing this on purpose? What is your problem Yellow Top?" I fumed at him shaking with the brown paper bag in my hand.

He just stood there looking at me.

Real senseless. No words came out of his mouth.

"You know, I'm going to flatten you here and colour your yellow crown black with this play ground soil," I warned him. He inched backwards.

"Where are you going Yellow Top?" I pulled his afro yellow mop with my left hand while I held my precious hunger eraser with my right hand.

"Hey, what is going on there?" a familiar voice boomed.

With my left hand still grabbing onto KK's yellow mop, I turned and saw Mr Quinto, the principal.

In no second at all, the playground duty teachers and the principal were standing around KK and me.

I slowly let go off KK's hair. Actually, I wasn't scared of the teachers or the principal. I was so fed up with Yellow Top, I wanted to flatten him right there.

"What is going on here Sebastine?" the principal roared.

"Sir, this kid is annoying me."

"This kid has a name Sebastine. He is Kenton. You must learn to respect other people," right from the start the principal was making it my fault.

"You hit Kenton once and you were going to do it again."

"Yes sir, I was about to knock him off because he kept following me around, annoying me about my lunch," I told the principal.

"Well, this poor kid is on a special scholarship. Sometimes it is good to share with the less fortunate," he told me and looked around at the teachers who nodded in agreement.

He held Kenton's hand and made a long speech about kindness and generosity. He only stopped when the first lunch 'time is over' bell chimed on the intercom.

I looked at my watch.

Drat, it was 1.50. Just ten minutes to the final bell.

Still holding on to Kenton's hand, the principal and the teachers started walking to the office.

I was left there, as if the whole situation was my fault.

I quickly opened the brown paper bag and took out my pie.

I couldn't believe it!

The pie was as cold as a dead man's foot.

I was so mad, I lifted the pie over my head and threw it, aiming for Kenton's yellow mop.

The stupid kid had wasted my time and the pie was cold and yucky.

I watched the pie fly across the field and, as it was about to land on Yellow Top, Mr Quinto turned around - still holding Kenton's hand - to shout at a student.

And the pie, landed right into his wide-open mouth. He fell backwards, dragging Yellow Top with him to the grass.

The principal is not a skinny man and I felt the earth shake.

Well, that's why I'm home.

I've been suspended for a whole week - the reason being that the principal swallowed the pie, choking and coughing so hard that he ended up in emergency at the private hospital. That's what my mum told me the 'before dinner session' about my misbehaviour.

As soon as the principal fell, I ran the other way to the classroom but was called to the office by the deputy principal after the principal was rushed to emergency.

I sat in the deputy principal's office waiting patiently as he conferenced with dad and mum. I was suspended at 2.45 on the same day the pie was holed.

I returned to the 6 Red classroom and packed my books under the watchful eye

of Miss Gray. I really wanted to crush KK as he sat there acting innocent.

Miss Gray walked me to the car park and I drove home in silence with mum and dad.

One week suspension and my parents also grounded me for two weeks.

Triple jeopardy.

Yep, like a three-layered cake. Suspended, grounded and grounded.

But, believe it or not, I can't wait to get back to school because, this time I am going to well and truly flatten Kenton Konas – even if it means I will be terminated.

My dad will chase me away from home.

But I have a plan.

I will stow away on my uncle's container ship and migrate to Surfer's Paradise and work in a pie shop.

"6 whacky tales for youngster", Marlene Potoura, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (September 1, 2018), reading age 9-12 year



MARLENE DEE GRAY POTOURA

Forty Two Stories: Collection of Short Stories Paperback – September 26, 2019

by Marlene Dee Gray Potoura (Author)

Ordinary people, the types of people you meet every day - a cleaner, a cook, a bus driver, a street vendor, a school boy - all have a story to tell. Tales of courage, compassion, hope and self-belief. They live in villages, towns and cities around Bougainville and Papua New Guinea, and their stories explore values that inspire. There are some colourful characters that leap out of the real and spirit world of Papua New Guinea in this short story collection. — Stephanie Wynne, Editor of Tusitala Short Story Competition - Samoa Observer

Available online at Amazon, Paperback from \$3.87 or PGK13.77 (postage not included)

SHORT STORY

A brief meeting of two souls

DUNCAN GABI

My Land, My Country Blog

MADANG - I joined the long queue outside BSP bank in Goroka at around something to 12 to pick up my long overdue bank card.

I had lodged an application for a new bank card a month ago. About two weeks ago, thinking my card was ready; I went to pick it up.

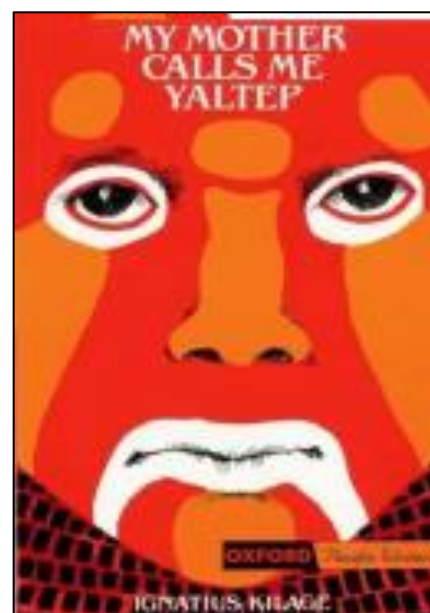
Instead, I was told they had run out of NRL themed cards so I had to pay K20 for a Kundu card and pick it up in two weeks.

So I went yesterday but was told by them to come today.

Despite the long queue and blazing heat of the scorching sun and I ignoring the coronavirus preventive measure of social distancing, I joined the long line of people outside the bank who, from the look on their faces and their continuous complaints, had been standing in the never moving, stagnant line for hours.

It was government payday; you know how it is in PNG when it's payday.

Despite being an impatient person, I humbled myself and stood in line braving the midday sun of Goroka



which is, on a good day, hotter than POM, Lae or Madang.

In front of me stood a young girl, a few centimeters shorter and about the same age. She had a bag slung across her shoulder; her hair was untidy - roughly done in what seem to be an unsuccessful attempt at braiding. Her shirt was faded and she wore jeans roughly cut below the knee. She had somewhat fair and smooth skin. I know I'm not supposed to discuss that.

Standing behind her, I had no way of seeing her front, if you know what I mean.

She had something in her hand, and once in a while I would see her hand move as if she was flipping through something.

After 30 minutes or so, curiosity got the better of me. I wanted to see what my queue friend was doing.

So, I peered over her shoulder. She being a few centimeters shorter gave me the advantage of looking over her shoulder to see what she was doing. I knew it was not right but I had to, as any person bored to death waiting in a line that wasn't moving would do.

What I saw her doing caught me by surprise. She was reading a book.

She was reading in public, not in the bank but outside beside the footpath despite hundreds of people and vehicles moving to and fro. She paid no mind to anybody; she was caught up in her book.

This is a rare sight, something you do not see often.

I looked to the front and then turned and looked to the back to see what other people were doing while waiting in line.

Most elderly people had newspapers and were reading the usual stuff you find in papers. Some would make faces and show disapproval when reading something they didn't like.

Behind me, two guys were discussing how coronavirus was a conspiracy

theory and how it was created in a lab by China to kill the people and dominate the world in its southward expansion.

And then there were young people on their phones surfing the internet on social media, updating statuses with comments like "*Gosh, sun hot na line blo bank no move too, #smh #goroka*".

Other young people were listening to music as they had headphones blocking their ears and blocking out the world.

Then it dawned me, in this age of technology when all the young people are glued to their phones and their world revolves around their phones, entangled in the cyber world, there are few who still grab and read a book, turn the pages and get lost in the author's world.

And standing in front of me is this young lady, reading. She would take out her phone occasionally to check the time and then continued reading.

I spied a page of the book and found it was a romance novel, something like Mills and Boon, so I thought this might be my chance to strike up a romance with this young ragged haired book lover.

Searching in my *bilum*, I pulled out my Ignatius Kilage's semi-autobiography, '*My mother calls me Yaltep*', and flipped the pages to chapter 8, '*Courtship*', to get a few tips and pointers on how to woo a lady.

Kilage's book is one of my favourites by a PNG author and I always carry it in my *bilum* wherever I go. I turn the pages and read a few chapters whenever I'm bored.

I started reading, in my mind hoping she would turn around and see me reading too, then we both would establish that romantic connection like the fictitious stuff we see in teenage movies.

I just wanted her to see me reading, I don't know what my initial plan of attracting her was but after almost an hour standing in line and covering seven chapters, I forgot all about her.

When the inside of the bank was cleared, the security officer opened the door and we all went rushing into the bank in hopes of getting first in line first.

I went and stood in the withdrawal line, she went and joined the deposit line which is next to the withdrawals.

The bank teller who assisted me yesterday asked me to come so she could assist me promptly, so instead of joining the enquiries line, which is the line you join to apply for a new card or pick up a new card, I found myself in the withdrawals section.

The withdrawals and deposits section lines in the bank are close together, I looked across and, lo, she was a few feet ahead of me in her line.

I thought, well I'm never going to see her again or she is never going to see me read this book. I placed my hopes on her turning around and seeing me read.

That is stupid, I know, but luck was on my side.

The waves of destiny and the winds of romance were *totally* on my side because the withdrawals line moved more quickly than the deposits line, maybe because the good ladies in the withdrawals section were working fast because they knew they were about to be part of something great.

No less than 20 minutes passed and I was close to her. She was opposite.

And then she turned, looked past me, then at me, and slowly her eyes went down to my hands. And in my fingers was the orange covered book.

Still holding her book, she lifted her eyes and they met mine. My heart stopped when she smiled at me. I held my breath and puffed out my chest like a bird doing a mating dance to attract the female.

At that moment, I wanted to break a knee in front of her and propose, 'Will you marry me?' I didn't have an engagement ring but I would propose

with the book, 'Will you take this book and me?'

Plus, there are only limited copies of the book in Papua New Guinea, and not everybody has the luxury of owning one. Mine is borrowed, by the way.

I was still daydreaming and picturing us on a beach watching the sunset, sipping coconut juice through straws, and enjoying our favourite novels while the waves crashed gently on the shore that I didn't realise the line in front of me was moving.

The people in front were about two feet ahead of me, the older lady standing behind me whose fragile knees were about to give way scolded me and pushed me to move on, you know how

rude and impatient they can be when they hit old age.

When I took a few steps, I was ahead of my soul mate. I couldn't turn around and look at her even though I wanted to. I sure wished I had eyes in the back on my head, I would be all seeing.

I'm sure she wanted me to turn around too but we were in the bank and everyone was frustrated and cussing under their breath.

The poor security guard was sweating trying to maintain order. The foul atmosphere killed the romantic atmosphere and my chances of striking up a romance with the young book lover were gone.

The line moved quicker. I picked up my card and walked out and waited outside of the bank for another 15 minutes hoping she come but a small fake rainy midday shower of Goroka sent me seeking refuge in the nearby Asian shop packed with street vendors and local tourists.

In the crowded shop, I blocked out all the noise as my mind wandered. I might never see her again but, if it was fate that we saw each other, even for a brief moment, there was something in the air.

I pray and hope that we meet again in a place where people come to stand in line and complain about the sun and the bad smell of body odour wafts through to the various sections of the bank.

Duncan Gabi is from Rigo in Central Province. and blogs at www.aunamelo.wordpress.com.

SHORT STORY

Hanging Balls – you be the judge

BAKA BINA

THE voice broke through the quiet of the day as the birds chirped away their days in the tall yar trees around the coffee garden.

Musonimo walked through the village to go to where he was trying to go. He changed course when he saw smoke over the top of the coffee trees from a house that was set a bit to the outside of the main village. He had not seen his friend in the village for a long time and he needed to ascertain where the man was.

A few coffee trees away from the house he crouched and peered through to notice a movement in front of the house.

A small pile of rubbish was smoking away outside the meticulously kept yard when he breached the small built-up gate. The morning rays of the sun wove a pattern on the thin smoke warping up and splattered it onto the pitpit wall of

the house like a big black and brown mural. The smoke meant somebody was somewhere around the house.

'Are there people around here or not?' He asked in a loud voice to no one in particular.

'I have not seen the man Paito for long time. Is he there in his house or has he gone travelling?' He continued his one-man conversation as he neared the smoking trash heap.

Meiheme was tending to the *assbean* plot in the small garden in the front of the house. She pulled up from where she was weeding and cleared her throat.

'Musonimo-O, good man, it is good for you to come around. Gosh, I too have not seen you or your wife in a long time. Is your wife in good health?' She cried out in relief.

'*Ii ii*, Meiheme, good woman, is that you there in the garden? I did not see you there doing weeding work. Now, I have not seen you or your husband in a long, long while and yes, my wife is in good health, more than good to spend her days at the *kandis* place, gambling the little she makes from the markets.'

'I was asking about your husband amongst those gambling and generally they were saying they too have not seen him grace the *kandis* place in a while. That was the reason for me to come by. I was going down the main village to go to the *hauspik*. My missus said one the young male pigs was causing some problems. It may have been a cause it being too young to be mating. I however saw smoke trails from this house and came around.'

Meiheme left her weeding and came to join him at the smoking debris in front of the house. She shook Musonimo's

hand and sat down to tend the fire she had going with the leaves and rubbish she had swept up earlier.

'I have not gone to the *kandis* place in a long while. I think it would be about three moons. I go to my garden which is at the opposite end of the *kandis* place and return here. So yes, they would not have seen me there.'

Musonimo took notice of her teary red eyes.

'Oh, sure, a lot of us waste whole days there doing nothing but standing there like fence posts watching our women gamble away our money.'

Meiheme smiled to mask her tears.

She too had the tendency to go there before going to the garden and, on a good day, she would go there and then sit down with her *bilum* bag and spade or *digging stick* beside her either gambling in the *kandis* or watching others do the same. She surely did waste her days there.

'Now, and my brother? Has he gone on a journey? It is quite a while that we have not seen *his nose* - and plenty of big events have come and gone. He surely has not got a new wife and is living at her place, is he?'

A cackle of laughter broke from the house.

Musonimo looked up as Paito's deep throated laugh shrilled out from the house walls.

'*Ii ii*, my good friend. You're inside the house? You staying in there this good sunny morning is something. Am I missing something?'

'Eh, your brother hardly gets around these days. He spends his days here and sleeps most times.' Meiheme rolled her eyes.

'Gosh, is he sick?'

'*Apo*, can you get out here or what?'

'My good friend', the shaky voice from inside the house called out. 'I just woke

up and was trying to come out and sit in the sun. You asking if I got a new wife sounded like fun to me and that were the reason I chuckled. If you see me now, you will regret that I should have got that new wife.'

'Like he was going to get one, the *ghepili* from yesterday and tomorrow too,' Meiheme shot out sarcastically.

'Look at him now, he thought he was a *Slim Dusty reincarnate* and was strutting it out there wanting to get a new wife and, in his endeavour, got more than what he bargained for. He cannot walk, so ask him what is wrong with him. He's got it all in an old *ten kilo rice bag*.' She smiled to tone down her sarcasm.

Paito broached the low door slowly in a crouching position. He was weighed down heavily and his steps were measured.

Musonimo was taken aback. '*Ii ii, Apo*, good one ya! This woman, don't make fun of him. He is not a *ghepili* because he got you as his wife. What will you do if his *balls* were hanging loose?'

Meiheme broke out laughing. '*Haii-e aga-e hii*.' The tenseness of the last couple of months made her cry in her laughter.

'*Apo*, he was long into his bachelorhood when I carried over my legs to him in marriage. He did not go out wooing me nor did he pay bride price for me. I came by to fill in a void. So by that account he was a *ghepili*. A *ghepili* is one who cannot get a wife the proper way. But right now, that is not our problem. I dared not even mention what was wrong with this buccaneering *Slim Dusty*. You turn up here with the sun and sunshine. Oh, my goodness.' She wiped off the tears running down her chin - much to the chagrin of Paito.

Musonimo gave his friend a bear hug, and then helped him straighten up and get his bearings.

Paito adjusted his eyes to the bright sunlit area and looked around for the dilapidated plastic chair that was always left outside. He undid the *laplap* that he had wound around him and retightened

the knot. He then tried to scamper to the plastic chair a few feet away. He crouched low and had one hand down between his thighs to hold up a rope sewn onto the old empty rice bag.

Meiheme scrambled around the chair for him and he sat down into it gingerly. He then positioned the rice bag slowly between his legs. He grimaced as he tried to fit the bag onto the chair. Meiheme noticed that the bag shot out over the edge of the chair and she hastened into the house to bring out a twenty-litre plastic water container. She placed it below the chair and the bag settled over onto it.

'Whee!' Paito cursed his blessing for having a woman nearby. He found it a relief to lie back and was pleased that the bag was not in the way.

Musonimo was taken aback. His friend had aged considerably and he was sporting a big beard that was going grey. What he wasn't expecting was the taut rice bag.

Musonimo's wide eyes and the chagrin on his face sought an explanation. He was totally fazed, watching his friend break into a sweat. The sun's rays through the top of the *yar* trees were becoming warmer. Paito was uncomfortable trying to explain what was afflicting him.

Meiheme fidgeted around the fireplace, adding more rubbish and creating more smoke. After what seemed to be an eternity, she spoke for him.

'Yesterday we had the medicine man, Goheno come do his speciality. We bought a little bit of protein for him to *make his bamboo lusowaso* to *cut the bad ropes*. We have been having these visits by the medicine men and they have done so many *lusowasos* and *puripuris*. But all these rituals bring no relief. We don't know what it is and he has lost the will to live,' Meiheme related.

'Now, now, what is it that you are suffering from?'

'*Apo*, nobody told you of his ailment?' She again interjected, not giving her

husband a chance to answer to Musonimo.

The blank look on Musonimo's face was all she needed. She looked at her husband's terse face and fidgeted to say explain more. But she struggled to find the right words.

Paito looked up into the morning sun wishing the heat into his body. The silence crept into the yard.

In as much of a whisper, Meiheme spoke again. 'Apo, we are so ashamed of what we are going through that we cannot step outside of the yard. Even our children have abandoned us. They bear the shame more because they are the ones that go out into the village.'

'It was after he came back from Madang. He must have slept with some *outside women* there. The result of that is he now has to carry his *balls* in that old *ten kilo rice* bag you see.'

'My good Apo, I had no idea that you were having this problem. Now, do I understand that your *balls* have swollen up?' he said in a lowered voice.

'Apo, not only have they swollen, they have doubled in size, so that they are now like two mango fruits down there hanging from my crotch. I am beginning to think that they will grow into.... you know, those long water melons. They'd be like that.' Paito spoke in a squeaky voice as he pulled up his *laplap* to show his *balls* inside the discoloured rice bag. The old bag was straining at the strands which emphasized the oversized state of his scrotum.

It was an embarrassing display and the sweat on Paito glistened like morning dew.

'Apo, good man, when did all of this start?'

'One day I was urinating and there was a small boil at the top of one of my *balls*. It started itching around the pimple and I furiously started scratching where I had busted the pimple. I thought it was a simple pimple. But now I am not so sure. Soon after I felt the skin starting to grown strong and fill out. Then a week

later, I realised that the *balls* were becoming heavier. Then they started growing. Some days, it is very irritating and some days nothing, just peace and calm. But the swelling does not go down.'

'When it is irritating, that is when they are swelling more. I then want to scratch, scratch and snap them off. I hardly sleep. There are no body aches, just this irritating desire to scratch the *balls*.'

'On the days it does not irritate, I can sleep for hours on end.'

'When I walk, I feel like I am one of those *bulmakaus* over at the mission station. These *bulmakaus* carry those milk bags between their legs. That's when I smile to myself at the ridiculousness of it all. Other times, like I said, when I hear the noise and laughter in the village, I feel like just ripping them out and joining you all there.'

'Apo, my good friend, it is no fun staying on your own, isolated like this in your own house. And the village is just there. I dare myself to go there but I fear the village children will have the fun of their lives seeing me walk like a *bulmakau* with these *hanging balls*.'

'But we think it is the *sangumas* doing their work causing the *balls* to swell. We don't eat anything good like proteins here. We have our regular *kaukau* every day. If we are doing good and the *sangumas* want to get to us, that is okay but I am your regular poor neighbour. For good measure we got the other medicine man, Vanopahi to get his *ginger sticks* and he *stuck them into ginger tubers* that we planted around the house. We even put them in the *kunai* roof of the house. That good *puripuri* has put a stop, we hope, to the *sangumas* coming to our house.'

'Now, talking about *sangumas*, Apo, it is scary visiting sick people nowadays. If the sick person dies, the immediate persons who visited him or her are often accused of being a *sanguma*. It is alleged that the *visitor* must have gone about doing the dastardly things of taking the life of the sick person. It is this type of reasoning that stops people from visiting the sick.'

'Apo, I know I am one of those who speaks out about these and takes part in these blame games, but, right now, I can tell you I miss all you people and I could do with a stream of visitors. My good friend! When you are ostracised - and I tell you right now, I am very hungry for people to come around and talk to me; even the known *sangumas* are welcome.'

'I sleep and watch the door most days hoping for people to come by. I sit here in the sun everyday looking towards that track among the coffee trees hoping just one person's shadow can breach the shade. I hear voices down in the village and I want to yell into the village to get them around to the house. But I always hesitate; I remain silent.'

'I yearn to talk to someone, for goodness' sake. If dogs could talk, I would gladly sit up and talk all day with any of the skinny, scabies-ridden dogs that roam the village. One turns up here regularly. I talk to it and feed it most of my *kaukau*. The stupid dog just eats the *kaukau*, looks at me with its blank eyes while I'm trying to have a conversation with it and it thanks me by scratching its backside before it moves on. If I did not have that woman, I would have become mad. I am already fed up with seeing that same person day in and day out. I need to talk to someone else, other than my wife. I want to talk politics, talk about the village and all the manly things that men talk and do. Right now, I am a social outcast and I hate it.'

'You've got to be grateful for that woman. She is sticking by you.' Musonimo gave his approval for Meiheme.

'I don't dispute that. There are no other better words than Apo in our language to heap on a woman to show our appreciation. She is my biggest Apo.'

Musonimo smiled. 'Now you see what we are doing when we start talking *sangumas*. We are already killing ourselves when we throw around the *sanguma* word unnecessarily. We are dead before we actually die.'

'You are in the village and you see - nobody is willing to visit with you because you have been vocal on all

things *sanguma* before. If all the people in the village have the same belief, the village is doomed.'

'Did you hear last week that Sahiseho from village up the road died and they are blaming the wife as a *sanguma* woman? For goodness' sake, the wife was the carer - like your poor wife, Meiheme here. The brothers of the man blamed the wife even though they had abandoned the sick man in the first place. For six months their brother was crying out for them; none of them visited. Then he dies, they were quick to blame the wife.'

'It was the brothers' cause for revenge against her because when Sahiseho was sick, she made a statement that the village were full of *sangumas* and they were the ones making her husband sick. She planted *sanguma ginger* around the house and that stopped them from coming to her house. People did not visit and were scared silly that they might be blamed as doing *sanguma*. I see the same situation here.'

'Apo, I am scared for myself.' Meiheme intoned from where she was sitting by the fire. 'What you are saying is true because people have not been coming around and visiting. When people visit, they usually come around with food and sugar and coffee. Now I have to stretch myself to providing the food for the house. I have to make the garden and still tend to your friend here. I sometimes cry that the village doesn't care anymore and his blood relatives, I don't see them here.'

'Apo, I feel for your feeling bad. If the Sahiseho saga relates to how we people are seeing things here; seriously, I am afraid for you.'

'I think I should leave the village and go back to my village. That type of talking forebodes ill for me - even though I am the only one caring for this useless bastard now. I have not seen the backsides of his brothers and family. Should he die, they will blame me. Now, for what? I say what is afflicting him is what he gets for chasing after women. He thought he got a good one in Madang. It was an *outside woman* and the results are he got both his *balls* hanging inside old rice bags.'

'What is wrong with you men? You want to blame everything on women with anything regarding *sangumas* and *making poison* and *afflictions by bad spirits*. You all think that we women folk are purveyors of these evil forces and you men continue to blame us women and children for it. Look at you men. You do nothing all day and then there is no food because you refuse to work the garden; you think you are hungry because the *sangumas* ate all your innards. The truth is that you are having *kaukau* that has worms. These have got you so you don't eat well and then you accuse the women folk of being possessed by *sangumas* causing or bringing your ill fortunes.'

'Apo, listen, don't worry about the *sangumas*. They can eat out my innards but what I really want them to do is to eat out these *two balls of mine* so that I don't have to put up with the embarrassing thing of wearing the handles to the *ten-kilo rice bag* around my neck. It's even not funny walking while trying to make sure the *balls* are safe down there.'

'Apo, with all this *sanguma* blaming that our people throw around, it does not pay to visit the sick. A sick person's condition worsens after a particular person visited; this visiting person must be a *sanguma*. That is some crazy reasoning.'

'I don't blame you for trying to pull out those irritating balls when you want to go out to enjoy the life in the village. I would do the same. It is the blaming thing that is making us not visit the sick.'

'Apo, I think we are into the thick of it - this blame game. Meiheme and I have sat long into the night, especially when I have that darned scratching *ichimitis*, trying to see who might be responsible. We have named a lot people but gave up when the whole village became our suspects. We were thinking that everyone in the village was capable of being *sangumas*. Every now and then Meiheme meets these people on the way to the garden and she has the fright of her life.'

'But these are my people and that scares the shit out of me.'

'Musonimo, good man, let me say this: this *sanguma* thing is making us very poor.' Meiheme spoke with a strain in her voice. 'This is not only in money, but in relationships as well. None of our neighbours want to come see us. You see that house in front. I have not seen any of them here for the last three months since Paito started staying around the house. One of them used to come here regularly for his *smoke and buai*. But I have not seen him for a long while now.'

'Sseh, let's talk something else. It's really depressing.'

'Okay, let me tell you this story. The other day I was sitting squat over the *pit latrine* behind there. You remember that deluge of rain? The following morning when, you know, the soil over the pit had not sort of dried out yet.'

'Apo-yo, that morning I really wanted the *sangumas* to eat these balls out. You know, they were now about five or six kilos heavy.'

'I was there squatting comfortably over the hole trying to do my morning ablutions. After adjusting my squat and making sure the rice bag was secured with me, holding them up by the rope to the bag in front of me here, I tried to exert my first force.'

'Don't you laugh yet!'

'You must remember that the soil in the latrine was a bit wet from water seeping through the *kunai* thatches. Of course, the smell there is not what you want. Now I was in that squat and was trying that first force to my *pekpek* when something dastardly happened.'

'Boy oh boy, you should have seen me. I did not know what to do. I was either going to excrete or look after my *balls*.'

'I could just feel my first *pekpek* at the mouth of anus when pop, the darned swollen *balls* slipped out. They fell, no, plonked out of the bag over the hole in the pit and I had this nasty feeling that the balls were going to continue into the abyss of the toilet hole. I thought I was going to follow suit, *ball* and all.'

'Apo, I was doing all things at the same time: *trying* to stop my *balls* from dropping into the hole while trying to stop my *pekpek* from coming out and at the same time trying to catch my balance and still not face plant plump onto the soggy soil. You know the soil in there, that is where we *pispis* and *pekpek* and no good place to be sitting down in nor doing face plants.'

Musonimo and Meiheme finally broke out in smirking guffaws.

'Apo, I had this fleeting feeling that my *balls* were falling down into that dark hole full of *pekpek*. I sort of had this awful thought that they had broken out from their sheaths, - like the yolk of an egg - yeah, I had that picture in my mind, the gory egg like fluids and the biggest turkey size cocktails - the two kidney gonads following after.'

'Well, I wasn't waiting to find out. I just somehow kamikazied into the pitpit blind wall in front of me. I drove head first into it so that my backside was hurled up into the sky. I tried to do a tumble roll in the small space in there. Seriously, no dark abyss was going to swallow these two *balls*.'

Musonimo rolled about in the dust holding his bust. Meiheme laughed along with Musonimo. Paito wore chagrin on his face. Laughing was relieving. They had not laughed in a long while and it felt good.

'Apo, at that point in time, I forgot that those two *balls* were humongous but there was no self preservation on my part. That dark hole in the ground scared me shitty. For my efforts, I must have got knocked out by them *balls* flying about my thighs during the kamikaze time because, when I woke up, the sun was a different colour and I was smelling like the *shithouse* that I woke up in.'

'Now when I think about it, I should have really ripped the *balls* off then there and then.'

'Well, Apo, Paito, my good man, it is good that you still have them *balls* on you.' Musonimo enjoyed the story.

'*Aghai e ii haii-e hii.*' Meiheme burst out laughing again.

'Apo, you should have seen him; his rice bag around his thighs, one end of the rope handle to the bag holding up his *balls* and him crawling on his knees coming out from the toilet. I had my heart up in my mouth but when he told me how he tried to stop his *balls* falling into the pit toilet, I coloured myself laughing blue.'

'Well, that day we let go of the three months stress with our laughter! Thankfully I can still chuckle over it now. However, our real concern now is that we are getting no visits from anyone in the village.'

Paito put on a stern face - but with a bit of a grin showing through.

'Apo, I think that this woman has a point. We need to do something about that. We are becoming a friendless community.' Musonimo grinned.

'But we have to get you better and get those two *balls* back into their original smaller size. You are telling this story but I have not heard you saying anything about getting *waitmahn's* medicine. The *hausik* is just there besides the school. I am sure the *Doktaboi* there would have been glad to see you with your illness.'

Meiheme cut in. 'Apo, we have not gone to the *hausik*.'

'Apo, you remember that young woman Alma, the one with the one big leg and is called *the Big Foot*.'

'Yeah, Huka's daughter, the one that would stand on the one big leg and drinks like a man.'

'Yes, that Huka's daughter, Alma, she had malaria but then developed that one huge leg that is as big as a tree trunk. Would it not be possible that you might be having the same type of sick?'

Paito sat in deep thought.

'Well, that one, the same type of sickness affected her leg from the ankle right up to ...and not her other thing.'

Musonimo said with a silly smile while pointing with his fingers to his crotch.

'That hanging part is something I do not wish upon any female.'

'Ii ii, you are trying to be funny with us women. The only thing we have hanging are our *susus* and you are not going to be descriptive over those too, ha-ha!'

'You know, I was given malaria tablets. I did not take them because I did not like their bitter taste.'

'Apo, this man likes the coasts and the coastal women and goes to their place to be bitten by all their bugs and more. He comes back and prefers not to take these good medicines. Instead, it's all talk; blame *sangumas*; do *lusowasos* and *puripuris* to try cure it. We leave in a crazy world!'

'Good man, Musonimo, one time he was bedridden from a heavy malaria bout and the *Doktaboi* came to give him medicine. I sought out the *Doktaboi* because your dying friend was too heavy to haul across to his *hausik*. The *Doktaboi* gave him some medicine and water and told him to drink it while he was watching. He then came around for three days to make sure that your friend completed taking all the medicines and he recovered. I had some cooking bananas that I was going to harvest for the *Doktaboi* to say thank you to him. But then without me knowing, this idiot harvests the banana.'

'I have not gone to this *Doktaboi* this time because I sold him on a false promise previously and felt ashamed to go back again to ask for his assistance.'

'Eh, I did not finish my story about Alma.' Musonimo cut in. 'As I was saying before, she had this big, *big foot* trunk for a leg. She was still happily able to continue doing her things with *the big foot*. Now if you have the same sickness, you can continue to live happily with no problems.'

'You mean I could get treated at the *hausik*. It might be some sick that the *waitmahn* know about and I am thinking that our *ples lusowaso* and *puripuri* is better than the *waitmahn's* medicine.'

Meiheme looked cross-eyed at her husband. 'I told you so! But you were scared of that little needle prick to your ass. I think you should find a bigger bag to house your ever-growing *balls*.'

'We could do something else though.'

Musonimo rummaged through his *bilum* to pull out a small coca cola bottle. It had some blue kerosine liquid in it. He pulled out a second coke bottle that had some white creamy liquid. Then he pulled another small plastic wrapping

from the *bilum*. He opened it up to look at it while Paito peered down to it.

Paito's face drew a frown. He took the message. He could feel his breath suddenly become very hot. There was a rising anger in him towards Musonimo.

'What? You are on a mission to visit with pigs that are on heat and you take this opportune time to visit with me with your kerosine and *gohuno cream* and... and... and your stupid small blade.'

He struggled to get off the chair and then looking around him, he slowly duck-walked himself into the house. Meiheme looked on stunned. He was walking out on his flabbergasted friend. As he breached the door, he spoke over his back.

'Ha! Goodbye, I am going to sleep and whatever their sizes, I had better wake up in one piece with these two balls still hanging down there.'

BIOGRAPHICAL STORY

The Army Patrol That Went Wrong

NALAU BINGEDING

I GREW UP IN WAGANGLUHU VILLAGE, along the banks of the Busoo River in the Bukawa area of Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea.

As a kid the banks of Busoo River was the best place in the world for me. I could not think of another place in the world that could substitute the Busoo River and the many adventures my peers and I encountered every day. The Busoo River was our swimming pool, it was our fishing ground, it was our playground, and the lush tropical rainforests along the banks of the river provided us with countless adventures daily.

Moreover, the banks of the Busoo River was annually used by the Papua New Guinea and Australian Defence Force for joint military drills, and the excitement of watching these military drills after school was a bonus for my peers and I. The sound of machine guns, bazookas, M16s and army helicopters drove our little minds crazy, and all we could think of doing the next day was to come again and watch these epic military drills.

Although we were just third and fourth graders in our local primary school, we knew the names of most of the military equipment used and the types of actions taken by the soldiers in the drills. We



also knew what the role of the radioman was and we learned by heart the words he spoke during the drills.

After the military drills are over and the soldiers leave, my peers and I usually struggled to fit back into our routine village and school lives. And if you saw three or four heads clustering in one corner of the school yard during lunch break or after school, you can be sure the discussion is about the latest military drill along the banks of the Busoo River.

But to really get the hangovers of the latest military drills out of our systems, we would gather at the river after school and act out the military drills using whatever resources we could find in the nearby bushes. We would meet every day after school at the same spot and act out what we had seen during the recent military drills. And to top it off, we would take army patrols along the banks of the river in the direction of the sea, and if dusk sets in we would abandon the patrols and return home.

Acting out the military drills after school would go on for some time until the military madness was flashed out of our systems, and life in the village or at our local school returned to normalcy.

But of all the military enactments my peers and I had during our childhood days, I have not forgotten one of our regular army patrols along the banks of the Busoo River. What happened on that fateful day is implanted forever in the back of my mind, and every time I run into my childhood friends, I am reminded of the army patrol that went wrong.

Busoo Platoon reconnaissance

It was Friday and we were let off at 10am after completing work parade at school because our teachers needed to go into Lae City to collect their pay cheques.

The bell rang and it was time to head home, but we all knew where we would meet and what we would do that day. A certain spot along the banks of the Busoo River was where we would meet that very day for our military patrol.

This meet was special because the fifth graders had heard our stories and were enthusiastic in joining us, the third and

fourth graders, in our regular military patrols.

When we were all gathered at the appointed place at the river, everyone went about preparing for the military patrol down the banks of the Busoo River. Wild banana stumps, sticks, vines, stems of giant ginger species, known as Gogol, were plucked out of the nearby bushes to make replicas of machine guns, bazookas, M16s and a wireless radio.

At first there was some excitement, but soon the excitement died down and there was some silence as every kid in the platoon wanted to make the best gun he could possibly think out. As each individual crafted his gun, he would glance at the others around him to ensure his gun was better than theirs without saying a word. Everyone in the platoon was making a gun except one person, his name was Wayakwa, and he was tasked by our platoon commander to make a wireless radio.

Wayakwa was one of a kid who was usually picked on by other kids at the local primary school for trivial matters, and most of the time you would not find him mingling with other kids after school. But that very day Wayakwa came to join the platoon, and somehow, he was appointed to be our radioman and was accorded some respect.

I had crafted an M16 for myself, but the quality of my gun was not at par with that of the other kids. And as I took a glance at the other kids and their guns, I could not comprehend why they were so serious in crafting guns that were perfect replicas of real M16s, bazookas and machine guns.

There was something special about this particular military patrol so the preparations were meticulous, but I could not work out what it was. I had a hunch something big was going to happen that very day, but I could not tell whether it would turn out to be a good or bad thing for the platoon.

As the preparations progressed, all eyes were now fixed on the radioman and his wireless radio. Everyone wanted the radio to be a perfect replica of a real wireless radio, and once in a while somebody would comment on what had

been left out or what needed to be amended to improve the quality of the wireless radio.

And when the wireless radio was completed, Wayakwa was standing beside the replica of a real wireless radio made out of wild banana stumps, sticks, vines and stems of Gogol. I could tell that the wireless radio would have been in excess of 20 kilograms.



For third graders like Wayakwa and me 20 kilograms was beyond our carrying capacity, but I could tell that Wayakwa was not bothered by the weight of the wireless radio. He was given that special task by the platoon commander to perform, and it was his responsibility to carry it despite the weight to earn the respect of the platoon.

Finally, everything was in order and the platoon was ready to head downstream. Everyone had their faces painted with charcoal and their heads covered in banana leaves or some grass species, and their machine guns, M16s and bazookas were in their arms or on their shoulders.

Our radio man was already raring to go, but his 20kg load of wireless radio was still on the ground as he gazed at it with a smiling face.

Then the platoon commander and his subordinates gathered some 10 metres away from where we were and discussed the patrol plan while we waited anxiously for their instructions.

The plan was that the platoon commander, Namun, was to take the lead the patrol and his subordinates of Geding and Uyah were to strategically position themselves in the patrol line to give necessary instruction should we encounter enemy patrols. The radioman, Wayakwa, was to be the last person in the patrol line so that he could call for a helicopter from Igam Army Barracks in

Lae City if there were any casualties along the way.

Slowly, the platoon headed downstream. There was silence as the troopers cautiously scanned the surrounding bushes for signs of enemy patrols, and once in a while the platoon commander would turn around and signal for us to sit down in the bushes and wait for some villagers to pass by on their way to our village.

The platoon had travelled for 2 miles and the patrol seemed to be progressing smoothly with no casualties, and the presence of the platoon had not been compromised so far. Villagers who were returning from their gardens or fishing trips to the sea did not spot our military patrol, and we were anticipating a successful patrol if the commander would call off the mission in the next 1 or 2 miles.

Danger close!

All was going well as the platoon headed further downstream, but suddenly there was a scream from the front line and the platoon came to a halt. Then the troopers in front whispered to each other and pass the word down the line so that all platoon members were aware of the situation.

The platoon commander, Namun, was hurt. He had step on some rattan spikes and his foot was bleeding heavily.

“Quick, get the radioman to call for help from Igam Army Barracks, said Geding, one of the two subordinates to the platoon commander. “Call for headquarters to send a helicopter as soon as possible, our platoon commander is down”, said Uyah, the other subordinate to the platoon commander.

As the rest of the platoon waited patiently, some of our medics began work on the casualty. The rattan spikes were removed from Namun’s foot, the wounds were cleaned with some clear sap extracted from some nearby vines, and juice from the leaves of the piper plant was squeezed into the wound to dry up the blood.

While this was going on, some troopers began preparing a stretcher using sticks and vines to carry the injured person to

the riverside for the helicopter to come and whizz him off to Igam Army Barracks for further treatment.

At the same time the radioman had begun making frantic calls to Igam Army Barracks for a helicopter to be sent immediately.

From the back of the line, we could hear Wayakwa frantically calling Igam Army Barracks for help. "This is Alpha 1 calling Bravo 2, over? Bravo 2, do you read me, over? This is Alpha 1. Please send a helicopter to Busoo River, over? We have a casualty; the platoon commander for Alpha Company is injured, over?"

Then we hear Wayakwa changing the tone of his voice and answers himself as if Igam Army Barracks was responding to his calls. "Roger, this is Bravo 2 calling Alpha 1, over? Message copied; do you read me, over?"

While the medics were preparing the casualty for evacuation and Wayakwa was calling for help, the rest of the platoon was on alert in case an enemy patrol crossed our path. The troopers were vigorously scanning the river bank and the nearby bushes for signs of an enemy patrol approaching.

Then it was good news. Wayakwa, after making frantic calls to Igam Army Barracks informed the platoon that Igam Army Barracks had dispatched a helicopter and it was on its way.

It was all thumbs up for the platoon, and you could see smiles all around as we waited patiently for the helicopter to arrive.

But after some 30 minutes or so, there was no sign of a helicopter coming to pick up the casualty.

The platoon commander, Namun, was already placed in a stretcher, and he was impatient and wanted to know if the helicopter was really coming.

So Uyah whispered to the trooper next to him to send word down the line to the radioman to call Igam Army Barracks again to send a helicopter to pick up the casualty. Word was quickly sent down the line and we could hear Wayakwa

calling Igam Army Barracks again to send a helicopter.

"This is Alpha 1 calling Bravo 2, over? Bravo 2, do you read me, over? This is Alpha 1. Please send a helicopter to Busoo River, over? We have a casualty; the platoon commander for Alpha Company is injured, over?"



As Wayakwa repeatedly called Igam Army Barracks using his wireless radio, the platoon intently listened. Then Wayakwa turned around and enthusiastically informed the platoon that a helicopter had been dispatched and will soon land on the riverbed of the Busoo River to pick up the casualty.

And as the platoon anxiously waited, we could hear in the distance the sound of a helicopter approaching. As the sound of a helicopter got louder and louder, there were smiles all around and Wayakwa was given some praise for his efforts in getting a helicopter to come so soon to pick up the casualty.

But after a while, the sound of the helicopter engine faded. And we could tell that the helicopter was no longer headed in our direction, but it was headed for the headwaters of the Busoo River. "Maybe the helicopter had missed our location, but it would come back if Wayakwa got back on the radio and pointed out our exact position to the helicopter pilot", somebody said.

Yes, most of the troopers agreed that Wayakwa should get back on the radio and call the helicopter and pinpoint our location.

Enthusiastically, Wayakwa got back on the radio and called the helicopter pilot to return downstream and pick up the casualty.

And as Wayakwa was calling the helicopter, we could hear the sound of a

helicopter approaching, and the sound got louder and louder.

And as we waited, the sound got even louder and louder, and yes, a helicopter was really heading down the banks of the Busoo towards where we were located.

But this did not stop Wayakwa from calling the helicopter. We could hear Wayakwa saying, "We are located some 3 miles downstream from Wagangluhu village, and some 5 miles from the sea, do you read me, over?"

Surely there was a civilian helicopter flying low towards where we were.

And as we watched anxiously for what could happen next, we could see some white men inside the helicopter, and the helicopter was attempting to land on the riverbed.

And when the helicopter finally landed on the riverbed, some 30 metres away from where we were, somebody shouted, "The white men are going to steal us and take us to Australia".

Escape and evade

At that instant every trooper fled in every direction into the thick jungle behind the river bank. Although barefoot, we did not care about rattan spikes or any other mishaps that may be in our way. We had to flee as fast as we could and as far away as we could from the river bank.

In the next few minutes, it was a case of every man for himself. It was abandoned ship, and the platoon commander or his subordinates for themselves and the troopers for themselves.

It was chaos and nobody could tell where the other one was going as we disappeared into the thick jungle.

The radioman was left behind as the troopers and their commanders fled into the jungle. And the last thing I could remember about the radioman was that he was still on the radio calling for help when the civilian helicopter landed on the river bank.

But I was not sure if the radioman had also fled into the jungle just like the rest

of us after the helicopter landed on the riverbed.

For the next few moments everyone went his own way, and all one could see was the path in front of him as each kid made his way through the jungle without knowing what his final destination was.

And as kids, this was a terrifying experience, especially when there was a helicopter with white men inside that had just landed on the river bank behind us. The thought of these white men catching up with us and taking us to Australia drove our adrenaline levels so high, running through the thick jungle was just like running a 100m race on a grassy athletic field.

Then after some time there was a call in the jungle. Somebody was calling for all troopers to come together.

Maybe one of our commanders was calling for all troopers to gather in one place for head count. I was not sure, but I reluctantly made my way to where the call was coming from.

As I made my way through the jungle, I came upon some of the troopers and we slowly headed to where the call was coming from.

“Come all troopers, we all need to gather to make a head count. Please come quickly, this is an emergency call”.

We came upon a new garden and there was Uyah, one of the two subordinates to the platoon commander. He was with some of the troopers, and was making head count as I and the other troopers arrived on the scene. Geding, the other subordinate to the platoon commander was not present.

As the troopers arrived one by one or in groups on the scene, we would burst out in laughter over the incident we just encountered along the banks of Busoo River.

As each group sat around in circles in the garden and chatted about what happened, there was laughter everywhere. Some people could not hold back tears as each story unfolded, and people were literally lying on the ground and holding onto their stomachs as they laughed off what they just heard.

As we waited and laughed off our heads on the stories that were told by each trooper, Geding and the platoon commander, Namun, arrived on the scene. There was laughter all around as these two senior officers arrived on the scene.

After they told of their stories and everybody had laughed off their heads, the platoon commander wanted another head count to ensure no soldier had gone missing in action.

“Do a thorough head count for us to see if anybody is missing in action”, Namun exclaimed. “Uyah, Geding, my two subordinates, please get all troopers in line and do a head count”.

After a thorough head count the two subordinates to the platoon commander informed the troopers and the platoon commander that everybody was present except our radioman. Wayakwa, our radioman was missing, and nobody knew about his whereabouts.

“He was still on the radio as we all fled into the jungle when the helicopter landed on the riverbed”, somebody asserted. “Yes, that’s true, Wayakwa was still on the radio calling Igam Army Barracks when we all fled into the jungle”, somebody else interjected.

Then somebody solemnly threw in the notion that maybe the helicopter and the white men inside had taken hold of our radioman and had taken him away. Poor guy, maybe he is now on his way to Australia with the white men in the helicopter. We may never see our radioman again, and what will we say to his old mother when we arrive back in the village that day.

There was silence, and everybody was anxious as to what happened to our radioman. The absence of our radioman was a big concern to the commanders and the troopers as our little minds endeavoured to fathom the events that led to our escape into the jungle and the disappearance of our radioman.

However, somebody suggested that we should call out again to attract our radioman’s attention. Maybe he is still in the jungle, but he is scared and does not want to come out.

“Yes, let us all call out for the radioman”, our platoon commander interjected. “Maybe he has gone too far and could not hear us or he has met some people from the village and has accompanied them back to the village”.

Then everybody started calling out for our radioman. “Wayakwa, come back, we are here in the garden. The helicopter is gone, and there is nothing to fear. Please come out, we have to go home now. Please come quickly, we are waiting for you”.

The callings went on for a while, but there was no return call from Wayakwa. We could hear the birds singing in the trees, but we could not hear any human beings returning our calls.

Maybe Wayakwa has gone home or maybe he is on his way to Australia right now. If he is on his way to Australia with the white men in the helicopter, he would never return to our village. He may become like the white men and speak English like them and live like them. He may have a better life in Australia and forget all about Busoo River and our little village.

Then all of a sudden, we could hear somebody coming through the bushes. It was as if a bulldozer was pushing its way through the jungle. We could hear somebody breathing heavily, and the bushes gave way as this person came running through the jungle.

“It’s Wayakwa, our radioman. He is here at last”, somebody shouted.

It was Wayakwa alright. He had heard our calls in the jungle and had come to find us.

Recover and regroup

As Wayakwa came onto the scene, we all were relieved that he had finally found us. We were all happy that he had not been taken away to Australia by the white men, and surely, we would not be in trouble with his old mother or the village people when we returned to the village that day.

It was a joyous moment for the troopers and our commanders. We were all present, and no soldier was missing in action.

As Wayaka took his seat in the garden, every trooper went up to him and hugged him. It was as if Wayakwa had come back from a faraway place after being away for many years.

As soon as Wayakwa had taken a good breather and had regained his composure, everybody wanted to know what happened to him after the helicopter landed on the river bed.

At that instant, Wayakwa burst out in laughter as every trooper and commander joined in. The laughter went for a while and then there was silence.

Regaining his composure, Wayakwa began his account of what happened. "I was still on the radio calling Igam Army Barracks when the helicopter landed on the riverbed. My eyes were fixed on the helicopter when I was calling Igam Army Barracks, but I was not aware that all of you had fled into the jungle".

"After realising that I was the only one left, I ran away into the jungle with the wireless radio still on my back. I had gone some 30 meters or so, not realizing that the wireless radio was still on my back. But the radio got stuck in between two trees as when I tried to squeeze myself through. And in order to free myself, I just dumped the wireless radio on the forest floor and fled into the jungle".

Even before Wayakawa had completed his story, some of the troopers and commanders were lying on the ground holding onto their stomachs as they laughed off their heads. Some of the troopers literally had tears in their eyes as they laughed their heads off to Wayakawa's story.

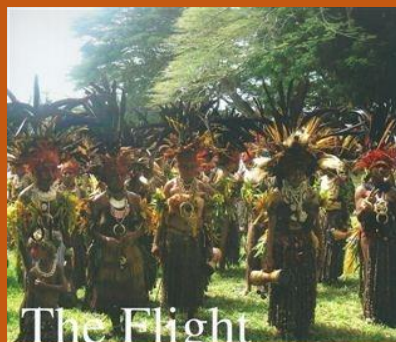
After all the laughter, Wayakwa completed his story. It was a long story, and every time it hit a funny part, there was laughter everywhere.

Wayakwa's story was the climax of the army patrol that went wrong that very day.

Wayakwa was commended by the commanders and troopers for being a good radioman. In fact, his call to Igam Army Barracks had really brought a real-life helicopter to land on the riverbed as anticipated by the platoon.

This was a children's military game that we played out in the jungles beside the Busoo River many years ago. But it was a reality when our radioman's call for a helicopter from Igam Army Barracks in Lae City actually landed a real-life helicopter right beside us as we had anticipated.

It was a day like no other and an army patrol like no other. It was an experience we would cherish for the rest of our lives. And as for me, I have cherished it for most of my life.



The Flight of Galkope Papua New Guinea

KELA KAPKORA SIL BOLKIN

By Kela Kapkora Sil Bolkin

Synopsis: The tribes and clans of the Galkope have occupied the steep mountain slopes and valleys of the southern part of the Simbu Province in Papua New Guinea for countless generations. This has not always been the case however. A son of the Galkope, Kela Kapkora Sil Bolkin, spent several years trekking through his traditional homeland talking to people about their origins. The primary foci of his enquiries were the traditional men's houses, where the elders and sages of the Galkope recounted, interpreted and handed down their stories from the past. Through these old men it has been possible to delve back several hundred years into the mists of time and memory to the very moments of the inception of the Galkope as a distinct people and nation. From that time, when Luis Vaez Torres was first touching the southern shores of Papua New Guinea and when mythical beings and legendary warriors touched shoulders in the high mountainous interior the story is brought slowly and carefully forward to the near present when the Galkope began their flight to the four corners of Papua New Guinea in a great diaspora. The journey includes the exploits of the legendary explorer and founder, Alai Bia, and his quest for new lands, the story of Warmil and his spirit-wife and Sipa, the munificent half-man, half-raptor, through to the arrival of the first Christian missionaries and the eventual disintegration of the Galkope under the incessant plague of inter-tribal warfare and the bane of the new politics and economic imperatives of an independent Papua New Guinea. Today over half of the Galkope live outside the Simbu. The importance of the men's houses and their sages has diminished to almost nothing. The magnificent valleys and mountains now sit in the aura of a silent sun and the rivers and streams flow over the pebbles of a lost time. Soon there will be no memories at all. The Flight of Galkope is a last-ditch attempt to salvage those memories and render them in a form for the modern age so that those Galkope, no matter where they now live, will be able to understand where they come from and what made them. It is a well-worn cliché that to understand the present one must understand the past. For the Galkope this may now be possible through Kela Kapkora Sil Bolkin's meticulously researched and distinctly Papua New Guinean historical account. It is, perhaps, something that other people in Papua New Guinea might consider and reflect upon for their future too.

Extracted from <https://crawford.anu.edu.au/news-events/events/3160/book-launch-flight-galkope>

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Parking your wife or 'marit antap long marit'

KELA KAPKORA SIL BOLKIN

WHILE Papua New Guinea has a couple of matrilineal societies, the majority of our many cultures are patrilineal, meaning the heirs to the land are male.

If a woman gives birth to sons, she is respected by her husband's family, although this does not mean she is always safe.

There are chances of her being pushed out of public life by an incoming young wife.

However, essentially a son is a mother's social safety net when everything else falls apart because the son is entitled to land.

That said, many first wives get parked on the side as by incoming younger wives.

PNG society has coined a phrase for this: 'marit antap long marat' ['jumping on to an existing marriage'].

In the 16th century, King Henry the Eighth of England desperately sought a son but one never came.

Of his many marriages, two ended in annulment, two in natural deaths and two of his wives were beheaded for claimed adultery and treason.

These innocent wives were victims, to an extent, of an important man's desire for a son to be his heir, the next King of England.

My tribesmen are Henry-like and desire sons to carry their name forward.

If that doesn't eventuate, they marry again, although thankfully the divorced wives are not murdered.

But there are some men who treat their wives very badly.

They will divorce or demote the first wife from public life and marry again and hand the new wife the family assets.

In addition, she becomes the so-called 'battery of the car', if the husband owns one. When the car is on the road, the new wife sits in front, alongside her husband at the steering wheel.

In the present-day, getting divorced or eloping with a married man who promises wealth is a daily occurrence helped along by pimps and mobile phones.

I am reminded of a family feud in my tribal land in which two girls from the same family jumped into the same bed with a particular polygamist.

Some 20 years ago, Wemin was an ordinary man who married a Yuri woman and the couple toiled the soil until they had earned enough money to buy a trucking business.

Wemin ferried our Galkope people to and from Kundiawa town.

As the business grew, Wemin ventured into trade stores and the purchase of coffee beans.

Talk abounded in the village that Wemin was so rich the BSP Bank in Kundiawa kept his money in the vault.

As this cooked up story spread, girls melted like butter in the sun when they saw him.

Yes, with success came women, and Wemin married six girls at about two-year intervals.

He parked his first wife on the side to mother their kids and thereafter she lived a life of celibacy.

Each of the six girls Wemin married over the years conceived and had one or two children with him.

When he was done with each, he parked them and some would tire of this and elope and remarry, sometimes leaving their children behind.

In 2016, Wemin poached a Josephine from Grade 6 and married her. She was aged about 15.

Her parents, although being well aware of Wemin's character, wanted their daughter to marry him, his wealth being a great attraction.

They seemed not to care about the imminent risk Josephine faced against the mob of parked wives whose jealousy towards the interloper would be unbridled.

Wemin speedily built a store for Josephine's parents and had it packed with cargo for them to operate it on their tribal land. They were over the moon and overwhelmed by their good luck.

Josephine soon bore Wemin a child with and things looked rosy in that first year. Before long a second child was born but, as Josephine was nursing it, Wemin, being Wemin, started again looking around for girls.

Pimps swiftly netted Wemin a beautiful girl and they were paid with cartons of SP beer.

Trouble was that the new girl, Apai, was Josephine's blood cousin - Josephine's maternal uncle's daughter.

Anyway, Apai became the battery of the car and Josephine was parked at home.

But Josephine was having none of this and, on two occasions, injured Wemin with a knife.

Moreover, Apai had to be heavily guarded by Wemin's henchmen.

After a long struggle, Josephine gave up, took her daughters and returned to her parents.

Her father had, on two previous occasions, armed himself with a gun and chased Wemin, who had escaped in his car.

When Apai had Wemin's child, he committed to pay – after the next coffee season - K10,000, 30 pigs and some whitemen's goods as bride price.

Of course, Apai's family celebrated at hearing this.

Meanwhile, Josephine, her family, and Wemin's previous wives and children were squatting in the dirt listening to this talk of the imminent bride price.

Apai conceived again and was expecting a second child. With gratitude, Wemin established a trade store in Apai's tribal land with her parents as store keepers.

Just recently, word reached me that Apai was experiencing acute abdominal pain.

Her family, practicing Catholics, cooked up the idea that some sanguma [evil spirits] were jealous and had twisted the infant's legs, hands and head in Apai's womb in order to kill both mother and child.

One of them related this tale as if he had actually witnessed it.

Wemin and Apai's father hired a witch doctor who claimed to have seven spirits under his armpit to come to the village.

The plan was to summon the village folk to converge, sit in a group and allow the witch doctor to scan them and single out those village folk complicit in twisting the infant's limbs.

In fact, the witch doctor's plan was to look around the mob and select the feeble and the pathetic as the culprits, collect his money and head quickly for home.

If he had picked out the younger, stronger ones they would immediately have attacked him with great violence.

I got a call from home that this was happening and rang the village leaders, all of whom I know well, to stop this insanity.

I said the witch doctor had no extra-terrestrial powers under his armpit but was trying to cook up some tricks to satisfy their misery and make some money.

Speaking very sternly, I stated that if sanguma did exist, then they were all sanguma because they had defied the blessedness of family and the sacraments of the Catholic church in giving away Apai to a lustful man who already married Josephine, also a daughter of the clan.

I concluded saying that Apai must now go to Kundiawa General hospital for a diagnosis by a real doctor.

So, on Wednesday, the village folk rang me to say they had not brought the witch doctor to the village but instead had a community conversation.

The nub of the discussion was that they wanted to discourage jealousy and sanguma.

The leaders implored the sanguma to feed on excreta and spare Apai or any other person they planned to kill. Then they fetched water and bananas for Apai to drink, eat and be cleansed.

Yesterday, Apai was to go to Kundiawa hospital for a checkup. I have not yet heard the outcome.

All that said, Wemin is a completely insane man. A number of women he married bore him sons but he continued to park them and marry new ones.

Essentially, he did not care if the women bore him mighty sons or beautiful daughters. He just liked getting new batteries for the car.

He had also created a division with Josephine and Apai's family, who had been hostile since their first skirmish. And all the other wives he had parked, and their children, were anguishing back at home with angry parents and clan members.

Papua New Guinea really needs to implement a national strategy to prevent gender-based violence which includes building a social safety net for divorced and parked mothers, especially as the overwhelming majority do not own land.

At present, these women rely on their parents as social safety nets but, when the parents die, the women and children fall into horrific poverty.

Girls who intentionally elope with a woman's husband should be penalised for undermining the first wife's livelihood. And parents who allow underage girls to get married must be fined or imprisoned.

In addition, all men who serially marry women must feel the full weight of the law. Their abhorrent behaviour is a threat to our people and society.

And I need hardly add that the whole practice of which doctoring and its evil practices must be erased by those authorities we elect and appoint to govern our country

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Tok Pisin, Tok Motu na Tok Ples

"I share the view of Chinua Achebe that whatever language I use must bear the burden of my experience. English provides the structure of literary experience by which I am able to create a tapestry of my experience."

Professor Steven Winduo
Transitions and Transformations (2013)

MICHAEL DOM

IF "TOK PISIN IS THE LANGUAGE EXPRESSION of our lifestyle and our intermingled cultures" ^[1] then what does this language say about us as a people?

As first language English speaking Papua Niuginians my siblings and I were introduced to Tok Pisin during our late primary and secondary school years. Our parents had placed little importance on instructing us in our Sinesine tokples by conscious decision of my father during the 1970's era when he was at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). In hindsight it was probably not his best idea and possibly hypocritical since dad was also schooled to read in Hebrew while at Martin Luther Seminary.

Nevertheless, our father made the equally emphatic order that we learn English to the best standard possible and the command, which was executed mainly by mother even though she had voiced her disapproval, was not entirely detrimental to us but rather afforded us some advantage in the education system and later on in our work and everyday lives. So I too am possibly hypocritical in championing others to use local languages.

Reconnecting with our own country folk by adopting Tok Pisin was a journey we consciously took over many years. The best aspect of this experience was to make us sensitive to other people's language use, style and the nuances of expression, since we were learning by imitation from many different people and not being formally schooled in Tok Pisin.

One outcome was that we were exposed to other PNG cultures during our

interactions and learned about them mostly through the kindness of our friends in entertaining our otherwise poor language skills while they advantaged themselves by exposure to our use of good English. It's not certain if either side of that bargain achieved any great mastery.

This summary does not encompass all the ways we learned Tok Pisin in exchange for practicing English but it will have to do for this purpose. Unfortunately, only one of my siblings gained passable skills to converse in Hiri Motu and we all share a sketchy and half-almost-knowing sense of our parent's native tokples Sinesine.

It is mostly from this background that I myself have come to have an appreciation for other people's use of their own tokples. Truthfully, I may have no idea what they're saying but it sure sounds nice to hear a Papua Niuginian language being vocalized. I have not felt challenged by being surrounded by people speaking languages other than English or Tok Pisin and in PNG that would be absurd.

However, today the bilingual use of English and Tok Pisin (trilingual if Motu is included) and a general ignorance of our parents Tok Ples is not unique for modern day Papua Niuginians living in urban areas. This is becoming part of the norm in PNG for a variety of reasons.

Although I am not knowledgeable on the statistics of current language use, in the past it might have been true to say that almost every Papua Niuginian was a polyglot, while in more recent times there are less and less multilingual and more and more tri-, bi- and mono-lingual Papua Niuginians.

This is a sad scenario for reasons which are more deeply a part of our cultural intelligence than merely an aesthetic: we've allowed absurdity to enter our paradise lounge of languages by which we interpret the world.

Tok Pisin emi kamap strong tru

A key cause commonly cited as contributing to the demise of many of our 820 plus Tok Ples is that Tok Pisin has replaced their use in everyday life and is increasingly valued by the majority of Papua Niuginians.

Urban drift under prevailing economic development paradigms is partly to blame for the demise of our Tok Ples usage. Indeed, languages fade out as the number of speakers dwindle.

Tok ples were a primary communication tool before other languages arrived and much like tools, they need to be regularly utilized in order for them to be well preserved.

Even the strictly Motuan speakers of bygone days have adapted to the use of Tok Pisin whereas it was, as I understand, sneered at as being an 'uncouth' form of speech in some circles. Hiri Motu on the other hand has a wonderfully natural lyricism about it however its practice may be on the decline.

There is also preference for Tok Pisin over English, which is a phenomenon fought tooth and nail by teachers across the country. Indeed, I recall many skirmishes between teachers and pupils whenever Tok Pisin was launched around the classroom and playground or had infiltrated an exercise book in broken English form. (Their foot

soldiers fell on our *bagu's* and bumbums!)

In more recent times proponents of Tok Ples and Tok Pisin had championed integration of dual language teaching at the kindergarten to elementary level. There were mixed results apparently.^[ii]

Interestingly one ex-kiap (Patrol Officer) of renowned practicality noted how “Tok Pisin is an extremely good language to relax in and will encourage innuendoes and nuances that either can’t or shouldn’t be effectively translated into English”.^[iii]

This is a valuable insight from a post-colonial era Australian government officer who would have worked very closely with Papua Niuginians in mainly rural outstations where it is likely that both the white-man and the black-man were learning and adapting Tok Pisin on the fly.

Another of those post-colonial icons with a more literary bent agreed with his conservative colleague saying that “I especially like poetry written in Tok Pisin. It has a very distinct flavour all its own that you can’t reproduce in an English translation”.^[iv]

Tok Pisin was heralded early on by Elton Brash, a linguist at the UPNG in 1971 (also a good friend and colleague of my father) who suggested that “Three features of the language promise well for its future life and development: its syncretic capacity and its resultant incremental growth; the imaginative life it embodies and the new forms of figurative expression it is rapidly evolving; the successful use of Pidgin by New Guineans as a creative medium. It is worth noting that Pidgin has always existed in a multilingual context. It has always been a second language and often a third or fourth.”^[v]

Academics overseas had also commented on the merging of our primary trade and official languages as part of the process of national economic and social development, and as addressed through arts and literature; “Papua New Guinea's writers needed to create an “acceptable Niuginian English, a national type of English,” just as the Americans and Australians had.”^[vi]

“This was necessary because of the sheer diversity of languages in PNG. Ultimately both the oral tradition as well as the newer contemporary literature needed to come together to create what Enos felt was “national unity through literature”.”^[vii]

Conversely, national academics, educators and other elite commentators have had different opinions about the utility of Tok Pisin, and by extension Tok Ples, in literary works^[viii]. It may be that English and Tok Pisin, sharing similar development and utilitarian origin, are more flexible to the exigencies of creative writing.

More pertinently from a linguistic angle our Tok Ples do not have written scripts and are reliant on oral continuity within existing native speaking populations, whereas Hiri Motu and Tok Pisin were developed and adapted by English language script now used and abused by a growing generation of young Papua Niuginians.

These may be other underlying factors considered by UPNG Prof. Steven Winduo when he wrote that “I share the view of Chinua Achebe that whatever language I use must bear the burden of my experience. English provides the structure of literary experience by which I am able to create a tapestry of my experience.”^[ix] This articulation captures my experience as a poet.^[x]

But the ‘PNG literary language’ negotiation is considered far from over by more than one of our ex-kiaps, those masters of practicality whom in their time had managed to get their jobs done under trying conditions, usually with minimal fuss all while communicating between tribes who were speaking those 820 plus Tok Ples.^[xi]

In any case, it seems that the deck was stacked against our Tok Ples from the very start and through post-colonial history for educational, economical, practical and literary purposes.

Tok Ples bai istap iet o nogat

Perhaps in the case of what to do about preserving our Tok Ples we should look towards New Zealand, Asia and Europe instead of Australia and America.

Indeed, the latter two nations, multicultural though they may be today, could be said to have had no originating language of their own. This is not to negate the very many languages of the first (prehistoric migrant) people to inhabit the two continental countries. Rather it seems to me that our attitude to linguistic diversity and its preservation is less relatable to Australia and America since they were essentially created by English speaking people.

In Aotearoa New Zealand teaching of Maori culture and language is mainstreamed into educational institutions. “By learning *te reo* and becoming increasingly familiar with *tikanga*, Māori students strengthen their identities while non-Māori journey towards shared cultural understandings”.^[xii] Albeit a dual language teaching system may have its own challenges and one primary dispute for PNG provinces may be which language and culture is promoted for training in school.

I contend firstly that it may not necessarily be the entire teaching curriculum which needs to be converted into another Tok Ples. Moreover, it is logistically impossible for us to choose which of PNG’s 800+ cultures we’d like to teach in school.

In the example of New Zealand there are still problems with poor Moari student outcomes and views differ on the value of immersing students within a culture-based rather than disciplinary-based curriculum.^[xiii]

Nevertheless, learning and utilizing a local language may be offered as a course within the school curriculum.

Secondly, it appears to me that we have already chosen two of our own national languages as alternatives, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu, and that there is no need to forcibly favour one particular Tok Ples over another when other factors such as available tutors, appropriate programs and advantageous practical exposure will in the end determine which of these may in fact be achieved in any local context.

In short, the most common and dominant, and the most organized and resourced local Tok Ples may be promoted for learning without

purposefully extinguishing others. That seems like the more practical approach.

For example, Kuman in Simbu appears to be dominating, Melpa in Western Highlands and Kuanua in the Islands region, whereas Enga has less of a problem choosing because they all speak 'English'.

Realistically the loss of some languages is probably unavoidable but the price of inaction on our part will be a rate of loss which is uncontrollably swift and sure.

While others may argue over the minutiae of the matter^[xii], the undoubtedly difficult processes of integration and foreseeable progress pains, I would suggest that as for any worthy project goal we set out to achieve we 'begin with the end in mind'.

What does the endpoint look like?

Well, consider that the New Zealand national anthem, God Defend New Zealand, is also sung in Maori and was translated in 1878.^[xiii] Their National Maori Language Week has been celebrated since 1975.^[xiv] I'll leave those two facts right there.

Also, while it is indisputable that there are still cultural challenges in their society, today non-Maori Kiwi's have for the better part engaged with, if not entirely embraced, their countries Pacific Island heritage at a national level. "Respect, optimally, comes naturally, but New Zealand shows that it can also be taught".^[xv]

These days the general thinking seems to be that social and cultural diversity is a situation which needs to be enforced upon people. But in my opinion social and cultural diversity is the natural state of humanity and the trends of modern-day conformity are the odd progeny of economic globalization and institutionalized intellectuals. The language of trade took over and its teachers regulated it right through their own heads and into ours.

We need to facilitate for cultural diversity to continue to flourish in the PNG garden and that means allowing for a riotous mess rather than keeping the pedicured lawns and manicured hedges of an English country garden.

Across in Asia their vast national populations and predominantly cultural-based lifestyles provide a pool for indigenous languages to be maintained. Many of these nations in fact have descended from ancient civilizations which rose and fell over millennia before the arrival of European explorers and conquerors, delinquents and desecrators.

Moreover, much of the history and culture of our Asian neighbours has been recorded in their own language script, some of which is still in use today.

While PNG linguists may debate the utility or profitability of devising scripts for our Tok Ples – think JRR Tolkien I say – I have heard it challenged elsewhere that 'if the Japanese and Indonesians can have signs on their streets written in their Tok Ples why can't we use Tok Pisin?'

That does not seem too implausible a suggestion and if only we would not keep removing street signage there might be more means to visualize that endpoint.

By comparison, PNG is the largest Pacific Island nation and with a population predicted to reach 15 million souls by 2050 it may be suggested that we will have good enough numbers to spread between our 820 languages but even, say, 18,000 tonsils a tongue is an overestimate for some *mama tang*.

In multicultural Europe, now infected by a diversity-at-all-costs ideology, their unique cultures which eventually blended into the most successful civilization in human history (aka Western society) now appears to be raging against the dying of the light.

I say we rage on too, to let diversity be its own light – magically unique not misguidedly ubiquitous.

Linguistic diversity is refracted light from the multifaceted prism of existence. We not only have different ways of witnessing our world, we have different ways of expressing our meaning in it.

The questions still posed are what's good about that situation and how do we get there.

Multilingualism is always admirable and in fact people with such language abilities were the key to historical exploration ventures and eventually played a key role in the development and use of creole languages.

Similar to PNG it is not uncommon for Europeans to be conversant in several languages.

Nederland actor Viggo Mortensen, also known as Strider/Aragorn in JRR Tolkien's Middle Earth, speaks no less than seven languages, having lived and studied across Europe and in America, and mastered the Elvish speech (Quenya) invented by Tolkien.

My mother is conversant in at least five of our PNG Tok Ples and she had decided not to go on to high school in the 1960's, leaving Simbu to work in Goroka, saving money to attend a women's training school in Baitabag Madang, then later on working for the Lutheran Mission in Gagidu Finschafen.

The life and language learning story of Viggo and my mother, absorbing languages wherever they lived for long periods of time, was more common in the past than we may think but may certainly be declining today.

We are educating the native languages out of our societies and along with them entire visualizations and expressions of the human experience. We're in danger of getting dumber the duller our conversations become when everyone thinks in the same way.

It's likely that education does less to influence linguistic capacity than we may think and linguistic capacity may be better related with intelligence than schooling. It's suggested that "language has a significant influence on memory, behavior, and general thought processes".^[xvi]

A solution then is to enable youth to learn Tok Ples within varied and dynamic modes rather than enforce their training within regimented and examined school curriculum.

Wanem tingting emi gutpela

Tok Pisin has become a powerful language in all our toolkits so we should also look towards supporting Hiri Motu

use, if not for variety, beauty and creativity then at least for ownership of a wonderfully wicked tongue.

Tok Ples support may be provided by designing innovative school programs for the creative arts and literature, presentation of stories, drama, poetry, dance and even debate.

Leaving the technical discussion to those more qualified I will suggest that in order to preserve our Tok Ples we must think more affirmatively of the valuable endpoint we want to achieve and the strengths and responsibility we have towards reaching this goal.

We are the most linguistically diverse nation on Earth and we still have time to preserve that unique and valuable aspect of our nationhood. This is a difference of quality worth maintaining.

Utilization of language is key and can be achieved by broader strategies, such as ensuring rural development so that local communities (native speakers) are better able to maintain their way of life, as well as more specific programs directed at schools and communities, through creative activities where local languages and culture can be promoted – *em olsem ples singsing bilong taim bipo*.

If we want generational continuity then we must look to providing the opportunity for our school children to be nurtured in those languages, with the added value of learning different cultures and customs.

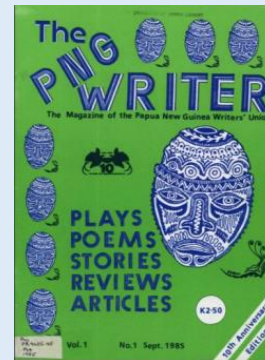
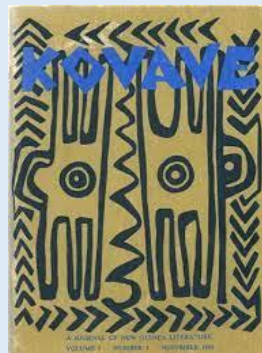
Youth need to interact dynamically with languages in order to discover the utility and intrinsic value of using language to open the doorway to their own imaginations and abilities.

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- vii. Ben Jackson in a PNG Attitude article Ben's PNG Diary – Day 2: The poetry of Tok Pisin (April 2013) (Poetry Slam at the Port Moresby Arts Theatre) "Dr Winduo saw weakness in Tok Pisin for written work because expression is shared equally by-word choice and the demeanour of the person speaking those words and, as such, meaning is lost without the author's presence. However, for live recitals, such as the Poetry Slam, Dr Winduo was a tremendous advocate for Tok Pisin and it was easy to appreciate this view when I heard the entrants recite their pieces."
- viii. Professor Steven Winduo University of Papua New Guinea Transitions and Transformations: Literature, Politics

- ix. and Culture in Papua New Guinea (2013) ibid. "This suggests to me that although our cultural expressions are relevant, the framework in the language for communicating needs to be structurally sound. In other words, there must be known borders, a landscape and space in which to craft a poem in a form which displays its artistry; art which explores beyond known territory by using our own poetics."p153
- x. Philip Fitzpatrick comment on PNG Attitude article Toksingsing: danis bilong yumi iet (July 2020) "Papua New Guinean writers need to talk to each other and determine what their literature means and how best to interpret and present it. There is still a lot to be discovered before a definitive national literature evolves. Regional differences, for instance, may be significant."
- xi. <https://www.newamerica.org/weekly/new-zealand-model-cultural-education-were-not/>
- xii. Megan Lourie & Elizabeth Rata (2012): A critique of the role of culture in Maori education, British Journal of Sociology of Education, DOI:10.1080/01425692.2012.736184
- xiii. <https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/blog/the-language-of-instruction-controversy-in-papua-new-guinea> <https://www.onepng.com/2013/08/the-education-reform-system-in-papua.html> <https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/blog/the-language-of-instruction-controversy-in-papua-new-guinea>
- xiv. <https://www.maorilanguage.net/waiata/e-ihowa-atua-nz-national-anthem/>
- xv. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/whangarei-parade-to-kick-off-te-wiki-o-te-reo-maori/MDN72DSZZKBFAKW7A6ZWRRWAFI/>
- xvi. <https://towardsdatascience.com/the-importance-of-language-in-human-cognition-and-artificial-general-intelligence-6d33af481684>

Interested readers may find downloadable PDF copies of historical documents, magazines and journals of PNG's literature online in the Virtual Library of Canada's Athabasca University



Of Building Blocks, Library Shelves, and a Country's Soul

MAEBH LONG, PHD (UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO)

In the winning essay of the Tingting Bilong Mi 2020 essay competition, Illeana Dom brings her readers into her old school library. As she walks us past the library shelves, she points out absence: the lack of new works by PNG authors in the non-fiction section, and in the fiction section, the difficulty in finding any works by PNG authors at all, such is the dominance of international writers. This is not, Illeana insists, what the library in a Papua New Guinean school could look like. There are novels, essays and poetry collections by PNG authors that could adorn the selves. With governmental support her old school library could be a PNG school library, one that highlights the achievements of local writers and presents the rich variety of Papua New Guinea's cultures in engaging, inspiring works. The more local books that are read, the more local books are likely to be written, and instead of endlessly scrolling on social media or forlornly tramping through uninspiring library shelves, Papua New Guineans could be accessing a body of literature that engenders pride in national accomplishments.

But as libraries currently stand, their emptiness is such that the competition's second prize winner, Mathisah Turi, finds herself silent when she tries to name a Papua New Guinean author. To counter this silence, she writes with passion about the power of imagination and the need to stimulate it, and her piece calls for governmental support for stories featuring the languages and

peoples of her home nation. For her, these books would not rest on library shelves, but become building blocks enabling the country to enrich the nation in its own ways and on its own terms. These blocks would become props to local languages, seawalls preventing steady erosion from waves of English. And they could fill the hands of a generation too used to grabbing blockish smartphones.

For Isabelle Vilau, whose essay won third prize, Illeana's libraries and Mathisah's building blocks are transfigured into the core of the nation. By telling the stories of a thousand generations in nearly as many languages, local literature can unite the different communities and cultures across Papua New Guinea. Local literature is not simply the heart or the brain of a country: for Isabelle, it is a country's soul. It is a nation's interior monologue, its critic, its conscience. Without it, the nation is simply a body, moving and resting and changing, but without a deep sense of self. Without it, the different parts of the national body will never feel as one.

Vilousa Hahembe, who wrote the most popular essay on the blog, reminds us that local stories and poems – the building blocks for libraries that will form a nation's soul – not only motivate and unite, but serve the important function of opening readers' eyes to the specific social issues of Papua New Guinea. By engaging with local challenges and community worries, readers will

learn to think critically about social problems and recognise the work that needs to be done. A literature written by PNG authors for PNG readers will celebrate and preserve, but it will also confront, head-on and with in-depth knowledge, the challenges ahead, so the public can strive to change the country for the better.

These four writers, brilliant female essayists all, express themselves with insight and urgency. Their metaphors enliven their essays and their references to other writers and thinkers weave their arguments into important national conversations. Together they dismiss anxieties about the local pool of talent: these four young women show that with the right support, a substantial body of contemporary PNG literature can be made accessible to a new generation of readers.

There are, of course, Papua New Guinean books that could already be placed on library shelves. Not only books from writers producing material and in need of support today, but books from earlier bursts of literary activity. These books, which should be centre stage in libraries, and their authors, whose names should come easily to the tongues of Papua New Guinean readers, could provide a firm foundation for shelves and blocks and souls.

There is a range of wonderful material from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, with literary journals, the

Papua Pocket Poets series, poetry collections and novels published by UPNG students and graduates. The University of Papua New Guinea was not the only institution that sought to facilitate decolonisation and national identity through writing, art and drama, however. From 1968 Glyn Davis, at Goroka Teachers College (GTC), edited four typescript volumes of a series he called New New Guinea Writing. The Summer Institute of Linguistics had been printing collections of oral literature since the late 1960s. From 1969 the Kristen Pres published hundreds of small, inexpensive volumes which were a mixture of Christian reading material and folklore, and for three years ran literary contests. Glen Bays ran creative writing workshops at the Creative Training Centre from 1970, and he published the work produced there in booklets and in the *Nobonob Nius*. He also founded the Christian Writers Association of Melanesia (CWAMEL), which from 1972 had its own magazine, *Precept*. In 1968 the Administration founded a Papua New Guinean Literature Bureau. The Bureau established Papua New Guinea Writing in 1970 and took over the national literature competitions Roger Boschman had started in 1968. These popular literature competitions were joined by the Waigani Writing Competition in 1969, the Kristen Pres competitions from 1970 to 1973, literary sections in the Port Moresby *Eistedfodd* in 1970, and, less competitively, a Writers' Day from 1972.

I do not note this array of material to emphasise loss or lament the disregard of works that should populate library shelves. Rather, I

give this space to one period in PNG's literary history to stress that the writers of the Tingting Bilong Mi essay competition are part of a vibrant tradition that over long generations has been expressed orally and in writing, that has taken form in hundreds of local languages, that has waxed and waned and changed, but with support can fill library shelves with works new and old. There are so many blocks ready to be used.

The re-flourishing of contemporary writing, a regrowth that needs to occur every generation, could take many forms and spring from unexpected sources. Perhaps, given that the essay writers expressed concern about phones and online writing styles, this blossoming could draw productively on the language of social media. Casual, vernacular language use can be clever and witty and fresh and can enable readers to see the potential in everyday speech. To take an example from the 1960s and '70s once more, before the University of Papua New Guinea was founded, a Commission on Higher Education in Papua and New Guinea was established to consider what form a Papua New Guinean university should take. Among the recommendations in the Commission's report were thoughts on the lingua franca of the university. The Report suggested English rather than Tok Pisin, arguing that while Tok Pisin could be 'ingenious and at times delightful', it could not articulate 'even quite simple abstract concepts with elegance, precision and economy. Efforts to demonstrate its range, say by translating Shakespearean speeches, fall into the category of literary curiosities –

entertaining certainly, but as certainly trivial'. Yet, when university students in the 1970s began publishing in the literary journal *Kovave*, as well as Papua New Guinea Writing, they readily disproved this. Rabbie Namaliu, for example, had two plays in Tok Pisin performed to much acclaim, and these were published in *Kovave: The Good Woman of Konedobu* (1970) and *Maski Kaunsil* (1968, pub. *Kovave* 1975). Similarly, John Kasaipwalova's 'The Magistrate and my Grandfather's Testicles' (1972) presents excellent, humorous use of slang and non-standard English, as does his award-winning short story, 'Betel Nut is Bad Magic for Aeroplanes' (1971). I am not claiming that the language of social media is the same as Tok Pisin, of course, but I suggest that language hierarchies which present certain modes of communication as fundamentally more literary than others can prevent us from seeing their potential. The writers of the Report were wrong when they said that Tok Pisin could only produce trivial curiosities. Let us see what the inventive use of other languages and other modes of speech in Papua New Guinea can do today.

There are so many wonderful works from Papua New Guinea that could fill the country's library shelves, act as building blocks for communities, and form part of the nation's soul. Given the talent on display in these essays, there are so many more works that are ready to come. As these young women remind us, and we hope the right people are listening, they just need the right support.



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The Red Cigar Seller

Boy in all red
And a red in his hands
Coins clatter in one pocket
Notes slumber in the other.
“One kina red! One kina red!
He chants as a song
Up and down the sidewalk.
His feet stationed with alert
His body cautious
To the coppers
And the rangers
Those that attack you in surprise.
This red brings danger
Those he had escaped many times
His eyes watch the road
As his mouth continues to chant.
“One-kina red stap!

Caroline Evari



Street vending young boy

Tala*

From the kitchen came an enchanting aroma;
Cooked in the clay pot it thumped me to devour.
No longer could I wait to be served a salver;
Oh how I craved for the *tala* cooked on fire!

The *tala* and chopped taro leaf;
With diced pork liver, heart, and rib.
Blended and boiled on the fire;
The spices were added to produce a spicy flavor.

My lunch to consume under the swaying palm trees;
On my island home 's white sandy beach.
Served on big coconut shell chiefly for me;
Consume me with taro, my delightful lunch favorably.

Tattiana Abola

**Tala* is “pork blood” in the *Tawala* language of Milne Bay province. It is a traditional dish cooked for any form of gathering when a pig is slaughtered. To not waste every part of the pig, its blood must also be cooked.

Freeway – Town!

Yu siksti igo
Yu siksti ikam
Yu biket driver
Yu singaut
“Freeway - Town! Freeway - Town!”
Ol sit i pulap
Ol man i hangamap
Yu biket driver
Yu singaut
“Freeway - Town! Freeway - Town!”
Ol polis pasim rot
Ol polis tok yu stop
Yu biket driver
Yu singaut
“Freeway - Town! Freeway - Town!”
Pasingia tok yu stop
Bas cru tok yu stop
Yu biket driver
Yu singaut
“Freeway - Town! Freeway - Town!”
Nau yu stap lon steisen
Nau yu kamap pasingia
Yu biket driver
Yu singaut
“Freeway - Town! Freeway - Town!”

Caroline Evari

Kiluwe, oh Kiluwe

Mt Giluwe, oh Giluwe
Kiluwe in mother lingua franca,
from whose mighty peaks,
the freezing mists disgorge

And snowflakes that puff out,
and ice, the spray-gunned ice,
Sending away the glacial drops
that slide into the mist

The Kiluwe ground frost,
Home of cold breezes
that wilts unprotected plants,
Then enjoys the icy steppe

The vapour streams and smears,
Turns into ice that blasts the air,
and infiltrates the atmosphere,
turning all into a chilled haze

The fog that then shelters the cold,
Causing nature to be an ice-box,
Chilling all that it comes to meet
as it freezes and fogs its way

Sometimes comes the hailstorm,
Icy tactics from above,
But always the shreds of mist
And the fogs lingering gently

Ah, mighty steaming Kiluwe,
Your peak standing in grandeur
Mastering the winds and ice,
And sovereign over all we see

Samuel Lucas Kafugili



The rocky peaks of Kiluwe, Mt Giluwe in Tambul District
Western Highlands Province

Pona

My eyes refuse to sleep
But when I close my eyes
In my mind's eye I see my mother
I am combing her hair and she is telling me a story
Of a daughter, born not of her womb but from her heart
I feel the tears weighing down my eyelids
But how do I dry them, when it is my heart that weeps?

Imelda Griffin

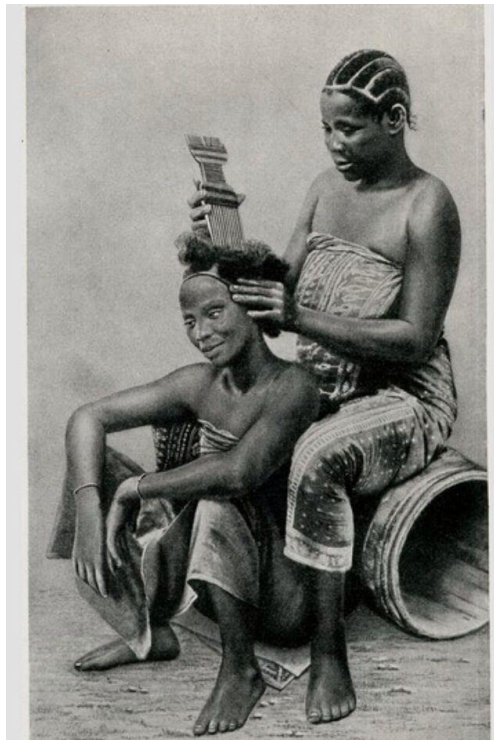


Image downloaded from <https://images.app.goo.gl/9j3RdPUrc7RVMSrC7>

Ohh Sine – Gai Tine

Sine-Gai Tine oh, Prena oh! Your face is like the sunrise when looking up from the bottom of Mt Wilhelm, blinding me for a moment.

Your complexion is as fair as the sands of Madang beach, your hands are as tender as a shepherd's and you have a warrior's calf.

Your eyes and smile mesmerise me, and your laughs, they hypnotise me.

I've seen Madang but you are more beautiful, you are sweeter than Ramu Sugar, more scenic than the view looking down Mt Wilhelm.

Your fragrance and aroma leave me overwhelmed, your melodious voice silences all others and keeps me awake longer than Kongo coffee.

I'm confused when you become as calm as Lake Yahonde, I'm nervous when you move as fast as Wara Simbu.

Convincing you is like climbing Mt Wilhelm, being with you makes me feel I've conquered Mt Wilhelm, losing you is unimaginable.

You are kinder and gentler than the limestone of Chuave but sometimes you're as rough as that road from Tabare to Laswara.

There is no tale of a Miok flying this way, to Tabare, to Laswara then to Bolen.

I did not come after listening to Ambai Ya! I came as the wind blew me towards you, when the forces of nature took their course.

When I saw a thousand lights shining down there at Bolen, still in the air.

I felt like flying away after I saw you wearing that colourful head dress, I thought you wanted my feathers, not as colourful as those you already had

But that was not what you wanted because you took away from me something more. Something I will always come back for.

Oh Sine-Gai Tine of Laswara, I've heard of, seen and known. But you...?'

Edwin Lako

Let words be not silent or sleep alone

Have all good poems been written
That we today have none to share
What then of the heart being smitten
By the beauty of eyes that stare
Or the walk that none can compare

Have all good poems been written
That we today have none to read
What then of the loss that burden
A broken heart held by a thread
Or photo lost to time instead

Have all good poems been written
That we today have none to hear
What then of the sky and mountain
Their beauty and our fear
Or how far yet to us near

Have all good poems been written
That we today have none to write
What then of the difficult mundane
The highs and lows we must bite
Or the hopes that we bear in spite

Let words be not silent and dead
Or sleep alone in our single bed

Raymond Sigimet



“Tonight, the moon carries her umbrella”

She rises late in the afternoon
And tonight, she carries her umbrella
Smoky tendrils trail behind her glittering sarung kobaya
As she strolls across my universe
Far, far away she walks, alone
Where my arms cannot reach to embrace her

Dia beranjak keslangan hori ini
Dan molom ini dia membawa payungnya
Gugusan kabut terpapar di balik kilauan sarung kebojanya
Saat dia berjalan melintasi duniaku
Jauh dan semakin jauh dia melongkah sendiri
Dimana tanganku tok bisa menggapoi untuk memeluknya

Meri ia emi kirap long bikpela apinun
Na long nait emi karim ambrala bilong em
Simuk i aigris bihainim kalakala laplap bilong em
Taim emi wokabaut long heven antap
Longwe turu em iet i wokabaut
Na han bilong mi ino inap long holim pasim em

“Hari hanuaboi hua ena damaru ehuaiamu”

Ia na adorahi gabe kahanai edaemu
Bena hari hanuaboi ena damaru be huaiamu
Kwalahu eodaea daemu rami mai kiamana na heto
Vairagu amo ehanaimu
Daudau hereai sibona erakamu
Imagu ese basine rosia diba.

*Original English poem and Tok Pisin by Michael Dom,
translation into Bahasa by Silvana Sandi and Hiri Motu
translation by Rev. Willie and Christine Moses.*

Bigger words to say I’m sorry

Are there bigger words to say I’m sorry?
Of those hidden scars and painful bruises,
as we sit and stare without a worry

The sovereign house can fall from glory
For no one wants to put words to truces
Are there bigger words to say I’m sorry?

What of the stories and their memory?
Of starry nights and poetic muses,
as we sit and stare without a worry

Exchanging untoward trajectory
of spiteful spat and verbal abuses
Are there bigger words to say I’m sorry?

The stabbing hurt does dull much memory
The falling away then has no uses
as we sit and stare without a worry

The wise in their words and oratory
Words that can be said and no one loses
Are there bigger words to say I’m sorry,
while we sit and stare without a worry?

Raymond Sigimet



Relentless

Secrets in my head
Scars in my heart
Fear in my bones
I want to explode
Each time I'm provoked
To remember what happened

Desperate to make things right
But the situation's too tight
Should I choose dad?
Should I choose uncles?
Love and hate them all
in equal measure
I'm stuck in the middle

Used to being neglected
Can't accept being abandoned
Time heals, I was told
But memories open wounds
That don't want to be healed

I aimed for the stars
But landed in misery
Had my head held high
But despair overwhelmed me
Drowning in my own tears
And no one understands

My heart is frowning
But my face's still smiling
I've become too good at it
Everyone's become so used to it

Laugh like there's no choice,
Live like there's no chance
That's all there is to it
This relentless hell I'm living

Stephanie Alois

Keep your heaven

keep your heaven
if you will ask for offerings
and won't buy my scones

keep your jesus
if you will ignore me
and love your own

keep your religion
if it will teach me to
hate on an empty stomach

and if after the mass
you drive home in a Maserati
while i limp to my shack

keep your prayers
keep your spirituality that separates
me from my brother who is gay

keep the songs that lift
you to heaven if your stares
will push my sister away

keep your sermon that scares
me into submission
while you sleep with the deaconess

keep your prophetic gift
it is pushing me back
into the darkness

all i want is humanity
all i want is equality
all i want is a jesus
that says everyone matters

Wardley D I Barry



Angel: Image from catholic.com

In their cocoon

As the flames of the bushfire spread
To reach home is everyone's dread

Fear cripples me as I watch the news
All around the world anxiety brews

But it's human to panic
In a global pandemic

Though little humans remain oblivious
They continue, as usual, to be mischievous

As they watch The Trolls with excitement
I feel the fire spread, in disappointment

Every morning they wake up cheery
Whilst I awake worried and weary

Too much worrying, and fear of unknown
In deepest misery I could almost drown

But their infectious laughter pulls me through
To live without fear as we want to do

Whilst adhering rigidly to instructions
Stay home, stay safe, no obstructions

In their carefree world I'd love to dwell
But the fire will stop, all will be well

Domica Are



Arise and take back PNG, PM urges Sepik: Image from PNG Online News

Kisim bek kantri

Mama karim bebi nogat inap marasin
Pikinini lusim skul mekim raskol pasin
Mama laik go maket rot kondisen aut
Pablik Sevent laik wok pawa black aut

Olsem wanem nau kantri blong mi PNG?
Planti kainkain hevi nogat sevis deliveri
Graun blong yumi oil, gas na silver gol pulap
Why ol pikinini hangere taim ol memba bel solap?

We stap win moni bilong dispela elensi gas?
Planti moa risos i go tasol ekonomi go wes
Yumi weitim wanem, ol pinisim gol na silver?
Katim daun ol diwai, na stilim planti moa timber?

Tingim taim ol go bek karim kago na tok baibai
Lusim yumi wantaim graun ino nap karim kaikai
Na taim yumi bungim hevi ol bai tanim baksait
Na hamamas na hait taim yumi yet kros pait

Na husat nau i asua, ol memba statim kros pait
Pulim lain igo ikam, gavman igo oposisen sait
Taitim baset nating, nogat moni long basket
Bihain askim raun long husat igat moni maket

Askim Sainaman em tok kam kisi moa lon
Aiyo! na why turu na dispela kantri ibin bon?
Yumi gat planti wari tasol Saina tok gat ansa
Karim bokis moni kam na tok sain lo ya!

Na yumi han lek guria na pairapim tasol
Na apim bokis dinau moni soim masol
Nambis go long hailens, wok imas go yet!
Tasol taim moni pinis, ples ino stret yet

Nau gavman i senis wantaim nupela Agrimen
Yumi mas gat hop, papa bilong haus em Igiri man
Singaut antap long maikrofon na tok kisim bek!
Na sampela harim na tok Aiyo! Bun i slek

Oh, sore oh PNG! Yumi noken wari
Wok bung wantaim na sapatim Mangi Tari
Kisim bek kantri long korapsen dinau banis
Wokabaut wantaim long kamapim gutpela senis

Dennis K Belas

Pairap Blong Kundu Kirapim Tingting

Wantaim wel i light long skin na ret pen makim long pes
Purpur blong yu na kangal blong mi i kalap wankain turu
Dispela samsam bai olsem paia i les long dai hariap
Larim yumi kalap igo yet, inap long namel blong bikpla nait
Dispela samsam bai ino nap pinis maski kundu i no moa
pairap

Kundu pairap, mekim me lek guria
Sigirap long danis na yu suruk kam klostu
Yu holim han blong mi igo pass long sait blong yu
Sanap klostu long mi na holim simel lip purpur
Wel i light long skin na ret pen makim long pes

Kalap i go i kam olsem win i raunim pangal kokonas
Wokim kangal blong mi i seksek behainim kundu i pairap
Ol man i lukim yumi ai op na mangalim tumas
Kalap wantaim kundu na singsing gut tru
Purpur blong yu na kangal blong mi i kalap wankain turu

Taim han blong mi i pass long sait blong yu
Pilim Skin blong yu i wel gut turu long tuhat blong yu
Bun blong mi i wara nating mekim mi holim yu strong tumas
Mi hambak tru taim ol i lukim yu samsam long sait blong mi
Dispela samsam bai olsem paia i les long dai hariap

Simel blong purpur blong yu i paitim nus blong mi
Na taim yu singsing, nek blong yu i olsem pisin
Wokim mi langar tumas na leva i pam na kalap
Yu hangamap long sait blong mi olsem paspas long han
Larim yumi kalap igo moa yet, inap long namel blong bikpla
nait

Mi tanim het blong mi na lukim sait blong yu
Yu lap tasol na larim han blong mi saitim susu blong yu
Mi man yah, karim bun blong tumbuna blong mi
Redim ol pik, tambu na kaikai, karuka na tabila
Dispela samsam bai ino nap pinis maski kundu i no moa
pairap

Beating Drum Awakening Thoughts

With oil shining on the skin and red paint smeared on the face
Your grass skirt and my head feathers moved in one motion
This dance will be like a fire that does not die quickly
Let us dance on forever untill the mid of the night
This dancing will never end even when the drums beat no more

The drum beats making my legs shake
So eager to dance you moved closer
You held my arm tightly closer to your side
Standing closer to me and holding scented leaf skirts
With oil shining on the skin and red paint smeared on the face

Dancing to and fro like the wind circling coconut fronds
Making my head feathers shake to the kundu beats
People seeing us stared with eyes wide marvelingly
Dancing to the drums and singing in tune
Your grass skirt and my head feathers moved to one rythem

When my arms brushed against your side
Feeling your skin so nicley oiled with your sweat
My bones watered to nothingness as I tightly held on to you
I am proud when people are seeing you dancing next to me

This dance will be like a fire that does not die quickly
The smell of your grass skirt stung my nostrils
And when you sing, your voice just like a bird
Arousing me so deeply that my heart jumps a beat
You hung at my side like an armband on my arm
Let us dance on forever till the mid of the night

I turn my head and saw you by my side
You only laughed and let my hand brush against your breasts
Im a man yeh! I carry the bones of my ancestors
Ready the pigs, kina shells and food, the pandanus mats and
wooden trays
This dancing will never end even when the drums beat no more

Original tok-singsing and English translation by Benjamin Mane



Image from PNGAA: PNG Kundu: ourdrumbeat, our stories, our voices - Papua New Guinea Association of Australia

Launa ramoramo kakakakana

Launa buatau
Vaga auna,
Bona ahu hoduna
Launa ramoramo kakakakana

Launa mata roharoha naha
bodagaiamo
Isi mirokana,
Gorere ihavarana.
Launa udu toto gorere

Launa herehia gauna
Kekeni eha heralaidiamu,
Mavaru ai.
Hutuma iha moaledia.

Launa lalo naha moalemu
Sene au huahuana.
Hebou ikehona,
Maino au huahuana.

Launa badu au huahuana,
Heudugurai kohuna taoni ai,
Uda hanuadia edia hanenamo.
Launa mauri ena ura gauna ta

Launa na buatau.
Vaga auna,
Bona ahu hoduna.
Launa ramoramo kakakana

*Hiri Motu translation by Rev. Willie
Moses and Christine Moses*



*Trobriand dancers photo Rod Clark,
<https://www.angelfire.com/mb2/milnebay/events.html>*

Mi tasol olsem blut i kapsait

Mi tasol mi buai,
Na stik daga Na sel kambang
wantaim:
Mi tasol olsem blut i kapsait

Mi bagarapim ai bilong yu,
Mekim tit i bilak
Na sigirapim sik tu:
Mi tasol mekim maus i sua

Mi kam nating long yu,
Ol meri bilas wantaim mi
Na danis ikam bungim yu:
Mi mekim olgeta i hamamas

Mi save stretim sindaun,
Mi kaikai bilong kastom
Mi stap na kibung i kirap:
Mi kaikai bilong wanbel

Na tu, mi ken kirapim tubel,
Mi bikipela hevi bilong siti
Tasol gutpela bilong asples:
Mi stap na yupela stap

Mi tasol mi buai,
Na stik daga
Na sel kambang wantaim:
Mi tasol olsem blut i kapsait

Tok Pisin translation by Michael Dom

Shattered dream

The dream is bitter
Not really better
than days gone by

I walked your way
To be close to your heart but it was
closed to me

The dream is a fairytale
Your love was legendary
until it all turned to clay

The tale of our good old days
The ambitions we shared
walked out of our lives

I am the red, red stain

I am the betel nut,
The daga stick
And the lime pot:
I am the red, red stain

I am the filthy eyesore,
The stained teeth
And the health hazard:
I am the mouth cancer

I am the free gift,
The girls are garlanded with
And dance to greet:
I am the crowd pleaser

I am the icebreaker,
The nut of kastom
And first act of the kibung:
I am the nut of peace

And, I am the nut of conflict,
The urban curse
And the rural blessing:
I am the lifestyle choice

I am the betel nut,
The daga stick
And the lime pot:
I am the red, red stain

Original poem by Michael Dom

Love can breathe new dreams
Touch our hearts once again
perhaps it all be renewed

But regret swirls like the wind
from the mountains, to rescind
a friendship attainable no more

Now my hope is a death rose
Petals wilted, nobody knows
whether a downfallen dream can rise

Jimmy Awagl

Kiluwe, oh Kiluwe is a song of mist and ice

MICHAEL DOM

IT IS A RARE PLEASURE to come across a poem which rises above the common, well beyond the ordinary, far from the expected, one which soars and, in doing so, lifts us up with it, allowing us to live inside it, then stand beside it and to marvel at the grandeur we behold.

Samuel Lucas Kafugili has presented us with one such poem in [Kiluwe, oh Kiluwe](#).

This poem was extracted from his very soul; it is a song of mist and ice from the ancient high mountain valley of Tambul-Nebilyer.

Reading this poem I can smell the fresh air and feel its bite, taste the teary blue sky burning my eyes and watch the soft dappled sunlight weeping in the green grass. I am standing there in amidst the sweet potato mounds, the Irish potato and broccoli, the cabbage and carrot which grow plentifully in the rich black volcanic soil, where the strident pine and *yar* trees whisper to each other.

What a glorious scene to behold Tambul Valley from ‘Murmur Pass’, to swoop down the winding road into the valley, while the mountains leap into the air beside us. And there he stands, Kiluwe, like some ancient chieftain surveying his land.

“Ah, mighty steaming Kiluwe,
Your peak standing in grandeur
Mastering the winds and ice
And sovereign over all we see”

This is a great poem. It is a poem which will be read, recited and recalled long after our bones rest in the soil of our birthplaces.

I have followed Samuel’s poems published on [Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG Attitude](#) and, as a fellow poet, I can say that when he wrote this poem Samuel had approached the apex of a mountain he has been intrepidly scaling.

Kiluwe leaps beyond his other work, such as [Deceitful beauty of a lassie](#), [The power of Muddle Mind](#) and [The sentinel is always vigilant](#). In all these poems Samuel maintains a non-rhyming quatrain form throughout and each stanza is a box containing distinctive expressions of related aspects on the subject being explored.

It is his focus on crafting a compact stanza which has allowed the poet to concentrate his efforts with diction, phrasing and concision, to be precise and accurate, and to have the best word which is the right word.

When I compare the first stanza of *The sentinel is always vigilant* to *Kiluwe, oh Kiluwe* there is immediate recognition of the value of simplicity and selectivity. Whereas, *The sentinel* makes a bland opening, “It’s dangerous to be in precarious space / That allows impairment of our being”, *Kiluwe* bursts into our eyes, “Mt Giluwe, oh Giluwe / Kiluwe in the mother lingua franca”.

Comparing these verse segments, we see that the use of longer words drags the lines on but the use of shorter words spliced with the foreign term, *lingua franca*, perfectly balances the deft and necessary conversion of *Giluwe* to *Kiluwe* – Samuel reclaims the name in one swoop!

The sentinel does address a different subject though and, as Lindsay Bond commented, it is one which is “serious and descriptive of real events and adverse imaginings”. It is a sentimental poem, one of intellectual consideration rather than a poem of raw emotive power (naïve) beneath a veneer of skill which, to me, *Kiluwe* exemplifies.

The second stanza of *Muddle Mind*, really does muddle the mind, as the rest of the stanzas also do; “A tangle mind fearful, / Human inflated badly, / The

power of muddled mind, / Disappearing sagacity of permissive”.

It takes time to disentangle this poem and that is probably the aim: the stanzas mirror the subject.

But the second stanza of *Kiluwe* is a mental explosion; “And snowflakes that puff out, / and ice, the spray-gunned ice, / Sending away the glacial drops / that slide into the mist”.

This stanza is high magic executed right in front of our eyes – no mirrors used.

As a poet I am very jealous of this charmed verse and will hoard it in my treasure chest of inspirations.

In *Deceitful beauty* the fifth stanza is the very last and although it provides a vivid image the metaphor is familiar; “Shining bright like a perfect jewel, / But flickering, dimming after nightfall, / Now seen in all its broken splendor, / Filled atop with regret and remorse.”

It is a complex depiction of bad character trait and the results of deception upon the soul of a person. The stanza is satisfying. It is an expected conclusion.

But in *Kiluwe* the fifth stanza is a restart not an ending to the poem, and the imagery encapsulates the entire valley into the glass-ball of the verse; “The fog that then shelters the cold, / Causing nature to be an ice-box, / Chilling all that it comes to meet / as it freezes and fogs its way”.

Fog shelters the cold? Yes, it does!

Nature becomes an ice-box? This is a solid metaphor. And nature freezes and fogs its way to meet you. We are tested by nature at the extremity. That also is where life begins in earnest. And it is where great poetry is born.

The Observations of Caroline Evari

MICHAEL DOM

'*Nanu Sina: My Words*', by Caroline Evari, independently published (May 3, 2019)

I HAD BEEN FOLLOWING Caroline's poems on PNG Attitude for some time and was very glad to see her put out this book.

Nanu Sina is presented in four sections, namely, Conflicts, Relationships, Hope and Family.

I marvel at Caroline's ability to find uniting themes for her poems since I myself struggle with this editorial task.

I mused philosophically that Conflicts, with 31 poems, is the longest section whereas Hope, with only seven poems, is the shortest. That seems reflective of real life where hope is a small but valuable property that needs to be nurtured, but conflict *save kirap long laik bilong em iet, laka*.

Caroline writes with a purity of heart and her poetry does not attempt to beguile us with flamboyance or disguise its intentions. The prosaic format she favours allows each poem to come across as a complete story.

What Caroline lacks in the technical variety of composition, compared to say Julie Mota or Wardley Barry, she makes up in the story her poem relates under different emotional contexts.

Reading her poems allows us to relate directly with what she feels and thinks when she writes in the first person. For example;

"If it is me that you love
Why come for money?
If it's money that you are after
Why say love?"

There is no arguing with this line of questioning and while the verse may

lack artistic style it is a gut punch from a fist of clenched emotion.

Ms. Evari does not pull her punches and the subject does not matter, whether it is a soured romance, as above from *Money vs Love*, or a racial quandary, as in *Culture or Color*;

"A knock on a white man's door
Leaves me fading like a rose
It's a white man's world."

When I read her words in *Protest* "Let the wheels of justice turn to our song / As it burns down the camps where greed is nurtured", I want to make sure I'm on her side.

When she portrays the doom of war in *Battlefield* it is clear to me that both sides lose someone and something precious.

"Wives await their husbands
Children watch the smoggy distance
For their fathers to appear.

Mothers yearn for the laughter of their sons
And pray for their heroines
Far, far away."

In *Imbia* and *My missing Aruma* Caroline reconnects with traditional poetry, where the naïve poetic expressions are exciting in their directness.

One of her two Tok Pisin poems, *Arim toktok* is rather moralistic but it does relate some familiar parental advice with often far-reaching consequence. Better to show the outcome in poem.

Whereas, when Caroline writes as an observer her poem is elevated to a higher level of clarity where she draws a picture in our heads like a roll of film showing a familiar scene. She does this in *The Red Cigar Seller*.

This drama takes place at a typical major PMV bus stop in Port Moresby – the roving street seller who remains simultaneously famous and anonymous.

But this Red Cigar Seller is no pauper, no mere street urchin since "Coins clatter in one pocket / Notes slumber in the other".

What a delightful juxtaposition of sound and touch which makes complete sense: coins make noises while notes may merely rustle when 'awakened' by searching fingers. I can see him checking his stash.

Our daring salesman is a wily operator "His feet stationed with alert / His body cautious / To the coppers / And the rangers / Those that attack you in surprise".

And who could help but be on the side of this singing cigar seller when we see "His eyes watch the road / As his mouth continues to chant / "One-kina red stap". We wish him many happy escapes.

One of the best effects less used in most poems I have read is the ability to make the reader laugh.

The humour in *Freeway – Town* is of another regular occurrence in the same venue which does not need to be described to pedestrians. We know what's up and it's amusing without forcing itself.

Here we meet the infamous bus stop characters who also sing their songs with or without police brutality I mean assistance – the *draiva na boskru* of our local PMV's: "Yu siksti igo / Yu siksti ikam / Yu biket driver / Yu singaut / "Freeway - Town! Freeway - Town!"

Indeed, the action we see now is revealed by an internal dialogue of the

narrator without any sort of description. We know the scene and the characters so we fill the narrator's shoes instead.

We are saddened when the wily street seller is caught but we also feel justified when the bus driver is stopped by cops for some traffic offence.

The two observational poems are sufficient to place Caroline Evari's work on a high pedestal. They reveal classic Papua Niuginian motifs, portray well recognised characters and are extracted from our everyday lives.

Caroline's style of poetry is mostly consistent but in at least one intriguing poem, *War of Love*, she seems to break out of a familiar mode and explore a more imaginary world.

It is a short poem of seven triplet verses, where the description is brief but profound.

The same form is used in the longer poem *Battlefield*. In *War of Love* Caroline uses undersea imagery to explore a romantic union, the seeking, the luring, finding and the aftermath.

“Curled up like a jellyfish
In the cold, cold blue ocean
He sleeps like a clam so calm.”

This reads like a haiku and to me the odd presentation of a romantic tale intrigues me more than the wordy and heavily constructed verses/lines used by other poets writing romance.

Before the finale another surprising verse emerges;

“She locates her weapon
Hidden inside, inside her heart
It's her only powerful weapon.”

Surely this is an insight into a woman's knowledge of her own power, of her emotional capacity and resilience, and her ability to use this strength as a weapon if need be.

But in this battle there is capitulation on both sides, love wins out, but is arrived at via an unusual route, lucky clam.

In this book, as with her several children's storybooks, Caroline offers readers of all ages her words of wonder, wit and wisdom. Nanu Sina is a good addition to any bookshelf.

BOOK REVIEW

Dame Rose Kekedo

CATHY KEIMELO

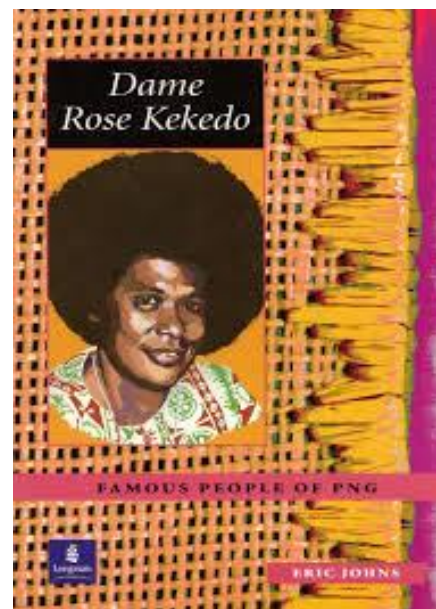
'Dame Rose Kekedo' by Eric Johns, pamphlet, 27 pages, Pearson & Longman Publisher, South Melbourne, Australia, January 1 2002

DAME ROSE KEKEDO is the eponymous biography a famous Papua New Guinean, and first woman to venture into fields and roles that were and are traditionally reserved for men. This amazing woman who broke the glass ceiling in PNG was Rose Kekedo, who was knighted for her services to the government of PNG before and after independence (1975).

The author, Eric Johns, begins by telling the story of Dame Kekedo's family background and how her mother Mary (who later became Dame Mary Kekedo) was determined for Rose and her brother to have a good education. She set up a school in Kokoda which grew to have 200 children attending including Rose and her brother. Sadly, the volcanic eruption of Mt Lamington forced the school to close and Rose

could not go to school. Despite this, both her parents, Mary and Walter were determined that she continue her education. Rose was sent to St Agnes Primary School at Dokina. She describes her two years as the loneliest time of her life. Eventually as conditions got better, she returned to Kokoda to complete her primary education. As her grades were good, her parents sent her to attend the government intermediate school at Popondetta.

In the late 1950's Rose became one of PNG's most highly educated people after returning from the Good Samaritan College to study for the Junior Certificate of Education. This was made possible by the scholarship scheme for Papua and New Guinea students for which only 20 were selected each year to study in Australia. The scholarships



began in 1954 and ceased in 1972. In 1972 when she returned from the University of Colorado (USA) Rose Kekedo was one of few Papua New Guineans with a tertiary degree.

It's interesting to see how the author recounts the Dame's story during the brief colonial administration of Papua and New Guinea. The changes which occurred over the years through the education system contributed to her

journey. During this time the Education Department was ready to build more high schools however this was prevented by Paul Hasluck, then Australia's minister for External Territories. Secondary education would not expand until more primary schools were built in 1955. This situation contributed to the limited opportunities for many primary school students to further their education. Girls comprised only 20 percent of all students in Papua and New Guinea primary schools and very few of them entered secondary school. Rose was fortunate to be one of the very few girls who got into secondary school and had an opportunity to do her best. This good fortune also gave her the drive to work hard in her professional career and also to help and encourage young girls and women to do the same.

In 1967 Rose entered public life as the first woman to represent PNG at the

United Nations based in New York. Dame Kekedo was also the first Papua and New Guinean woman to hold a permanent lecturer's position at Madang Teachers College in 1968. She was the first female principal of Port Moresby Teachers College (PMTTC) in 1974, the first female head for the Department of Community and Family Services in 1980, the first female head for the Department of Labour in 1983 and the first female chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) in 1996.

Prior to her success in the public services Dame Kekedo was committed to working towards the welfare of the needy and continued to advocate and encourage girls and women to aspire in their personal and professional life. She was a respected leader who abided by the rules and regulations of the public offices which she held.

Dame Kekedo's achievements in traditionally male areas of government service did not come without challenges. Despite being removed as head of the Department of Community and Family Services when the department was demolished in 1983, she continued to persevere in the public

service. In 1995, her services and hard work were recognised when Rose was awarded the Queen's Birthday Honours with a knighthood. She became the second woman in her family to be a Dame. Her mother Dame Mary Kekedo was knighted in 1987 for her work in educating and supporting the people in Kokoda. The family is indeed remarkable. Rose's sister Jean Kekedo graduated from the Adelaide University also became well known for her work with corporate and government organisations.

This form of short biography is highly recommended for upper primary and secondary school children, college and university students to read and learn about historical figures of PNG. Eric John's book provides a useful reference for those who are interested in PNG history. The book may appeal to anyone who is interested in learning about few of PNG's first remarkable women. It will surely inspire young Papua New Guinean women in their personal and professional lives to reach for the stars and to learn that even if they fall there is always a way to move forward. Dame Rose Kekedo is an amazing role model for many young PNG girls and women.

BOOK CHAPTER (EXTRACT)

Yours Truly: The Love Letter in a Glassed Frame

DANIEL KUMBON

'Survivor: Alive in Mum's Loving Arms' by Daniel Kumbon, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (August 9, 2017), not currently available on Amazon

THE OLD MAN held the framed letter in his trembling hands. It wasn't typed or anything but a simple handwritten note.

The paper on which it was written was from a lecture pad from the university. It had turned a brownish yellow and rusted along the edges, but the message was crystal clear inside the glassed frame. It read:

Wanaku Mono o le... My girl, my heart,

Have you ever stood still to watch a spring sprout out from the ground on the misty trails of the Koe Koname tapu or Bini Apini tapu mountain ranges just before the Ipasakale birds begin to sing in their sweet little voices as dawn begins to break and when mists still cover the valleys?

My love for you is like that – fresh and pure ready to cascade down the mountain slopes mixed with yours to form a river down in the valley. Can you see, as I do, our budding love growing to fullness?

You and I are young and our future is stretched right before us as one sees the Markham Valley from the top of Kassam Pass. I will take your hand and lead you there, but I am

in doubt because you might have other plans – secret plans and names of other people written in the depths of your mind.

I fear you might be taken away from me in the two years of study we have left. This love that is beginning to well up in me might be in vain. Your attention might even be diverted to another direction by your parents whose decision you might be forced to accept.

Tell me what I will do if you are taken away from me? No, I do not wish that to happen. I have decided that you should be mine forever. What do you say?

My heart is troubled this early morning as I stand here beside this spring wondering if our love would last a lifetime – the true love that has started welling up within me.

Tell me straight, in which direction your love will flow.

Yours forever.

AW

On the empty space at the far bottom right hand corner of the page was a small note of approval neatly written in his wife, Rosemary's own handwriting.

It read:

Wane Mono o le, - My man, my heart,

Do not be troubled for I will come with you on the trip. You will take my hand and lead me to the place you have in your mind.

Dated June 12th 1976

Today a copy of the letter hangs on the wall in their family home among a collection of other memorabilia. The original letter hangs in the *Enga Taik Anda* (Enga House of Cultural Values) in Wabag town.

The Old Man reread the letter with glassy eyes as hot tears streamed down the folds of his sunken face.

Continuous sorrow in the last year had taken its toll and reduced him to a bony wreck. His body refused to accept the fact that Rosemary, his wife was gone for good and that he should begin to live his own life again. She was the only woman he ever knew in his life.

He ate little and communicated with only a few people, mainly his business associates through texts and emails. He avoided physical contact as much as possible, while confining himself to his mansion.

He rarely spoke with anybody and went shopping in the big supermarkets at night. His people in the village did not know what was happening to him.

Only his children were aware. But they were all living in Australia. They had gone back there a couple of weeks after the funeral thinking he would recover. Little did they know that their dad was travelling fast down the path to self-destruction.

After everybody was gone, the Old Man continued to cry when he discovered the letter in an album Rosemary had privately kept among her personal belongings. He decided to frame it for posterity.

Their initial feelings for each other were etched forever on this letter, an enduring testimony of how much The Old Man and his dear wife had been committed to each other, beginning when they were young students.

He couldn't remember how many times he had read it before going to sleep in the last year since his wife was taken away from him right before his very eyes in a horrible traffic accident on a busy downtown street in Port Moresby.

The Old Man himself could have been killed too. He was nearly knocked down by oncoming traffic when he instinctively rushed across the street in a futile attempt to save his wife. But she was already dead-on impact.

He just collapsed beside the lifeless-form, his clothes soaked in her fresh blood spilling onto the hot bitumen. This was the very last time they would

lay together side by side, their souls traveling alone in different directions.

An alert young man who witnessed all that was happening on that fateful day took pity on The Old Man and rushed him to the nearest hospital in a taxi. Doctors resuscitated him and nursed him back to full health. He had suffered a major heart attack.

A St John's ambulance arrived minutes later to take the body of Rosemary to the morgue in the same hospital where The Old Man fought for his life in the dreaded Intensive care unit.

Nobody knows when it will be - during the day or at night, when it's raining or when it's sunny, by drowning or falling from a tree, at noon or at midnight, alone or with someone, in the garden or at home, when asleep or conscious, in the womb or at 100 years of age, on a sick bed or on the battlefield?

Nobody knows how they will die or when it will be.

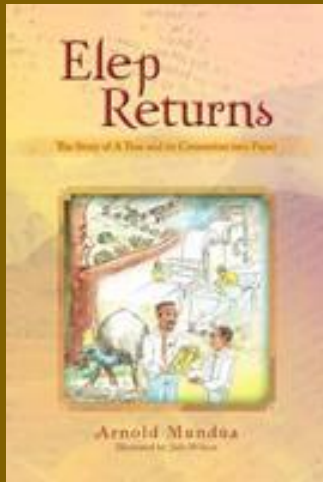
Precious life is but a puddle on a taro leaf – when it is overturned the puddle disappears for good into the ground.

Rosemary's life had just come to an end on that busy street. Her groceries, small change and personal belongings were scattered everywhere on the street. Police, the ambulance and news reporters began to appear on the scene.

The couple's usual trip to the grocery shop had turned into shocking headline news on EMTV at 6pm that evening. And next morning *'Lawyer's Wife Killed In Police High Speed Criminal Chase'* screamed the headlines in the papers.

It hurt to see pictures of Rosemary and her husband lying side by side in the middle of a busy street surrounded by strangers as if they had no children or relatives of their own.

Rosemary, a mother respected for her generosity and the loving care she showed through their family charity organisation had just ended her life in a most horrifying way.



Elep Returns: The Story of a Tree and Its Conversion into Paper

Elep Returns is the story of a tree, named Elep, which grew in Kandrian on the south coast of West New Britain in Papua New Guinea. Elep relates its own adventurous story, blossoming from a seed to a very big tree, to it being cut down and exported as a log to Japan, from its transformation to paper, to its import as paper by Australia and then by the country of its origin, to be printed as school certificates. As a matter of coincidence, Elep, now in its new incarnation, has the proud privilege of displaying the academic excellence of the boy who used to relish its nuts while in the Amumsong village.

The Eleps tale, narrated in simple yet delectable way, and interspersed with suspense every now and then, keeps the reader engrossed. In view of the educational nature of this novel, it should be essential reading for both the young and the old alike. It is a must for every school, college, university and institutional library.

Available online at Amazon, Paperback from \$31.82 or PGK113.21 (postage not included) or on Kindle \$4.99 or 17.75

BAKA BARAKOVE BINA'S BOOKLIST

Title	Genre	Author	Price* (Amazon)
Sibona	Novel	Emmanuel Peni	\$16.17 Paperback
Fitman, Raitman and Cooks	Novel	Francis Nii	No price given
An Uncertain Future	Novel	James Thomas	\$11.40 Paperback
Moments in Bougainville	Short-stories	Leonard Fong Roka	\$14.98 Paperback
Remember Me and Other Stories from Enga Province	Short-Stories	Daniel Kumbon, editor	\$3.88 Paperback
Dee's Short Stories	Short-stories	Marlene Dee Gray Potoura	Not available
Emotionally Famished	Short-stories	Marlene Dee Gray Potoura	\$11.33 Paperback
Bougainville Manifesto	Essays	Leonard Fong Roka	\$10.86 Paperback
The Resonance of My Thoughts	Essays	Francie Nii	\$11.21 Paperback
Drugs and Their Dangers in Papua New Guinea	Text book	Phillip Kai Morre	\$12.42 Paperback
Lost In His Land	Novel	Winterford Toreas	\$11.26 Paperback
When The River Destroys	Novellette	Samantha Kusari	\$10.36 Paperback
My Brother Warrollu – Stories for Young People	Short-stories	Marlene Dee Gray Potoura	\$11.83 Paperback
ABCDreams	Poetry	Wardley D Barry-Igivisa	\$16.83 Paperback
Walk My Song - Poetry	Poetry	Francis Nii	\$10.40 Paperback
The Pomong U'tau of Dreams	Poetry	Leonard Fong Roka	\$17.82 Paperback
A Bush Poet's Poetical Blossom	Poetry	Jimmy Drekore	\$14.60 Paperback
Daddy Two Shoes	Poetry	Diddie Kinamun Jackson	\$16.89 Paperback
My Struggle	Stories, Poetry and Essays	Jimmy Awagl	\$10.75 Paperback
My Journey	Stories, Poetry, Essays	Jimmy Awagl	\$13.19 Paperback

A Contemporary Voice	Poetry	Jimmy Awagl	\$11.60 Paperback
I Can See My Country Clearly Now	Essays and Memoirs	Daniel Kumbon	\$17.24 Paperback
In Search of Heritage in the Midst of Change	Stories and Poetry	Bomai Dick Witne	\$11.88 Paperback
Can't Sleep	Collection	Daniel Kumbon, editor	\$11.88 Paperback
Brokenville	Biographical novel	Leonard Fong Roka	\$11.25 Paperback
Zymur	Short-story	Baka Binakove Bina	Not available
Haffies Are Made, They Are Not Born	Novellette	Baka Binakove Bina	\$7.00 Paperback
The Curse of the Lamisi	Novellette	Baka Binakove Bina	\$12.87 Paperback
Antics of Alonaa Volume One	Short-stories	Baka Binakove Bina	\$15.32 Paperback
Sweet Garaina Apo	Novel	Baka Binakove Bina	\$19.75 Paperback
Man of Calibre	Novel	Baka Binakove Bina	\$4.05 Paperback
The Musings of Sogopex Under the Lamisi Tree	Short-stories	Baka Binakove Bina	Not available
Operation Kisim Bek Lombo	Novel	Baka Binakove Bina	\$22.97 Paperback
Tales From Faif	Short-stories	Baka Binakove Bina	\$16.21 Paperback
Prized Possessions	Poetry	Dominica Are	\$3.73 Paperback
Nanu Sina: My Words	Poetry	Caroline Evari	\$5.00 Paperback
Tattooed Face	Poetry	Jordan Dean	Out of print
Forbidden Dancer	Poetry	Jordan Dean	\$11.31 Paperback
Silent Thoughts	Essays	Jordan Dean	Out of print
Stranger In Paradise	Short-stories	Jordan Dean	Out of print
Tama'gega - Fatherless Child	Novella	Jordan Dean	\$13.58 Paperback
Melanesian Beauty	Poetry	Jordan Dean	\$9.38 Paperback
Stori Bilong Pikinini	Childrens fiction	Jordan Dean	\$12.82 Paperback
Viviwava	Short-stories	Jordan Dean	\$10.69 Paperback
Follow the Rainbow	Poetry	Jordan Dean	No price given
Survivor	Biographical stories	Daniel Kumbon, editor	\$7.53 Paperback
The Old Man's Dilemma	Novel	Daniel Kumbon	\$7.59 Paperback
Victory Song of Pingeta's Daughter	Biographical novel	Daniel Kumbon	\$19.70 Paperback
Language & Literature Skills	Text book	Francis Nii	No price given
Walk My Song - Poetry	Poetry	Francis Nii	\$10.40
Tears	Short-stories	Francis Nii	\$6.50 Paperback
Listen	Poetry	Thyatira Kaupa	\$5.44 Kindle Edition
Anthology at Another Crossroads	Poetry	Michael Dom	\$24.95 Paperback
The Musing of an Assistant Pig Keeper	Poetry & Prose	Michael Dom	\$12.60 Paperback
O Arise!	Poetry	Michael Dom	\$10.54 Paperback
Send words as gifts	Poetry	Michael Dom	\$23.47 Paperback
Dried grass over rought cut logs	Poetry	Michael Dom & Faumuina Tafuna'i	\$14.10 Paperback
26 sonnets	Poetry	Michael Dom	\$10.00 Paperback

My Grandfather is a Canoe	Poetry	Faumuina Tafuna'i, Michael Dom, et al.	\$9.99 Paperback
Game Changer (Logan's Legacy Series)	Novel	Jauelin K Nen	\$0.99 Kindle Edition
70 Reminders of Academic Excellence	Motivational	Gerard Ivaloa	K50.00 Paperback from author
The Crocodile Prize Anthology 2011	Anthology	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$13.70 Paperback
The Crocodile Prize Anthology 2012	Anthology	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$21.57 Paperback
The Crocodile Prize Anthology 2013	Anthology	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$12.63 Paperback
The Crocodile Prize Anthology 2014	Anthology	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$28.03 Paperback
The Crocodile Prize Anthology 2015	Anthology	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$22.65 Paperback
The Crocodile Prize Anthology 2016	Anthology	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$14.16 Paperback
Trickery at the Crocodile Pool and other children's stories from Papua New Guinea	Children's fiction	Benjamin Jackson	\$6.46 Paperback
Fighting For A Voice: The Inside Story of PNG Attitude and the Crocodile Prize	Biographical	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$22.06 Paperback
Top Crocs: The Winning Entries from Papua New Guinea's National Literature Competition The Crocodile Prize 2011 – 2015	Anthology	Philip Fitzpatrick, editor	\$4.84 Paperback
Ku High School Anthology 2014	Anthology	Francis Nii	\$1.00 Kindle Edition
Simbu High & Secondary Schools Anthology 2015	Anthology	Francis Nii	\$1.00 Kindle Edition
My Walk to Equality	Anthology	Rashmii Bell, editor	\$9.52 Paperback
The Floating Island	Novel	Philip Fitzpatrick	\$7.40 Paperback
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Inspector Metau: The case of the missing professor	Novel	Philip Fitzpatrick	\$8.46 Paperback
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The Unusual and Unexpected Case of the Rise and Rise of Inspector Hari Metau as told by his good friend Sergeant Kasari Aru	Novel	Philip Fitzpatrick	\$8.18 Paperback
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The Master Marksman	Novel	James Smith	\$14.00 Paperback
Sivarai	Short-stories anthology	Chips Mackeller	\$15.03 Paperback
A kiaps story	Autobiography	Graham Taylor	\$14.10 Paperback
Saidor Story	Autobiography	Norma Griffin & Anne Giffin	\$16.62 Paperback
Bamahuta, Leaving Papua	Autobiography	Philip Fitzpatrick	\$16.72 Paperback

This list is by no means comprehensive. Readers and authors are encouraged to submit details of any PNG authored books or books based on or about PNG, characters and themes, to Ples Singing Writers & Associates on email plessingsing@gmail.com.

Ples Singing

A space for Papua Niuginian creativity

Tingting bilong mi 2022 Essay competition

Observe the 2022 National General Elections and write about an issue from this period

First place K1500 | Second place K1000 | Third place K500

Open to students from secondary school to college and university, aged between 16 to 36 years

**PLUS 2
FREE
BOOKS BY
PNG
AUTHORS**

A scanned image of a photo ID is required on entry.

The essay should be not less than 1500 and not more than 3000 words.

Duration: 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2022

Winners will be announced at the start of the school term in March 2023

ENTRY IS FREE TO ALL PAPUA NIUGINIAN CITIZENS

Email entries to plessingsing@gmail.com

**Smooth Magazine Issue #01 is available for free download from Ples Singing A PNG writers Blog at plessingsing.com.
The article you read may be a blog article, a news story, editorial, a short story, an essay, a poem or a review.*

Awards, judging and benefits

- All entries will be prejudged by a blind panel of six published PNG writers and final judging of the top ten will be completed by Phil Fitzpatrick (Australian author) and Fiona Hukula (PNG academic and researcher).
- Best entries will be published in the Post Courier and The National newspapers.
- Well written essays may receive minimum editing for posting on Ples Singing and PNG Attitude blogs.
- Three winners will each receive two (2) books by PNG authors (valued at K50 each).
- Selected essays will be collated into a book which will be published by JDT Independent Publishing, and the school or institute of the winning essayists will receive two copies for their library.

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Kurai Memorial Awards

Write a *biographical story* about someone in your family who contributed to PNG before independence in 1975

Plus a two categories for student writers

**Best story in each category wins K500 prize money
Runner up wins K300**

There are two open categories for adult male and female participants age 18 and over
Length of the story should not be less than 1,500 and not more than 5,000 words

Extended: May 1 to August 31 2022

Winners will be announced on Independence Day, September 16th

ENTRY IS FREE TO ALL PAPUA NEW GUINEAN CITIZENS LIVING IN COUNTRY

Email entries to plessingsing@gmail.com

Awards, judging and benefits

- All entries will be blind judged by four published PNG authors
- Best entries will be published in the Post Courier and The National newspapers
- Prize money will be directly deposited in the bank account provided by the winners
- Well written stories may receive minimum editing for posting on Ples Singing and PNG Attitude blogs
- Selected stories may be collated into a book with other short stories to be published by JDT Independent Publishing

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A space for Papua Niuginian creativity

Mini-poetry competition

Cash prize
of up to
K250.
Enter now!

Poems for World Environment Day 6th June 2022

This contest is for all primary school students in Papua New Guinea

Send your entries to plessingsing@gmail.com

Create a poem about your view or knowledge about the status of our lands and waters, fish and wildlife, trees, native flora and the myriad insects in the jungles.

Are they in good condition in your homeland?

Prizes: First K250 cash | Second K150 cash | Third K100 cash

Contest closes on 1 June 2022 for the judges to decide the winner

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Essay competition

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Mini-poetry competition



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