

Tattooed Face

A collection of Poems

JORDAN DEAN

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ISBN: 1537265857

ISBN-13: 978-1537265858

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my parents; Dean & Louisa Magolei,
Charles Yobone & Anna Tumbu, my late grandfather Tony
Bokealei and to Maryanne Danti for her love and support.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere acknowledgement to Prisca Pano for her photograph that was used for the book cover.

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PROLOGUE

Life is full of challenges. Economic difficulties, unemployment, law and order issues, prostitution, corruption, domestic violence, family problems and political issues plague us on a daily basis. How a person faces each challenge that comes their way however, says much about their character, who they are on the inside. Some people draw strength and inspiration from the experiences of others.

Many Papua New Guinean poets and writers from both past and present have helped and inspired our people to face and overcome life's many challenges through the words of their poems. Such poems help people see they are not alone in their struggles and that it is possible to overcome their problems.

In traditional Papua New Guinea, tattoos were part of the initiation process, sacred and a form of identity. Women were heavily tattooed from head to toe, while men displayed chest markings related to their exploits in the headhunt. Today, tattoos have become almost ubiquitous. Celebrity and sports icons endorsement has helped tattoos to become a way to make one look glamorous and to enhance their sex appeal. It no longer speaks of their complex and ritual language. Thus, the meaning of our tattoos are fading and gradually being forgotten.

We have lost our identity - modernity and Christianity are largely to blame. Yet despite these shortcomings, each indelible symbol allows us to dimly discern those concepts and ideologies of a cultural code that once served to represent the complex of life experience in the natural and spiritual worlds of the tribal headhunters of Papua New Guinea. Tattoos have a special significance in our cultures. I used the term 'Tattooed Face' in the book's title as an expression of love and respect for our culture.

Tattooed Face: A collection of Poems

'Tattooed Face' is a collection of poems based on my experiences, reflections, perspectives, feelings, emotions, dreams, aspirations and every day issues: issues little felt, nor important yet continue to deprive our freedom. 'Tattooed Face' explores the meaning of love, insights on life, identity, culture, modernity, politics and corruption. It also celebrates life as a young Papua New Guinean, even though some are full of anger, regret and struggles.

I hope that my poetry inspires and allows readers to romanticize or see vivid pictures full of feelings or even recapture a dream, a reality or grasp one of life's fleeting moments.

Jordan Dean

Love & Emotions



Forgive Me for that Goodbye

(Published in the UniTarvur, UPNG, 2003)

Fed up with my destiny
And this place of no return
Think I'll take another day
And slowly watch it burn.
It doesn't really matter
How the time goes by
Cause, I still remember you
And that goodbye.

We staggered through these empty streets,
Arm in arm.
That night had made a mess of me
But your confessions kept me warm
I just need to know if you
Still think of me and that goodbye.

When I see you now, I remember
Watching you walk away
In these days of no regrets
I'll keep to myself
If I had let you down
Please, forgive me for that goodbye.

My Dream Girl

(Published in the UniTarvur, UPNG, 2003)

Out of a misty dream, she emerged;
A sweet and angelic beauty
Wearing the melancholy sunset
In her hair.

She carried the looks of the rainbow
And her frangipani smile shook me to the core;
So cute that I couldn't help but stare
Her voice was like the nightingale
Welcoming the first light of a new day
And her touch was so intimate,
It was like haven.

Into her lovely arms she took me
And flew away to that long lost paradise;
Where the rivers flowed with milk and honey
And the roses were always in full blossom.

Our eyes met for a second
And I realized I had been beaten once again
By this heavenly, young lady
Hell bent on wrecking my sleep.

Love is a Rose

Love is a single, scarlet rose
It brings momentary beauty with its blossom
The dampness of its petals from dewdrops
Are like tears and heart sheds.
Love is a rose which you treasure
Until you're hurt by its thorns.
The rose will die and wither,
The memories will remain
But the plant will flower again and again.

Love Bite

Lingering like a tattoo
On my neck,
Very red and sore but
Envied by unlucky folks
Because this tattoo
Is a souvenir from
The sacred moments in
Eden.

Love Pain

It ended in tears,
But not in shame.
You moved away
To help ease the pain.
Matters got better
As time moved on.
But in my heart
You will always belong.

A Virtual Hug

I was just thinking of you today
And wishing you were here
So I thought I'd drop you a little note
To bring you some smiles and cheer.

Just consider this a virtual hug,
To brighten up your day
And remember that your sweetheart
Is just a note away

Victim

Among the roses that blossomed
You sent out the sweetest scent
Drawing me to you
Like a bee in search for nectar.
My heart is a prisoner
Of your tempting words
Your true colors hidden
Behind a honeyed smile.
You moved on while I;
A victim of your fake love
Am left alone
To gather up the scattered pieces
Of my torn heart.

Truly Gone

I have known you for so long
I know everything about you
Even your favorite song
We were just friends
But you saw something more
Without even thinking
I showed you the door.
And now, I come to think of it
You weren't truly wrong,
'Cause I never knew I loved you
Until you were truly gone.

Sadness

A lump of butter in your throat
Eyes ablaze
When even the walls antagonize

Life comes out in full detail

A time when friends are foes
And enemies are assassins
Digging their teeth in your back
Until only a scar is left.

Fallen Heart

You meant so much to me
And I built my world around you
You were that crystal light
That makes me see in the darkest night
I didn't know there was a cheating heart
Behind that lovely smile,
Each time you called my name
I felt the warmth in your voice
You were the diamond in my crown
Until I read your four-page letter.

There's a sunset to every romance
But I didn't know it would set this soon
You left me without remorse or sorrow
Only best wishes for tomorrow
Now I'm left behind like the morning dew
To melt away from your love
It hurts to know you've been cheating all along.

For A Dear Friend

Many a thought — I'll spare for you
Silent tears — I'll shed for you
Quiet times — I'll set aside for you

In times of need I'll search
The setting sun for your thoughts
From the songs of birds, I'll hear your voice
The rain trees will ring with you wisdom
The moon and stars will remind me of your love.

When the sky is blue,
I'll watch the passing clouds to catch your kisses
And hugs, I'll feel in the early morning sun.

I'll seek your smile in the frangipanis' when I'm down
The busy parrots will remind me to have courage.
Among the roses, I'll find your love
And know that you still treasure me.

My Imagination

I see blue butterflies —
Or are they moths?
Rising in clouds in the shimmering heat
As we follow each other
Through the high grass
By the riverside
I see their tiny, delicate veined wings
And I stretch out my hand
To touch the glistening velvet.
Yet as my fingers reach out,
They disappear,
Fluttering away in a random jumble
Of dazed blueness.
The afternoon seems to stretch forever.
I could hear the jungles orchestra
Probably not, for I'm in the city
What is that song?
I think I hear echoes of the words
They drift away, slowly
Clouds of pale blue butterflies
Rise as I walk along
Perhaps they were moths?
I cannot tell,
Nor can I tell you why I see them
From afar,
For I wasn't there.

Forbidden Lover

Beyond the echoing darkness
A soft voice whispered to my ear,
Beckoning from the deep shadows
And cold fingers touched my cheeks
Struggling with mixed emotions
I couldn't see who it was.
But as darkness turned to light,
As the cold fingers turned warm
And the haunting mask removed,
I realized it was you
My forbidden lover.

Love is a Strange Thing

Love can make you fly
Higher than the sky
But love can make you cry
Hurt you deep inside
That's when you know it's not right
Love is a strange thing.

At first you were my crush
Now I think I'm in love
I know you don't feel the same
Love is a strange thing

Should I stop thinking about you
When all that I dream of
Is to hold and kiss you?
I hate it because I know
You don't feel the same
Love is a strange, strange thing.

An Evening in December

This December evening is a gift;
The gentle air caresses my face
The scent of soil after rain
Is fragrant in my nostrils,
My body relaxes
And my mind absorbs the quiet dusk
Meal time is over,
Children have ceased their games
And the birds have ended their songs;
Except for the evening call
Of a lone wagtail from the rain tree.
Above and beyond our planet
The velvet flanks of space
Begin to glisten with the light of stars
Supported by a thin crescent of light
From a young moon.

Strange Mixture

I'm such a strange mixture
Some days I soar like an eagle
Over the peaks of the Owen Staley;
Yet on other days I'm like a rat
Hiding in dark places
Sometimes, like a surfer
I truly enjoy riding life's rough waves;
But at other times I just sit and complain
Allowing the waves to break over me
Filling my eyes with tears
And my soul with self-pity.

Morning

As the curtain of night is drawn back
And the golden robes of daylight
Arrives over the sea and mountain
I greet this new day as a gift;
Warming moods that are frosty
Enlightening minds that are gloomy.

Mother's Day Gift

I bought my brother a Prado
Amethyst and diamond jewelry for my sister,
Even sent my dad on a trip around the world
Sleeping and dining in luxuries hotels

But for my mother,
I plucked a golden rose
From the warm garden of my heart
On its petals were the silent words;
'I love you.'
'Cause not even a million dollars
Could pay for her love.

My Mum

So soft, brown
Bright
Light
So beautiful
She stands over me
Watching every day
All things that I do
The times that I get scared
She's there
I can hear her footsteps
Walking behind me
I can feel her love for me
My mum;
She's an angel of haven

Love At First Sight

Head over heels
Leap before you look
Round and round we go
Ain't it grand?
I do. Me too.

Solitude

On this cold February evening
I gaze out across the ocean
The horizon is empty
Only a single star shines in the sky
Casting shadows on my soul

Are there butterflies where you walk?
Are you watching the stars that glitter above the water
Like strings of sparkling diamonds?
Or just listening to the tide moaning
Softly on the shore?
Is the ocean calm?

On this lonely shore where we pledged our love
And wrote our promises in the sand
I'll sit and wait for eternity
Until the water forgets to sparkle again.

A Love Poem

1.

I'm your 'twilight's child'
In the blue gardens of dawn
When the soul is quiet;
I'll whisper to you the secrets of morning

2.

I'm your 'pearl in the mist'
When you're lost in the journey of life
And you think you're blown away
Like a petal in the wind;
I'll show you the gates of paradise

3.

I'm your 'white, hot angel'
When the mountains too high to climb
And you can't go another mile alone;
I'll help you carry on

4.

I'm your 'Romeo'
With the passage of cloudy days
When you're listening to the drumming rain
Trickle, trickle, trickle;
I'll shelter you from the rain

5.

I'm your 'golden shooting star'
In the darkest hour of night
When shadows shrink and rise
And you're too blind to find your way home;
I'll rescue you from the storm

6.

I'm your 'prince charming'

When the lines of tension dig themselves
Deeper and deeper into your face
Like the print of ugly memories
And there's no one to comfort you;
I'll be your strength, I'll keep you warm

7.

I'm your 'apple in the eye'
When you feel immobilized
And there's nothing to hold onto;
I'll give you hope

8.

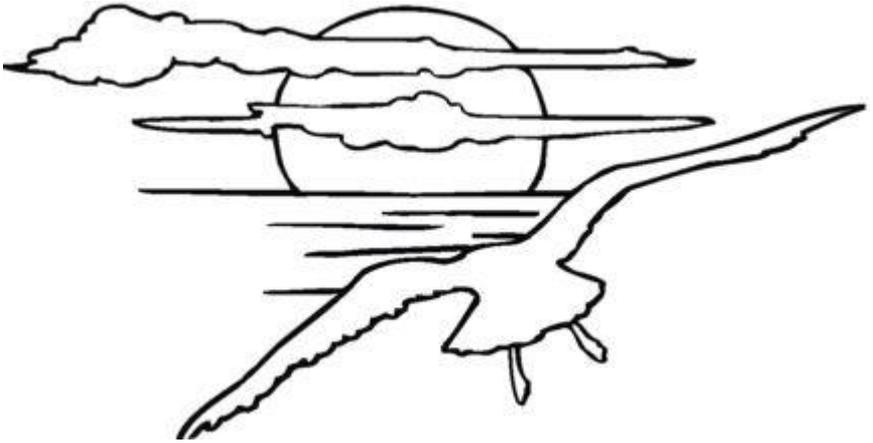
I'm your 'hidden jewel'
Of tarnished gold and all that glitters
In the garden of fallen hearts;
I'll make your dreams come true

9.

I'm your 'doctor of love'
When the ties of love seem to be unwinding
And the ribbons of your heart
Are deeply lacerated;

I'll sing to you a melody—
A love song
To heal your crippled heart.

The World around Us



Colours of the Sunset (i)

The world flamed crimson
Then cooled to pink
Soft gold, mauve
And grey- subtle,
Ever deepening colors
That played upon the face
Of the earth until at last;
Merged into a thin,
Cool blue of evening.

Colours of the Sunset (ii)

The brilliant sun disappears,
Her last flickering rays painting the rim
Of the sky with liquid crimson,
Bleeding into saffron and amethyst
And the palest of roses
Before dropping down
Like a huge dust bowl
Over the dim horizon.

Colours of the Sunset (iii)

In the evening I see
The sun dancing on the water's surface
With all the colors of the rainbow
Sometimes pink,
Sometimes purple,
Orange or scarlet.
Brilliant colors light up everywhere
While silhouetted palm trees bend down
Gaily to the whispering breeze.

Fireworks- Independence Night

Pinwheels whirling around
Spitting sparks upon the ground
Rockets shoot up high
And blossom in the night sky
Blue and yellow, green and red flowers,
Falling onto my head like a glittering crown.

Driving through Sogeri Plateau

Fences lean,
Their backs broken by times hard hand
This is where crows fly backwards.
On the sparse plains of Sogeri
Only water pipes protrude
The rolling hills stand bare and burnt.

The rusted relics of WWII
Lie unused and exposed
Mining dredges stand rusted and crooked,
Distorted beyond normality
Empty homes gape, hungry for visitors.

Long stretching spaces are never filled
Bare trees; leafless and dead
Hold hungrily on the empty ground
The road passes snake-like and upwards.

Sogeri emerges out of the mist
Her face unchanged
A small town, devoid of life
Her proud history forgotten.

Owen Stanley Range

The Owen Stanley Range
Bulk up like storm clouds
Against the sky.
Tall, rough-edged mountains
With summits peaked and rounded,
Naked and proud.
In the cold sweep of the sea breeze
They watch the noisy world
From their misty thrones.

Easter

Easter tastes like hot cream buns
Easter sounds like Jesus being nailed on the cross
Easter smells like alpine pines and spices
Easter feels like being betrayed for thirty silver pieces.
Easter is like an egg;
A celebration that means new life.

Alotau - Floating Town

Alotau is like a mirage; floating, dream-like
Blues and grays mingling
Soft, vaporous mists lifting from the Pacific Ocean
Modern buildings rising up,
Inchoate images in the muted light
And everywhere, a sense of tranquility and serenity
So hauntingly beautiful in her splendid isolation,
Trapped between sea and sky.
Who would capture this on canvass?

Forever held in her thrall;
A captive to her mystery and everlasting beauty
Even the gods hold their breath to watch her.

Jacksons Airport

At the Jacksons airport, I see
Fast metallic eagles
Taking off the runway.
They glide into the air
Soaring higher and higher
Into the warm sky
Until they're gone
Through the clouds
That looks like floating icebergs.

The Sea

The sea is my girlfriend
She cheers me up when I'm gloomy
And agrees with whatever I say
When happy, she rushes back and forth
With quick little splashes
Of beautiful, blue color.
When angry, she is all choppy
With white dogs looking very fierce
On warm days I lie on her sand
Of pure white silk and dream.

Port Moresby

Port Moresby stretched out before me;
Resplendent, glorious, magical
And gleaming in the tropical sun.

But my heart weeps for this jungle
Of glass and steel skeletons;
A city of cock-tail parties,
Home-brew for all the street boys
And spak-brus for the drug-bodies.

When the sun comes sailing down
I see the blue van patrolling around
And out in the city's streets
A silhouetted figure is asking
For one kina

Visitor

A strange little green frog
Came
 Hop up the stairs
 Hop
 Hop
He looked at the door, he looked at the mat
He looked at this and he looked at that
He looked at me
And went hop
 Hop
 Hop down the stairs again.

My Room Mate

The rat is an unlawful tenant
Who lives on unscrupulous profit
Earned from dirty schemes,
Yet pays no rental for his accommodation

He chews my clothes
Eats up my food
Even wants to bite my toes
But still insists on being my roommate.

False Messiah (Politician)

Out of his sugar-coated mouth
Came words of gold;
Boastful tales
And promises of development.
Praise the Lord for such a servant!

We thought he was the messiah
Sent from the Haus Tambaran
To heal our moni - sicknesses
And give us our daily bread
Oh Hallelujah!

We voted him
And made him king.
Time passed;
One year, two years
He never returned

Tough luck for us
'Oh Father, hallowed by thy name
Please hear our cries
And send your messiah back to us.
Amen.'

But, alas, there's no answers
Only prayers.

Bottle Collector

He's a hopeless guy
Roaming these dirty gutters
Gathering bottles and cans.
A homeless mind
Wandering up and down
The streets of Port Moresby
Searching in vain for a lost destiny.

In this rapidly changing economy,
A solitary world of political ideologies;
He has a dream of his own,
A fate of his own,
A destiny —
Lying in the bag of discarded bottles.

Drought in PNG - 1997

It was that time
When drought appeared
No water to drink,
Flies swarming like bees
Crackling branches of thirsty trees.
The tired earth was sweating
At a hundred degree Celsius
Hot, boiling, raging breeze
Nothing left but dried up bones
And hot- brown, sun baked ground.
People starved till their bones
Stick out of their skins.

The Blank Page

The blank page just sits there
Waiting for new poems
The blank page just sits there
Waiting for a blotch of ink
The blank page just sits there
Waiting for entrenched eyes to scan it
The blank page is a poet's nightmare.

Fire

I squatted down beside the fire
And held my hands out to its cheering warmth
Watching the shadows dance on the walls and ceiling
When I fed it two more logs,
Sparks went flying, the woods hissed and crackled
And fresh flames danced up.
As I continued gazing into the fire's red heart
I remembered the nights I had spent
As a child in mama's caring arms,
Where tired eyes stared into the red glow
Of peat flame and watched a dream go by.

The Wind

As the wind blows against the trees
I listen to the rattling breeze
Leaves go swish along the ground
And the whirly wind goes round
And round.

The Flood

Fed by the drowning rains
The river roared into full spate
Spreading her channels throughout
The narrow, marshy country
Here and there, I hear
The frothing voices of swollen streams
Like angry beasts
Banging among the rocks.

The Journalist

He's a sticky beak
Always minding everyone's business
Always at a murder scene
Or a car accident
He treats his notebook
Like the Holy Bible
Sometimes, he writes about sports
Or development
Maybe finance
But politics cover most of the paper
And Rape;
The headlines
Often he speaks the truth
Like an anointed saint
But makes himself busy,
Very busy over bad news.

Fergusson Island

At sunset, when the sky is painting a sad picture
My thoughts return to you, my island home;
The memory of scented blossoms haunts me
And the sounds of distant seagulls flying by
The breaking waves along the shores
My eyes are filled with tears
As I reminisce of days gone by
On my beautiful island home;
A pearl of the ocean
I will follow your charms
Like a man lured by the love of a virgin girl.

SP Lager

At the Pondo Tavern
I greedily gulp twelve bottles of SP
The alcohol flows though my veins
Exploding in my head
Like a silver Roman candle
I see a thousand stars
It thumps my chest
And flows down my arms
And through the rest of my body
Like liquid gold.
I feel myself floating above the clouds
It feels so good
I laugh and groan

Its hangover;
Cruel fate over!
Everything over!

Lae Market

In the silvery light of morning
Lae market was a riot of colors;
The dark crimson of the carrots
And the wet blue of the egg plants
The somber viridians of spinach
And the crisp green of lettuce
The scarlet's and gold of fruits
And the emerald green brightness
Of pyramids of melons
Everywhere the spongy red of buai spittle
Like drops of blood.

Night of Storm

The sinking sunlight gilded huge,
Billowing clouds of smoke
That poured black and white
Heat danced above the walls
Running in flames
Gleaming against the sunset
Like a diamond

In the direction of the distant sea
The seagulls cry
Among torn rages of clouds
Warning of a night of storm.

Accountant

At the office—

Phone ringing

Receptionist answering

Transferring callers to my extension

In-trays full of files for urgent attention

Staring at the computer monitor

Following up unpaid invoices with debtors

Entering receipts, payments and cash takings

Cash flow forecast for the next meeting

Pay all bills with cheque

Do deposits at the bank in a queue

Maintain customer relations

And monthly bank reconciliations

Deducting tax returns and superannuation

And remitting monthly contributions

From employees remunerations

At home—

Reclining from the day's work, tired

Tension released

I drink my coffee with ease

Go to sleep in peace;

Dreaming of the weekend

To relax at the bar with my girlfriend.

Saturday Night

Last Saturday night
I tried to drown all my worries
Watched my youthful twenty five years
Floating in a glass of cock-tail
Spent my night out partying
At the grooviest places in town
Dancing with those pretty girls at the club
This cock-tail has the flavor
To ease all my worries
A thousand stars twinkle before my eyes.
Depression is a word only whispered

Sunday morning
Finds me hidden beneath my covers
Still studying my problems;
Some stupid bitch blaming me
As the father of her child
She deserved that one night stand
Should have used a condom
To avoid this silly pregnancy headache

I'm here in my room
Surrounded with words;
Disoriented, disconcerted
My head spins!

Candidates

Election came once again
Candidates came
Different parties
Different posters
Different bribes
Different leaders
Different colors
and different promises;
some promised better roads,
infrastructure and rural electrification
Others promised education,
improved health and sanitation

Pink promises,
Green promises,
Yellow promises;
Making people color blind
We are disillusioned
with all these power-hungry candidates
who will forget all their promises
when they get to Waigani.

Dictator

A dictator rules our nation
He uses the Police as his fortification
Parliament is his puppet theatre

A narrow minded beast
Who uses money to dictate morals;
Who pacify poverty,
By keeping the poor passive
With more loans

The nation keeps pleading
For him to step down
The dictator uses his puppets
To defend his position;
To suppress any protests;
To shoot innocent students

He soars proudly like the kumul,
Way above the law
Untouchable!
Unstoppable!

When I am the Prime Minister

Another lifeless day
The leaves are brown
My mind is cloudy
Waiting for the bus at Waigani
Around me,
All the noise of the world
Buai sellers, street vendors, noisy bus crews
All struggling to earn some money
For their next meal

Where do all our taxes go?
Emotions rising
Anger peaking
All so confusing
Politics
Seriously?
This must be a big joke
Poly-many, many wives
Poly-steal, corrupt deals
Poly-tricks, liars
Blood sucking parasites
Truth.

It's getting late
We rush like sardines
To hitch a ride on the last buses
'Bus fare, bus fare, wasa bus fare!'
Bus crew cuts into my reverie
I hand him over a kina
'Keep the change' I said

He smiled
I smiled back

Problems of yesterday gone
Trees will look a little greener
And people will smile
When I am the Prime Minister.

A Nobody

One day I met a nobody
His back burnt from the sun
A relative of somebody
Homeless man sitting with his son
Avoided by everybody
Help the needy please! Anybody?

Gave him two, one kina coins
One for good luck
"Thank you!" He says
"God Bless your kind heart".
I took a deep breath.
I felt his words.
Inhale.
Exhale.
Life could be worse.
No home, no money
No job, no school
No nothing.
No iPhone, no MacBook
No car, no pizza
No nothing.
And yet, he can still smile
and have nothing at all.

Everything is Money

Buried thoughts,
Everyday needs.
Clothing, electricity, education
Everything is money
Cellphone, food, transportation
Everything is money
Birth control, prescriptions, medication
Everything is money
Buy a house with money
Buy a car with money
Buy a lady with money
Buy sex with money
Everything is money
A world heavy with disparity
Education is the key they said.
You'll be better off that way.

Look Closely

(In memory of the grandmother who was chased to her death at Hohola)

Look closely
You will see
A grandmother trying
To make ends meet by selling buai
Carrying the world on her shoulders
Why chase her to her death?
Do you see her?

Look closely
You will see
A boy who didn't complete his education
Due to financial constraints
No prospect of employment
Why do you beat him up for a lousy amount?
Do you see him?

Look closely
You will see
A young lady
From a broken family
With no means of income
Frequents the clubs for clients
To put food on the table
Why do you call her names?
Do you see her?

Look closely

You will see
A father of three
Surviving on a shoe-string budget
Living on the wings of a prayer
Why are we so selfish?
Do you see him?

Look closely
You will see
A female doctor
Who dedicated her life to serve the people
Yet was raped in her own house
Why rape a humble servant of God?
Do you see her?

Look closely
You will see
University students trying to protest
But shot at by unruly cops
Where is the freedom our founding fathers
Engraved in the Constitution?
Do you see them?

Look closely
You will see
Dedicated civil servants
Who serve with their hearts up their sleeves
While clowns in the haus tambaran
Play frolicking power games
Why is there so much corruption?
Do you see us?

Look closely
Look harder

Look deeper
You just might see
The world from our eyes

Fatherless Child

His dad is a Chinese man
A businessman
Who owned several shops
A love child that came by chance
Illegitimate as they say
by-product of unplanned romance
One-too-many drinks and a quick lay

The tequilas kept coming
Courtesy of the Chinese
Boozed up lady
A one night stand she'd soon forget
Baby's daddy gone
After his desires were met

Forgotten Christmas cards
No birthday cakes
Life shows no mercy

An empty sea shell
Forgotten dreams
A troubled life
Happiness is just a dream
Because he's a fatherless child

Transiting at Ninoy Aquino Airport (Manila)

A seven hour transit
At Ninoy Aquino International Airport
I stretch my legs, feel the cramp
Curse the 5 hours flight from Port Moresby
Waiting for the morning flight to Kuala Lumpur
Burning the midnight oil
I smile to the angelic flight attendants
On my way to the Immigration booth

'Maligayang pagdating sa Pilipinas sir'

Immigration officer says
As she stamps my passport
A porter in a suit takes my luggage
To the ground level, asks for a hundred peso,
Outside the terminal,
I look around and take in the sight
Of people milling all around,
Everyone gesturing me
To board their taxi cabs
I light a Dunhill cigarette
Bought from one of the duty free shops
inhale the sweet nicotine
Five hours was torture

I stand there gazing in awe
At the beehive of activities
Like a bush kanaka from
A '*Gods Must Be Crazy*' movie
This giant adobe brown snake
Never seems to sleep.

Petronas Twin Towers (Kuala Lumpur)

She stands so tall, day and night
Beautiful, breath-taking and majestic
She bathes in the rain
Feels the burning sun
And the cool breeze of the evening
She carries the clouds on her head.

Chats, midnight walks
Whispers, giggles of lovers
The cries, laughs, kisses and hugs
Broken hearts, innocent smiles
Sad and worried faces lost in thoughts
She witnesses it all!
She know everyone's secret
but she keeps it to herself.

Selfies, we-fies, group poses
in all the pictures
she smiles radiantly
People admire her, praise her
Click snaps, share moments
Upload and tag on Facebook
And they are gone!
But she is there for them
Day and night, sun and rain

The memories we shared
I shall never forget
This beautiful queen of Kuala Lumpur.

JORDAN DEAN

Life: Modernity & Culture



Tattooed Face

Behind my tattooed face
Is a face full of love and grace
Hidden beneath this hard and hateful cover
Is a glowing heart
That welcomes strangers
To those rocky cliffs I have loved the most
Or to grainy softness of white beaches
And, as green evening wafts the spray
Through slender coconut palms swaying away,
They just might glimpse at my feathery shadow
And fear that I eat humans raw.

Prostitute

Girl of the street

You kill me with your 20 year old seductiveness

Your one step, two bounce movements

What a pity for me.

I asked for buai

You said; Hemarai lasi, you dirty beggar

What a pity for me.

But on fortnight Friday

I saw a grey- haired executive

Pick you up in his Pajero

Now I know you're one payarise

I feel sorry for you.

Meri Wantok

Gone is the 'steel wool' hair
Now relaxed and gleaming
With the use of hair food or gel
Sometimes pammed or dyed
To a golden- brown, blonde lass.

Once your lips were 'buai' red
Now covered with lipsticks.
Gone is the dedemusi smell
Now you overdose with Casablanca or Roxana
Meri or chemist?

Before your hands were strong
Now fragile and painted with polish
Your chocolate brown skin is smooth
Thanks to the lotions and creams
With your pencil- thin eye brows
You crucify me with that plastic smile of yours.

Before I could pay you with bagi and mwali
Now I'll sweat my guts
Until my ebony butt is sore
Just to pay you fifty thousand kina
For your plastic beauty.

Identity

I tried to claim a Latin accent
Hollywood looks, Scandinavian eyes
And a French appetite.
I spoke fancy English
Wore an American Nike shoe
Dressed like an Aussie
And drove a hundred thousand kina Ford XLT

I was a Mario, Akon or Usher
An Eminem, Chris Brown, Justin Timberlake
Even a Shane Ward
But to my disgrace, I was stripped bare
And saw that I was made of;
Papua New Guinean blood,
Melanesian bones
And Pacific dreams.

No More Tapa

No more tapa
Now we have jeans and six pockets
Bagi and mwali are things of the past
Now we pay our women with ten thousand kina
A road will be constructed here
To bring rice and tinned fish to us
We don't need yams and taro.

No more sagali
Now we have Sony Hi-Fi radios
And Bob Marley claiming he shot the sheriff
But our Waigani sheriffs are alive
And riding flashy vehicles
We cut down our trees, saw the logs
And build nightclubs for the party animals,
To legitimize adultery and AIDS.

No more bwabwale
Now we pretend to be sorry with a few tears
We don't respect our dead relatives anymore
All we worry about is money and development
Once the moni- man build new mines
We only chew our buai and gossip;
Where is our royalties?

Grand Father

Grandfather sits lazily on his patapata
Smoking his rolled kasia
The cotton- white cloud is on his hair
His eyes are dim
Through the mist of eighty years.
But those misty eyes have seen
Skillful hands steer the lakatoi
And light feet dance the daiyo

Today, he hears the sagali
And his ancient pulse beat
To the forgotten tune;
A broken chant,
An untold story
Lost in an alien tale.

Commodity

Your home is a sight to behold
It shines with a thousand lights
And you dress like a super model every day
But you married for wealth, not for love
Though you live in a grand palace
You're only a dove in a filthy cage.
Neighbors think you're happy
And free from care,
You're not, though you seem to be
It's sad when I think of your wasted life,
For youth cannot mate with age
And your beauty was sold
For an old man's gold.

Pretty Vavine

She loves to party, have a good time
She looks so hearty, feeling fine
She loves to smoke Dunhill cigarette

She loves to model up in designer clothes
She is the scramble
And she moves with passion

She belongs to the nightclub-
The dance floor;
Closely attached to the white can,
Cigarette after cigarette
Smoking and laughing.

She enjoys the weekend most;
In tight jeans and mini top
She goes off to party
At the Gold Club or Shooters,
She is every man's pretty vavine.

The Forbidden Dancer

I am the forbidden dancer,
The poet who can save this world
With the twilight ballet of the sea
I am the dancer of compassionate whispers;
Chanting harmonies to the pearl
Scattering poems of a divine language
Across the horizon.

A figure dancing the ritual of life
Of sacred words and timeless foretelling
In ancestral waves of frangipani blossoms

A figure carving the destiny of love
Of blooming hearts and divine memories
Revitalizing the soul of the dance.

A figure painting the color of joy
Of seasons of melodies and immortal wisdom
From rhythmic dreams of graceful floating,
Converting silent fears to divine tears.

A dancer of tame less silence
Of mortality into sunrise
Awakening the ancestors from the spirit realm.
The forbidden dance is the beginning of eternity.

The Dancer

In all the glory and splendor
Of her traditional bilas
And her painted body
Like a beautiful rainbow,
She swayed to the rhythm of the wind
Fingers pluck across the setting sun
Tracing the legends of her ancestors
On foams of ocean rippling.

From the womb of dawn,
She danced to the melodies
Of the sagali
At the first sound of her smooth voice
The spirits are stirred
And my poor heart is crippled
By her heavenly beauty.

Mother Land

Guided by the sunrise
I navigated the world in my lakatoi
Searching for happiness
But was never satisfied.

I came to the end of daylight
And faced the doorway of darkness
But when I touched my face
I realized there were tears
And my spirit was cold
All that I thought I loved
And needed was gone.
I was naked,
Shivering in my misery.

At noon I sailed towards the sunset
And came across a deserted island;
The embers of their fire
Still glowing in the darkness.

I looked down, looked deep
And saw my begotten umbilical cord
Beneath the ashes.
A voice from deep within
Drew me closer until I reached out
And put my fingers on my blessed cord
I had come home at last.

Here is where my mother dripped her blood
Here is where my ancestors lie

JORDAN DEAN

Here is where my children shall grow
Here is where my bone shall decay.

Slowly, meticulously
I rekindled the embers
And burnt away my dead body
When it was gone,
I was no longer naked.

Bunebune (White Dove)

This morning I watched the coming of the day
On the modawa trees at the foot of the hill
And among the clusters of the frangipani flowers
Grey leaves of dawn turned to leaves of rose
Beneath the scarlet splendor of the havens,
A ripple of golden sun came out of the narrow valley
And ran like the running tide through the flushed grey,
Washing in amongst the sprays of silver ray beside me.

When I returned, the tide of noon was upon the hills
And amid the purple heather and pale amethyst
I stopped to rest on one of the great granite rocks
And in the vast blue of the havens above me
Nothing was visible save a speck of white
Where a bird drifted above that invisible sea.

And through the hot tide of noon
Went a yet hotter breath within me
As the heat of flame
And as I rest on the cold, grey granite
Far, far beyond that place
Beyond the dim hills of dreams
There my heart hung suspended
As that sacred white bird longing for home.

Then, when at nightfall
I climbed the hill for the last time
At the setting of the sun,
The golden ripple was an ebbing tide
And the spray of the silver ray were as a perishing flame

And the modawa sap was red as drops of blood.

There, I paused once more
And watched the flaming splendor of the rose colored sky
Slowly fading into the grey veils of dusk.
But my heart no longer sang
As those grey veils obscured my rose-lit haven,
For my thoughts was all of that bird-
That sacred white bird
That pierced the azure of my noonday haven
And in so doing, pierced my very heart.

Return of the Poet

The poet is coming home today
From wandering on a foreign land
Prepare not the best ulena
And mats of antique styles
Rather, leave the room bare
With frangipanis from yesterday.
Prepare his house by the shore
With its sago-thatched roof
With his necktie and polished leather shoe
The old poet shall come.
Big waves will slap along this coast
And the moon shall shine on those waters
Yes, the poet is coming back
Despite his titles and powers
The poet shall be buried
Unwept and unsung.

Glossary of Terms Used

- Bagi: traditional shell necklace
Bilas: traditional attire or costumes
Buai: Betel nut
Bunebune: White dove
Bwabwale: Funeral feast
Daiyo: Traditional Fergussion Island dance
Dedemusi: Scented leaf or plant used for traditional dances
Haus Tambaran: Parliament House
Hemarai lasi: Shameless
Kasia: Rolled tobacco
Kumul: Bird of Paradise
Lakatoi: Sailing Canoe
Maligayang pagdating sa Pilipinas sir: (tagalog) Welcome to Philippines Sir
Meri: Female, lady, girl
Meri Wantok: Female Relative
Modawa: Rose Wood
Moni- man: Rich Man
Moni-sicknesses: Financial woes or problems
Mwali: Traditional arm shell
Patapata: Platform
Payarise: Street slang for prostitute
Sagali: Traditional Feast or party
Spak-Brus: Marijuana
Tapa: Traditional fabric from the bark of a tree used for clothing
Ulena: Clay pot
Vavine: Lady or girl
Wasa: One Kina

Illustrations Used

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