7

Lewa Was Mama (Beloved Guardian Mother)

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*Mi raun lo Sir John Guise stadium
Baim buai na stori tsol
Susa wokabout i kam pulim buai
lo han blo mi. Mitupla lap na tok pilai
Tsol em bingim han blo mi na tok
lo iau blo mi*

I was at Sir John Guise stadium
Buy betel nut and chat along
Sister approaches. From my hand she
takes my betel nut. We laugh and
tell a joke
She squeeze my hand and whispers
in my ear

*Susa yu raun we? Lapun mama ya
i painim yu
Mi bekim – buai spakim mi tu
Susa mi stap. Raun tasol. Painim wok.
Mekim wok
Kisim ol pikinini go lo skul. Yu
save pinis*

Sister where have you been? Old
mother there she looks for you
I respond – giddy with betel nut
Sister I am here. Spin around. Look
for work. Make work
Take children to the school. You
know the usual

<i>Yu tok Lapun mama ya la tok wanem?</i>	You say old mother there what talk she wants me for?
<i>Susa em harim osem wanpla rong i painim yu</i>	Sister she hears that something bad you came across
<i>Mi bekim, ai raun blo buai wok lo isi nau</i>	I respond, betel nut dizziness now easing up
<i>Ah yu tok. Em harim se wanpla rong i kisim mi?</i>	Ah say what – she heard something bad I came across?
<i>Ah em harim osem. Yu stap yu traim ringim em n sekim em</i>	Ah she heard. You should try and ring and check on her
<i>Sekim em na painim aut wanem rong em harim</i>	Check and find exactly what bad she heard about
<i>Aiyo buai kik ya tanim ai blo mi na bel blo mi sut</i>	Aye betel nut dizziness comes strong and heart it skips a beat
<i>Wanem rong nau ya lapun mama ya i painim mi?</i>	What wrong – what bad that old mother she look for me?
<i>Mi raun lo Boroko, mi sekim ol kolos lo Yakaplin</i>	I go to Boroko. I check dress at market Yakaplin
<i>Ol kolos ya stail tumas. Sapos mi traim ating by lewa ya kalap kalap</i>	Those stylish clothes. If I try – excited might my lover be
<i>Lewa ya tu sa taitim masol tumas. Liklik wara na ai sa raun. Liklik wara na kros na jeles pasin sa pundaun. Ating mi stailim mi tumas</i>	Lover too much flexing muscle. Small water and dizzy he becomes Small water and upon me anger and jealousy come. Maybe too much styles – me
<i>Ol kolos tu ya nais tumas. Fifti toea, wan kina na tu kina</i>	Oh those dresses very nice. Fifty toea, one kina and two kina
<i>Ai sore ating mi gat fiftin kina ba mi autim displa retpla blaus</i>	Aye if only I had fifteen kina that bright red blouse would be mine
<i>Tasol tingting kisim masol lewa ya. Nogut em belhat nating ken</i>	But muscle lover comes to mind. Anger he might feel again
<i>Mi raun i go i kam. Mi tingim lapun mama ya.</i>	I go and I come. I think of that old mother there

7. LEWA WAS MAMA (BELOVED GUARDIAN MOTHER)

<i>Maski mi traim sekim em. Pinga paitim namba lo mobail pon Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip Putim pon lo iau na harim. Nek blo em ba kam o? Putim pon lo iau</i>	Never mind. I try and check on her. Fingers hit the numbers on the mobile phone Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip Put phone on the ear. Listen. Will her voice come? Put the phone on my ear
<i>Halo. Halo. Yu husait? Halo. Halo Mi no harim yu. Yu wet. Ok ok em nau Yu husait ya mi tok! Yu husait ya mi tok! Maski giamanim mi mi no yangpla meri. Yu harim? Mi lapun meri ya</i>	Hello. Hello. Who are you? Hello. Hello I cannot hear you. You wait. Ok ok now is good Who are you I say?! Who are you I say?! Don't lie to me. I am not a pretty lass. You hear? I am an old lady
<i>Mi bekim. Mi bekim. Ol kolos kala raunim ai blo mi Ol koins lo bilum pairap tu Halo. Lapun mama? Em mi tasol ya Susa ya em tok yu painim mi? Aiyo sori tru mi no ringim yu</i>	I respond. I respond. Dizzy from the colourful dresses The coins in my bilum clink as well Hello. Old mother? It is only me. Sister said you look for me? Aye sorry did not ring you sooner
<i>Em yu ah? Pikinini lewa blo mi. em yu ah? Lapun mama ya em luksave lo nek blo mi Ai yu em pikinini blo mi. Yu orait? Ayee lewa pikinini blo mi long taim mi no lukim yu</i>	Is that you? My beloved child. Is that you? Old mother there she heard and recognised my voice Aye! You are my child. Are you ok? Aye my beloved child very long time no see

<i>Mi harim em. Ol kolos kala ya tu ya</i>	I heard her. Those dress colours blinding me
<i>Ret, yello, grin, blu, kala kala stret na nais</i>	Red. Yellow. Blue. Colours. Colours – bold and nice
<i>Spet blo buai tu ya karamapim sait</i>	Betel spittle covering the side
<i>Sumuk blo paia na mit em mekim bel karai</i>	Fire, smoke and meat – smells make my stomach growl
<i>Ah. Mama em mi tasol ya. Susa tok yu painim mi?</i>	Ah. Mother it is only me. Sister there said you looked for me?
<i>Yu tok. Wanpla samting yu laikim mi mekim?</i>	You say. Is there something I can do?
<i>Yu sik mama yu laik mi kukim sup na kam?</i>	Are you sik mama? Shall I cook some soup?
<i>Yu wet bai mi go maket Malaoro painim pis na kumu mi kam kuk</i>	You wait let me find fish, vegies at market Malaoro. I'll come cook.
<i>Ai lewa pikinini mi painim yu steret</i>	Aye beloved child I searched for you I did
<i>Ai taim mama tok olsem, lewa blo mi i sut</i>	Aye when mama said like that my heart it skipped a beat
<i>Wanpla rong bai em autim. Em wanem rong steret?</i>	What's this wrong she will reveal? What's this bad she talks about?
<i>Ol kolos kala sun i kukim nau. Tingting blo mi i go lo buai ken</i>	Those dresses sun scorched now. Betel nut kick comes to mind
<i>Ai lewa pikinini blo mi. nek blo mama i wari nau</i>	Aye beloved child of mine. Mama's voice is worried now
<i>Mi harim osem masol lewa ya i mekim sampla rabis pasin</i>	I hear that muscle lover there he does some bad bad things
<i>Mi harim osem em kisim wanpla meri ken</i>	I hear he's has got another mistress now
<i>Mi harim osem ai blo yu bilak yu putim ai galas i go lo wok</i>	I hear that your eye is black. That you wore dark glasses into work

7. LEWA WAS MAMA (BELOVED GUARDIAN MOTHER)

<i>O tok tru yu harim lapun mama</i>	Ok. Old mother dear all that you hear is true
<i>Tasol yu save pinis em pasin maret mipla stap</i>	But you know these ways are marriage ways. We are here
<i>Em orait. Em go wok. Haste nait mipla go raun lo tambu meri ya</i>	It's ok. He's gone to work. Last night we visited the sister in law
<i>Ol pikinini orait mipla stap tasol</i>	The children are alright. We are ok
<i>Ai na mi kam raun ai giris long kolos lo Yakaplin</i>	Aye and here I am admiring clothes at Yakaplin
<i>Lapun mama em maret pasin tasol – mi orait</i>	Old mama it's just marriage ways that is all. I'm ok
<i>Na yu stap tasol yu no sik?</i>	And you ok? You are not sick?
<i>Aiyo mi stap pinis mi kam raun painim pis</i>	Aye I'll make sure I'll find fish I'll come
<i>Tasol lapun mama ya iau blong em i no harim</i>	But old mother there her deaf ears did not hear
<i>Olgeta gutpla toktok blo mi swit tumas</i>	All my good talk, my sweet sweet words
<i>Em i no harim osem mi tok em maret pasin tasol</i>	She did not hear me say that this is marriage ways that's all
<i>Het storong ya lapun mama ya em i tok</i>	That stubborn mother there she continued to say
<i>Lewa pikinini blo mi</i>	Beloved child of mine
<i>Wari kiliim mi turu mi tingim yu</i>	When I think of you I am worried sick
<i>Mi tingim yu bai mi halpim yu olsem wanem?</i>	I think of helping you. How – how can I help?
<i>Maret pasin em turu tasol skin blo yu em skin blo mi</i>	Marriage ways that's true but your skin is my skin

*Pikinini yu harim mi.
Yu harim gut
Sampla toktok blo mi yu kisim nau
Yu harim mi gat sampla samting.
Samting ya em pawa stret
Samting ya em masol lewa bai silek.
Yu harim? Yu klia lo tok blo mi?*

My child listen to me.
Listen very carefully
My words right now you take
You listen. I have something.
This thing is powerful true
This thing. Your beloved muscle
will calm down. You hear?
You understand?

*Ai lapun mama yu mekim
bikpla tok
Em pawa ya em wanem
samting stret?
Na i stap we? Yu bai givim or
bai mi baim?
Em lo maket or lo balus?*

Aye old mother what you say
is very deep
What is this power thing you
talk about?
Where is it? Will you give it?
Will I buy?
Is it at the market or imported?

*Ai pikinini. Yu noken wari.
Yu em lewa blo mi stret.
Mi wari lo yu na mi painim
Em mi yet bai mi givim
Noken tingting noken wari noken pret*

Aye child. Do not worry. You are
my beloved child
I worry for you I found this thing.
This thing I will give to you
Don't think. Don't worry.
Don't fear.

*Lapun mama na displa pawa ya
displa malera
Em i wel, o sop, or lip or simuk,
o paura or wara?
Em Kawar? Mi no save lukim yet
Plis yu tok klia na mi harim*

Old mother – and this power –
this magic
Is it oil, or soap, or leaves, or smoke,
or powder or water?
Is it ginger? I have not seen it yet.
Please explain so I can hear

7. LEWA WAS MAMA (BELOVED GUARDIAN MOTHER)

<i>Lewa pikinini em wel yu putim lo skin blo yu</i>	Beloved child. It's oil you smooth on your skin
<i>Lewa pikinini em ti yu tanim bai masol lewa i diring</i>	Beloved child it's tea you make. Your beloved muscle he will drink
<i>Lewa pikini laik blo yu tasol Yu tokim mi lo laik blo yu na mi givim</i>	Beloved child it's up to you Tell me if this is what you want and I will give
<i>Ai lapun mama. Ai lapun mama Nau em maus blo mi em pas na ai blo mi em op</i>	Aye old mama. Aye old mama Now my mouth is silent but my eyes open wide
<i>Tingting nau i go bek buai. Mi spetim buai ating bai tingting gut i kisim mi</i>	Betel nut comes back to mind Maybe betel nut will bring clarity back to stay with me
<i>Trangu lapun mama wari lo mi Trangu lapun mama tingim mi Em painim wei lo halpim mi lo taim nongut blo mi</i>	Poor old mama worries about me Poor old mama she thinks of me She finds a way to help me out when bad times come to me
<i>Het blo mi i raun lo kainkain planti tingting</i>	My head spins with all kinds of thoughts
<i>Mi tingim laip, mi tingim maret pasin tu ya</i>	I think of life, I think of marriage ways as well
<i>Em sa swit na olgeta samting em orait</i>	It is very sweet and everything is alright
<i>Tasol taim masol lewa ya sa apim wara</i>	But when beloved muscle lifts his water
<i>Na han skin sa tait na han sa slek</i>	And with his flexed up arms and his hand he takes a strike
<i>Aiyo maret pasin ya tu sa hat Skin sa pen na maus sa buruk</i>	Aiyo marriage ways they can be hard Skin will hurt and mouth will break
<i>Lewa sa pen na kainkain wari tingting sa kamap</i>	Heart aches and all kinds of worry thoughts come up
<i>Aiyo maret em orait tasol masol lewa sa tanim baksait</i>	Aiyo marriage is ok but beloved muscle he can turn his back

*Mama lewa yu tok ken ah
Dispela samting wanem pawa stret?
Bai mi plai lo nait? Bai mi lukim
wanem?
Nogut masol lewa lukim mi?*

Beloved mama please say it again
This thing what power is it?
Will I fly at night? What
will I see?
Maybe muscle lover will see me?

*Pikinini lewa yu sa wari nating stret
Em i no wanpla samting nogut
Ai mi tokim yu. Em winim wel
blo Kutubu. Yu rabim wel lo
skin blo yu
Yu tanim ti na em bai dring em winim
ti blo Kurumul*

Beloved child you worry over nothing
It is nothing bad
Aye I tell you. It's better than the oil
of Kutubu. You smooth this oil on
your skin
You boil a tea and he will drink its
better than tea of Kurumul

*Aiyo pikinini lewa bai olgeta
wari i pinis
Bai masol lewa blo yu bai
masol slek
Em bai lukim yu bai lukim
yangpla flawa
Em bai lukim swit flawa susu
i sanap*

Aiyo beloved child all your worries
will be no more
Your beloved muscle his muscles
will ease up
He will only see a young flower –
that is you
He will see a sweet sweet flower.
Breasts young and tender

*Aiyo pikinini lewa, masol lewa
bai no nap
Tromoi ai i go lo narapla meri ken
Yu tasol yu bai flawa sanap stap
Wanem kainkain tingting em i gat
lo narapla*

Aiyo beloved child muscle lover
he will not
Cast his eyes on another woman
Only you. A flower you will stand
All his many thoughts of another

*Em bai lus tingting.
Masol nau sa tait lo brukim maus
blo yu
Masol ya bai slek na silip
lukautim yu
Pikinini lewa olgeta wari blo yu bai
ol go tu*

He will cast away
Those muscles now intent on hurting
you. Break your mouth
Muscles will relax and lie down
to care for you
My beloved child all your worries
disappear

7. LEWA WAS MAMA (BELOVED GUARDIAN MOTHER)

<i>Yu putim wel lo skin o tanim ti em dring</i>	You smooth this oil on skin or make tea he drinks
<i>Tupla wantaim wankain tasol</i>	Both are very similar
<i>Olgeta wari blo yu bai pinis</i>	All your worries they will disappear
<i>Olgeta kainkain tingting em sa gat lo paul bai lus</i>	All his thoughts of going around he will forget
<i>Mi tokim yu em pawa stret, malera, posin,</i>	I tell you it is powerful, Magic, Potion,
<i>Mi tokim yu olgeta wari blo yu bai ronowei</i>	I tell you all your worries they will run away
<i>Mi holim stap sapos yu laik kam lukim</i>	I hold it here in case you want to see
<i>Mi haitim wanpla tasol stap nogut yu tok mi karim kam</i>	I keep one only in case you want – I can bring to you
<i>Aiyo olgeta skin blo mi kirap</i>	Aiyo goosebumps ripple through my skin
<i>Aiyo kainkain tingting raun lo het</i>	Aiyo all kinds of thoughts enter my head
<i>Ating buai nau em bai stretim displa het</i>	I think betel nut now will straighten this here head
<i>Lapun mama ya i tromoi toktok stret</i>	This old mother she her talk is making sense
<i>Ok lapun mama bai mi pinisim raun na mi kam</i>	Ok old mother let me finish I will come
<i>Yu stap lo we? Bai mi painim yu</i>	Where are you? I will look for you.
<i>Yu wetim Tunde nambaut mi bai kam</i>	I'll come around Tuesday. You wait.
<i>Yu harim? Displa em mi harim em i swit tumas</i>	You hear? This thing I hear it sounds so very sweet

*Mi stap mi stap na salim
planti tingting go
Olgeta tok blo lapun mama em orait
Tasol nau lo pepa kainkain stori
sa kamap
Olsem malera na posin em i no
gutpla pasin*

I stay. I stay and dwell
a lot on this
All her words are ok – old mother
But now many many stories show up
in the papers
That magic and poison are not
good ways

*Ol tok ol Hagen kilim
wanpla mama
Ol Hagen kukim mama ya lo paia
Olgeta man meri sanap na
lukim em
Ol tok pawa, malera, posin mama
ya em strong tumas*

They said the Hageners killed
a woman
The Hageners burnt her on a fire
All the men and women stood
and looked at her
They said her power, her magic,
her poison was too strong

*Poret blo ol ol kilim em ol
Hagen ya
Ol tok ol wansol Bougainville kilim
tripla meri
Ol susa ya ol mekim rong? Ol mekim
wanem rong turu?
Na lapun mama ya em painim wei lo
halpim mi*

Their fear overcame them –
those Hageners
They said the islanders on Bougainville
three women they did kill
Did those sisters do a wrong? What
wrong exactly did they do?
And old mother there she has found
oil to help me out

*Lapun mama ya em toktok
gut tasol
I no gat wanpla rong. Em painim
sol wei lo halpim mi
Em wari kilim em lo mi na em i
painim mi
Ai planti kainkain tingting mi salim*

Old mother there her words are
very good
There is nothing wrong at all. She just
found way to help me out
She is worried sick for me and all
she did is look for me
Aye all kinds of thoughts I
dwell upon

7. LEWA WAS MAMA (BELOVED GUARDIAN MOTHER)

<i>Tunde kam na Tunde go na mi no go</i>	Tuesday came and Tuesday went. I did not go
<i>Painim lapun mama ya. Mi no go</i>	Look for old mother there. I did not go
<i>Friday kam na masol lewa apim wara</i>	Friday came and muscle lover his drink he lifted
<i>Ai taim nogut blo mi i kam han buruk</i>	Aye when bad times come. Broken arm
<i>Han buruk mi go hausik go painim marasin</i>	Broken arm to hospital I go. Look for medicine
<i>Ol nes i sasim mi lo baim han buruk</i>	The nurses charge me for my broken arm
<i>Ol tok mi rong lo man i paitim mi</i>	They say it's my fault – the man he fights with me
<i>Ai masol lewa em kam lukautim mi klostu tripla wik</i>	Aye nearly three weeks muscle lover there he looked after me.
<i>Narapla Tunde kam na go. Narapla potnait kam</i>	Another Tuesday comes and goes. Another fortnight comes.
<i>Wara i kapsait osem tais. Masol lewa ya apim wara gut</i>	Water pours like a flood. Muscle lover lifts his water well
<i>Em maret pasin tasol mi tok. Olgeta samting i orait</i>	Its only marriage ways I say. Everything will be ok
<i>Maret pasin tu ya mi tok. Taim nogut taim wara ron mi sa kisim taim</i>	But marriage ways I say. When bad times come and water runs – suffering I stay
<i>Mi tingim ol gapman nau ol tok lo rausim pasin kilim galas meri</i>	I think of government now they say to get rid of sorcery killings
<i>Mi tingim taim lapun man i sik na Blut blo pisin ol glasim wok painim aut</i>	I think of my old man – sick The blood of a bird they used to diagnose
<i>Husat turu em i bagarapim em. Wanem has blo sik blem</i>	Who to blame for making him sick. What to blame for making him sick.

<i>Mi tingim taim lapun man i dai na rokok kam sindaun</i>	I remember when my old man died and the frog came and sat
<i>Lo dua lo haus em makim taim nogut</i>	On the door of the house to tell us – bad news coming
<i>Mi tingim diriman. Mi tingim sain blo tumbuna</i>	I think of dreams I had. I think of signs of ancestors
<i>Ai lapun mama ya em i no rong. Em wok lo wari tsol lo mi</i>	Aye old mother there she is not wrong. She is only worried for me
<i>Mi tingim mama karim i stori lo wanpla lapun papa blem</i>	I think of birth mother's story of her old father in the days
<i>Em tokim em lo bai ol i wasim em</i>	He said to her that they must wash her too
<i>Mama karim bekim. Ai papa yu no harim yet?</i>	Birth mother responded. Hey old man have you not heard?
<i>Ol lotu lain i wasim mi lo wara na Jisas em was man blo mi nau</i>	The churchfolk washed me and Jesus he is my guardian watchman now
<i>Na bubu man ya bekim em olsem Pikinini em orait mi ting Jisas em i gutpla man</i>	And Grandfather he responded like this Child that's all right I think Jesus is a good man
<i>Was man blo ples antap. Tasol yu save samting blong graun em i pawa tu</i>	He will watch you from above. But as you know the spirits of the land are powerful
<i>Olsem na bai mipla wasim yu</i>	That is why we must anointment will protect you too
<i>Na trangu mama karim daunim em yet nau</i>	So poor dear birth mama. She humbled herself now
<i>Na larim lapun papa wasim em na spetim em lo buai</i>	She let the old man wash her. Protect her and anoint her with betel nut spittle
<i>Kisim strong blong tumbuna na Papa Got wantem</i>	Taking strength from ancestors and Father God as well
<i>Em displa pasin tumbuna bin stap lo taim bipo na nau i stap lo blut</i>	These ancestral ways have been here before and now they're in the blood

7. LEWA WAS MAMA (BELOVED GUARDIAN MOTHER)

*Na masol lewa ya masol i no slek
Masol lewa ya i taitim han olgeta taim
Na skin blo mi laik dai. Mi sa
pundaun olsem lang
Skin blo mi i les na wari kilim mi*

And muscle lover. Muscle did not slack
Muscle lover he always flex his arms
And my skin. It is numb. I fall
down like a fly
My body is tired and I am
worried sick.

*Ol poroman blong masol lewa tu ya
Ol i tokim em olsem. Em ya kaikai
kawar na spetim meri ya
bai em i lusim yu. Rausim em.
Maus blong em i sap tumas. I gat
planti resa mama stap*

And the friends of muscle lover too
To him they said like this. Here, eat
this ginger and curse that woman
She will leave you. Get rid of her,
Her mouth is way too sharp. There
are many other beauties here

*Mi traim lapun mama ya mi
traim em tasol
Pinga blo mi paitim pon
Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
Lewa blo mi sut. Mi pulim win*

Let me try old mother there. Let me
just try her and see
My fingers hit the phone
Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
My heart it skips a beat. I take a breath

*Tasol nogat susa meri ya em tromoi
inglis kam
'The person you are calling is not
available. Please try again later'
Aiyo lapun mama ya yu go we?
Yu stap o?
Em orait bai mi traim gen bihain*

But it's only sister on the phone
in English she responds
'The person you are calling is not
available. Please try again later'
Aiyo old mother dear where are you?
Are you there?
That's ok I will try again later

*Narapla Tunde kam na go
Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
Susa meri tsol em bekim kam ...
Em orait bai mi 'try again later'
Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip*

Another Tuesday comes and goes
Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
Only sister responds again ... That's
alright I will try again later
Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip

<i>Tripla mun i lus na les lo wet mi ketsim bas i go</i>	Three months go by and sick of waiting I catch a bus and go
<i>Go kamap lo ples we op kat timba haus sanap. Lapun mama. Yu stap?</i>	I arrive at the place where the off cut timber house stands. Mama are you there?
<i>Trangu taim mi go kamap i nogat haus i stap. Sit blo paia tsol i bilasim graun</i>	Alas when I arrive there is no house but ashes decorate the ground
<i>Aweee mi sakim het. Na op kat haus? I bin sanap lo hia</i>	Aweee I shake my head. Off cut house? It used to stand right here
<i>Isi tasol mi askim ol lain lo sait sait haus</i>	Whispering I asked the neighbours nearby
<i>Ay plis yupla lukim lapun mama ya? Em go raun?</i>	Aye please have you seen this old mama here? Has she gone out?
<i>Ssss weeeeshh susa meri yu husat? Yu lewa pikinini?</i>	Shhh weeeeshh sister girl who are you? Are you beloved child?
<i>Sori tru lapun mama go pinis</i>	Sorry true but old mother she has gone
<i>Mipla kisim kainkain tingting na bel hevi</i>	We were faced with all sorts of thoughts and worries too
<i>Lapun mama ya em pawa meri stret na bilum i pulap</i>	That old mother she was very powerful. Her bag was full of stuff
<i>Malera, kambang, posin, kawar glass meri em em stret</i>	Magic. Lime. Poison. Ginger. Sorceress she was that is true
<i>Olgeta pawa ya em holim stap na pawa blem i winim mipela</i>	All the powers that she had they overcame us you see
<i>Poret em kisim mipla taim harim kainkain masalai</i>	We were filled with fear when we heard all sorts of spirits
<i>Na pisin krai lo nait. Ol meri Samarai palai lo bik moning</i>	And birds they call at night. Samarai women they fly over near dawn
<i>Rokrok singaut na binatang i dai lo winduo</i>	Frogs they call and bees drop dead on the window sill
<i>Mipla kisim taim lo kainkain birua tingting</i>	We were faced with all sorts of thoughts and worries too

7. LEWA WAS MAMA (BELOVED GUARDIAN MOTHER)

<i>Olsem na ol man i makim maus blo mipla ol it tok</i>	So the men who represent. The men they said
<i>Ol i tok. Em mas go! Em i mas go na ples bai orait ken!</i>	They said. She must go! She must go and our place will be safe again!
<i>Susa lewa mipla kukim haus blo em olsem na sit blo paia yu lukim</i>	Beloved sister so we burnt her house. That's the ashes that you see.
<i>Trangu kilim em nogat tasol ronim em mipla sutim ston</i>	Poor thing. Kill her we did not. But chase her we did and we did so throwing stones
<i>Ayee nau em bikpla wari tingting kisim mi</i>	Ayee I am overcome now with concern for her
<i>Em go we? Mi askim ol. Em orait? Mi askim ol</i>	Where did she go? I ask of them. Is she ok? I asked of them
<i>Em mama lewa blo mi stret na yupla ronim em</i>	She is my beloved mother how could you chase her so
<i>Wai na tripla mun i lus mi wet na painim pis?</i>	Why did I wait three months? Find fish and come to her.
<i>Ol gutpla lain ol tokim mi</i>	Some good folks they told me this
<i>Susa noken pret lapun mama mipla harim</i>	Sister have no fear. Old mother there we have heard
<i>Lapun mama go painim pemili lo Morata</i>	Old mother has gone to family at Morata
<i>Em no dai tasol hia em noken kam bek no gut bel hat pasin i kamap</i>	She did not die but here she must not return. In case angry ways arise
<i>Ayee gutpla tingting i kisim mi</i>	Ayee now my thoughts are calmer now
<i>Em i no dai. Em i ronowei go Morata</i>	She did not die. She has runaway to Morata
<i>Em orait bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip</i>	That's ok. Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
<i>Susa meri tasol bekim Inglis kam ... 'try again later'</i>	Sister lady only English she responds ... 'try again later'

*Tunde kam na Tunde go narapla tripla
mun i lus*

Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip

*Aiyo mama lewa mi salim
tingting kam*

Wai na mi no harim tok blo yu

*Maret pasin em tasol i no
wanpla samting tu*

*Maret pasin em tasol. Masol lewa
apim wara*

*Masol lewa paitim mi, skin i pen,
blut i kapsait*

*Masol lewa kisim narapla, na narapla
na narapla meri ken*

*Ating sapos mi harim yu – was mama
lewa, lapun mama*

*Ating sapos mi harim yu masol lewa ya
bai dai lo mi tasol*

Ating bai maret pasin stap orait

Ating bai pemili tu bai sindaun gut

*Em orait na nau mi salim
tingting tsol*

*Mi bai bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
Inap swit nek blo yu pairap lo pon lewa
was mama blo mi*

*Diriman na wetim wanpla gutpla taim
bai masol lewa ya i dai lo mi tasol.*

Tuesday comes and Tuesday goes.
Another three more months pass by

Bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
Aiyo beloved mother my thoughts
I send to you

Why did I not heed your counsel

It's only marriage ways. It's really
no big deal

Only marriage ways. Muscle lover
takes his drink

Muscle lover beats me up. Body
hurts. Blood – it pours down

Muscle lover takes another and
another and another woman again

Perhaps if I had taken heed – guardian
beloved mother. Old mother

Perhaps if I had taken heed. Muscle
lover – in love with me alone

Maybe marriage life would be alright

Maybe family life would be ok

That's ok. So now I think of you and
ponder these

I will bip bip bip bip bip bip bip bip
Until I hear your sweet voice on the
phone. My beloved guardian mother

Dream and stay and wait for one
fine day when muscle lover would
die for me alone.

Afterword for *Lewa Was Mama*

Lewa Was Mama—Beloved Guardian Mother—can be considered an ethnographic poem (Denzin 1997; Maynard and Cahnmann-Taylor 2010). It is reflexive auto-ethnography (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011; Reed-Danahay 2001) and in this afterword I elaborate its context and relation to the themes of this collection. The poem is set in Port Moresby, the capital city of Papua New Guinea (PNG), where I was born and lived for many years. It draws on decades of life stories and experiences, including those from fieldwork for my PhD, which was conducted over a six-month period from January to June 2013. I wrote the poem—or perhaps more truthfully, the poem came to me—after returning from my fieldwork. As I started to sift through my data, I found myself struggling to reconcile gaps between the big picture development narratives about women’s empowerment and the intimate details of the day-to-day lives of the many women I knew.

The starting place for the poem is the Sir John Guise Stadium, a key feature of the city’s landscape and the site of many national celebrations, such as Independence Day, sports and an important national campaign calling for action on violence against women. For many years it also played a part in my family’s daily routine. Watching soccer training and games, walking around the stadium for exercise, and catching up with family or friends meant hanging around the informal markets in and around the stadium.

The poem’s narrator, a woman who resides in the city, leads the reader from the stadium on some of her typical outings around the city as she reasons through her own dilemmas in love and marriage (similar to those discussed by Ceridwen Spark and Jenny Munro in this volume). She must contend with the dilemma she faces when offered help to deal with her marital problems by her elderly friend—*Lewa Was Mama*—who lives in a Moresby settlement. Boroko is a residential suburb. Morata is a suburb into which merges one of the city’s larger and older informal settlements. Malaoro is one of the larger fresh food markets and Yakaplin is one of the largest used clothing markets in the city. Kutubu is the site of one of PNG’s oil projects located in the highlands region at Lake Kutubu. Kurumul tea comes from the Kurumul tea plantation, also located in the highlands region of PNG.

The poem is set in 2013 when PNG and various international agencies were grappling to understand and find solutions to the epidemic of violence in PNG, which includes sorcery and domestic violence.

Sorcery and gendered violence: A humanitarian crisis

Just months before I commenced my fieldwork in 2013, the non-government organisation (NGO) Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF) declared the prevalence of sexual and domestic gendered violence in PNG to be a humanitarian crisis. Sadly, 2013 turned out to be a significant year for the narrative of violence in PNG's history. In February, shockwaves were felt through the international community as news and graphic images emerged of Kepari Leniata, a 20-year-old woman in Mt Hagen. Leniata had been set alight after she was accused of sorcery and burnt to death in broad daylight in front of hundreds of onlookers. In April, the world learned that in Bougainville four women had been abducted after being accused of practising sorcery. One—Helen Rumbali—was beheaded and the other three held captive for several weeks. A foreign national was gang raped in Madang around this time.

National responses

In many ways, these events led to an awakening in PNG of the need to address violence. As part of this, a movement to hold a national *Haus Krai* to acknowledge the crisis of gendered violence in PNG emerged. *Haus Krai* is the Tok Pisin term for a house or site of mourning, where people gather to mourn a deceased person. As the movement gained momentum, a number of *Haus Krai* events were held throughout the world to express solidarity with the victims of violence and to call for action to address violence in PNG.

In Port Moresby the national *Haus Krai* was held at the Sir John Guise stadium. I was conducting fieldwork while following these events and in May 2013, attended the national *Haus Krai* in the city.

The space between national and international responses and lived experiences

After fieldwork my evenings would involve catching up on personal and mainstream news via Facebook. As there was no television where we were living, Facebook was an important way for me to keep abreast of the *Haus Krai* movement. Despite being a 15-minute drive from the Sir John Guise stadium where people were gathered, I noticed a difference between the lived reality of my life and that of the people with whom I was interacting in the field. Many people in the settlement community had phones but because of a lack of electricity they generally were off because the batteries were flat or to preserve them for the most important calls. People asked if I had brought newspapers with me as a way to catch up on the news, but also to add to their stocks of toilet paper used in the pit toilets. A few houses had TVs and there were a few communal TVs, but most people seemed unaware of the national *Haus Krai* movement.

Yet violence was intimately interwoven in the day-to-day stories of struggle and survival (see Jolly 2012; Jolly, Stewart with Brewer (eds) 2012): a woman slashed with a knife by her brother-in-law; a woman beaten; a family chased from their home because one of its members was accused of sorcery; stories of love and magic to help allay a man's violent tendencies or tame his indiscretions; women elders caring for their grandchildren in the absence of parents; an elderly grandmother caring for her orphaned grandchildren after their parents had died of AIDS; and community leaders striving to address development needs while battling in courts to stay forceful evictions.

Celebrating indigenous spirituality: Sisterhood and motherhood

In my life, a dream or the sighting of a specific animal or other 'sign' conveys a meaning and is usually reflected upon to anticipate the future or explain the past. Traditional legends of women, love, seduction, magic, sorcery, weaving, gardening and life also resonate in my memory. The lived realities of many women I know reflect this same rich interweaving of the spiritual and the worldly. This poem is a celebration of the indigenous spirituality—as opposed to indigenous sorcery and witchcraft.

The space between the public responses to violence that highlight the brutality and the private narratives of witchcraft and magic relates to the more positive and spiritual magical effects that are also elements of the supernatural. As I watched the news of Leniata and Rumbali in disbelief, my emotional response involved my understandings of positive stories of spirituality. Were these phenomena one and the same thing? How had their communities judged these women so harshly when these communities placed value on their embodiment of spiritual good? By believing in my own version of spirituality was I complicit in 'practice' that so terrified communities?

Martha Macintyre noted in her work among Tubetube people that 'stories about witches and spirit beings of various sorts provide far richer material on Tubetube ideas of embodiment, social and individual morality, and personhood' that 'constitute a discourse on embodiment' (Macintyre 1995: 40). *Lewa Was Mama* may well be viewed as such a discourse about the embodiment of contemporary Melanesian femininity. *Lewa Was Mama* is the 'pivotal antinomy' (ibid.: 42). To her community, she embodies the anti-social female witch; to her young friend she offers spiritual protection, love and healing. As for the people of Tubetube (Macintyre 1995), the stories of *Lewa Was Mama* and her friend are interwoven with conflict and violence.

In this space between the public responses to violence and the private lives of those experiencing it lies the less discussed narrative—that of the mutual support women give each other. The poem celebrates the 'mutuality of being' (Sahlins 2014: 62) in which women are mutually constituted (ibid.) through sisterhood and motherhood. In the way the Melanesian person is relational and partible (Strathern 1988), so too the Melanesian woman in relation to herself and other women can be regarded as relational and partible. This feminine connection and support as well as the full extent of the impact of violence is often rendered invisible when women are cast as individual victims, rather than socially connected. The poem is both a celebration of bonds between women and of indigenous spirituality—in its many unfathomable forms. Reflecting back to when I wrote the poem, I privileged the feminine voice and feminine relationality even though I often criticise Western feminist discourses for not being culturally sensitive to PNG women's lived experiences, anchored in social relationships that include men. The poem explores the relationships and exchanges that women conduct among themselves in ways that 'acknowledge male domination and

gender violence [and in doing so, they make possible] radical changes in gender relations, even perhaps in the models of the person' (Jolly 2012: 5; also see Macintyre 1995 for a discussion). By contrast, but similarly highlighting the ruptures in gender relations that contemporary life has produced, Stephanie Lusby's chapter (this volume) enables us to see our own complicity in perpetuating gendered violence when we ignore the intersection between producing security and male aggression.

I hope that by foregrounding feminine narratives of women's relationality and opposing the violence they experience, *Lewa Was Mama* enables us to see how narratives of 'women's empowerment' potentially can work to diminish the relationships that women draw on for mutual support. They can also background the broader impacts of violence on communities or networks of women who suffer collectively. The national *Haus Krai* movement is a public performance of this collective suffering but still speaks to the masculine state domain, to intervene and address violence perpetrated by men on women. *Lewa Was Mama* and her younger friend feel each other's pain as women and try to support each other through friendship and material (fish) and spiritual (magic) gifts.

In another example of changing gendered landscapes, Tait Brimacombe (this volume) discusses how the advent of mobile phones and social media platforms are providing women with avenues to participate in dialogue that would not previously have been possible. Similarly, indigenous spiritual connections also are being revolutionised by technology. In *Lewa Was Mama*, the two women never actually meet in person but this does not lessen the intensity of the feelings and emotional interactions between them. After the initial message conveyed at the market by their mutual friend—a sister—they communicate primarily through their mobile phones, or through the community from which *Lewa Was Mama* has fled. Mobile phones facilitate conversations about such issues.

Transformation and intergenerational mutuality

Lewa Was Mama shows how mutual constitution of women is also intergenerational. In embodying this spirituality, older women especially find ways of passing their knowledge on to younger generations. This shapes gender and transformation in the Pacific.

When I ask my birth mother about her early years in the 1940s, she describes them simply. She was born in a small hamlet called N'Drayongai in the Lahan area of Bulihan village on Manus Island. At birth she was wrapped in traditional bark cloth, *n'drih*. As a girl she slept in a hessian bag that had been used for copra. Her mother suffered from leprosy and was sent to far off New Ireland for treatment. She never saw her mother again. When the news reached her family that her mother had died, succumbed to her leprosy, her father decided to withdraw her from the new colonial school so she could care for her two younger sisters. Enthusiastic to attend school, she went on a hunger strike for several days until he relented. Frustrated and angry, her father allowed her to return to school—'Go to school and see where it will get you!'—he scolded her. As a young woman, while away from her home, she converted to Christianity but could not resist her elders' insistence that she be 'washed' to 'protect' her from earthly spiritual forces. As a mother, she and others acknowledge the presence of loved ones passed, who gently lit up the evenings with their flickering glow—the fireflies—ensuring our *lukaut* (care). Her stories and those of others told to us as children, transfer their indigenous personhoods and inform our understandings and our own enactment of this spirituality even in the urban context. She—Nahau Kambuou Rooney—while helping to care for her younger sisters and remaining anchored in the family that raised her, went on to become PNG's second ever female-elected Member of Parliament in 1977 and PNG's first female cabinet minister.

The personal stories of women's cultural and social roots, including their adaptive strategies and challenges, can become obscured in the overarching development narratives around women's empowerment. Dame Carol Kidu, Julie Soso, Enny Moaitz, Dame Josephine Abaijah, Margaret Nakikus, Felecia Dobunaba, Rose Kekedo, Naomi Martin, Meg Taylor, Anne Dickson-Waiko, Orovu Sepoe, Waliyato Clowes, Nahau Kambuou Rooney and others all rose to the top in their fields (Macintyre, this volume) while navigating their own PNG sociality with the professional and international demands placed on them. Women's status in Melanesia reflects their ability to adapt to place-determined socioeconomic and political factors that shape how women are seen, factors that usually place the traditional in opposition to the modern (Soaki, this volume). These oppositions privilege men and are often amplified in the urban context (for a discussion see Soaki, this volume; Spark, this volume; Cox, this volume).

Lewa Was Mama seeks to foreground the complexity of this spiritual and social connection between women in PNG and how it possibly plays an important part in enabling them to adapt and navigate the complex and sometimes inexplicable terrain of tradition, modernity, love, nurture, hope, joy, pain, violence and conflict. When the cameras have been turned off, the development workshops have ended and the national and international movements lose their momentum, this connection also enables them to retain a sense of self. It enables them to retain a degree of distance from universalising gender equality discourses that seem to prefer to ascribe 'success-hood' or 'victim-hood' to the singular woman. As Macintyre (this volume) states, 'Melanesian social worlds are in flux'. I hope that *Lewa Was Mama* makes visible some of the contributing factors and adaptive responses to this state of flux.

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