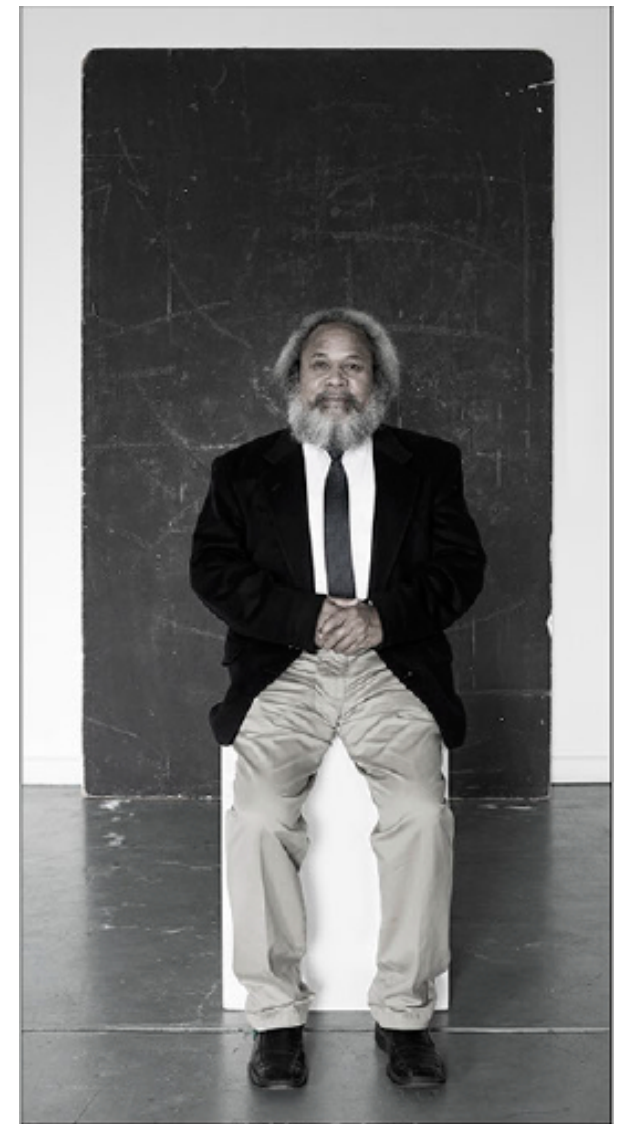


LETTER TO WEST PAPUA'S HEROES
AND HEROINES BY JACOB RUMBIAK

READ BY
JANETTE LIDDELOW

SPOKEN WORD FOR WEST PAPUA

ACU Art Gallery, Brunswick St, Fitzroy
Saturday 6 December 2015



Jacob Rumbiak by Dean Golja, 2015



FRWP Women's Office
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poster design: rebecca langley

LETTER TO WEST PAPUA'S HEROES AND HEROINES

BY JACOB RUMBIAK

IN THE DARK LIGHT OF STRUGGLE
BETWEEN THE RAIN, THE CYCLONES, AND THE DUST
THE BULLETS VOICE THEIR COURSE.
CRYING AND FEAR SWELL RISING FLOODS.

YOU, AND WE, AND ME, ARE THE HISTORY
YOU, AND WE, AND ME ARE THE DREAMING
YOU CHANGED YOUR NATION'S EYES,
YOU STOPPED FEAR.
WE ARE IN PAIN,
AND WE SUFFER, BUT WE SEE.

YOU ARE STANDING TO STOP THE COLONIST
YOU ARE STANDING TO BREAK THE CHAIN
YOU ARE STANDING IN DECEPTION
BENT LOW BY FALSE PROMISE.
BUT FOR THOSE IN PAIN AND WHO SUFFER
YOUR PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE REVERBERATES AND
REVERBERATES.

IT IS MOVING NOW, YOUR DREAMING
YOUR LABOUR TAKES BREATH.
THEY ARE LISTENING NOW, AS MELANESIAN YELL
'INDEPENDENCE' AND 'FREEDOM WEST PAPUA'

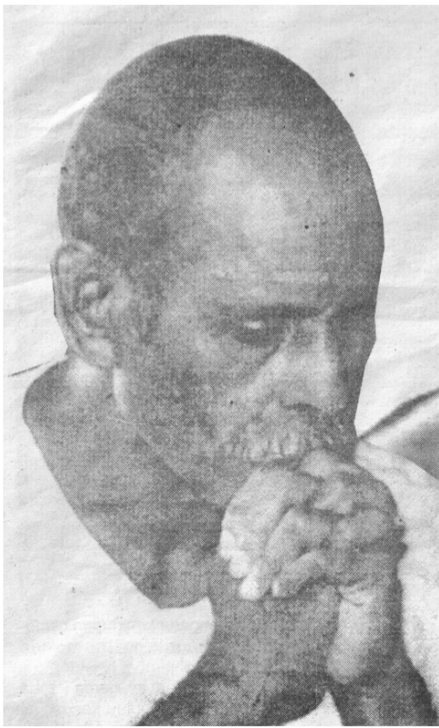
YOU HEROES AND HEROINES
PROUD, BUT NOT ARROGANT
SERVING WITH MODESTY.
WE RESPECT YOU,
WE REMEMBER YOU
WE ARE CARRYING YOUR DREAM.

WHEN YOUR BODY EMBRACES THE EARTH
YOU FACE THE MOON AND THE SUN.
REST EASY IN YOUR HOMELAND.
LOOK UPON US AS WE STRUGGLE
FOR WE ARE CARRYING YOUR DREAM.

YOUR NAMES SPARKLE WITH DIGNITY
YOUR DIGNITY CARRIES HUMANITY.
YOUR DIGNITY IS HUMANITY AND
CANNOT BE BOUGHT.

YOU HEROES AND HEROINES
SOARING SOULS OF GREATNESS
WE RESPECT YOU, AND WE REMEMBER YOU.
WE PLACE THESE FLOWERS ON YOUR GRAVE.
WE THANK YOU, AND BEG GOD BE WITH YOU
ALWAYS AND FOREVER.



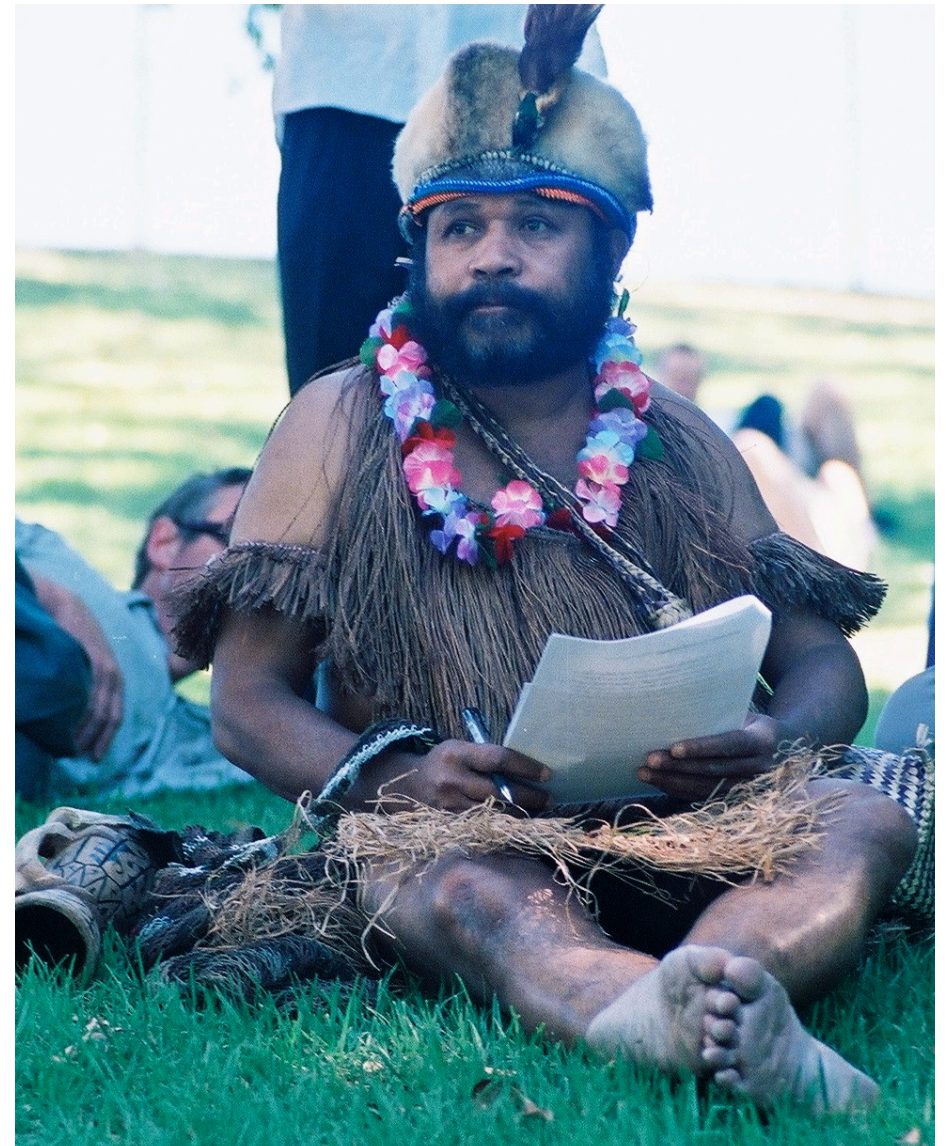


Letter to West Papua's Heroes and Heroines was originally 'Letter to Dr Thomas Wainggai', which Jacob wrote in 1996 in Tangerang Prison (West Java) after hearing on Radio Australia that his political colleague, Dr Thomas Wainggai, had died in Cipinang Prison (Jakarta). It was later discovered that Indonesian Intelligence had arranged for Wainggai to be poisoned.

Thomas Wainggai has a special place in the development of West Papua's political identity as Melanesians of the Pacific—rather than as Asians of the Indonesian Republic—through a (non-violent) paradigm of 'justice, peace, and love'.

On 14 December 1987, he raised a new flag, for 'West Melanesia' in the soccer Stadium in Jayapura. He, his wife, and eighty-five other West Papuans were immediately arrested and incarcerated.

(Sylvia Lawson **Against oblivion and about not being there** 'How Simone de Beauvoir died in Australia' University of NSW 2002).



Louise Byrne helped Jacob translate his poem from Indonesian to English for a Poetry Day organized **by Jim Aubrey** in Melbourne's Botanical Gardens in 2003. Jim Aubrey, a poet and human rights advocate, was retiring after years of work raising significant support for the the freedom struggles in Tibet, East Timor, and West Papua. (<http://www.jimaubrey.com.au/about.htm>)

**KYLIE SUPSKI'S REPLY TO JACOB RUMBIAK'S
"LETTER TO WEST PAPUA'S HEROES AND HEROINES"**



YOUR FACE WIRED
WIRED INTO THE WALL
WITH DARK LIGHT
OF YOUR STRUGGLES

YOUR WORDS WEEPING
WEEPING FOR YOUR
HEROES AND HEROINES
WEEPING FOR YOUR
LOST LAND

MY COUNTRY WAS ONCE
OCCUPIED TOO
I AM NOW FAR AWAY

MY HEROES AND HEROINES
ARE BURIED
IN THE PAGES OF HISTORY

YOU AND I
WE ARE NOW STANDING
ON THE STOLEN LAND
LAND OCCUPIED
LIKE YOURS

YOU AND I
WE ARE NOW LIVING
IN THE COUNTRY BUILT
BUILT ON GENOCIDE
LIKE YOURS

YOU AND I
WE WILL NEVER
NONEVER FORGET
THOSE IN PAIN
THOSE IN FEAR
THOSE WHO SUFFER

YOU AND I
WE WILL ALWAYS BELIEVE IN
OUR HEROES AND HEROINES
TO STOP DECEPTION
TO STOP FALSE PROMISES
TO OPEN NATION'S EYES

YOU AND I
WE WILL NEVER
NONEVER STOP
UNTIL THE DREAMS OF
OUR HEROES AND HEROINES
ARE RECLAIMED
UNTIL THIS LAND
UNTIL YOUR LAND
IS DECOLONIZED

UNTIL DIGNITY
REVERBERATES HUMANITY

OUR HEROES AND HEROINES'
DIGNITY REVERBERATES
REVERBERATES HUMANITY



Kylie Supski (far right, 3rd row from front) first aired the twin poems LETTER TO WEST PAPUA'S HEROES AND HEROINES by Jacob Rumbiak and her REPLY POEM during 'Spoken Word at Dan O'Connell Hotel' in Carlton on 9 January 2016 (Photo: Michael Reynolds)