

FAR FROM THE HOTEL

By Luke Dravo

You think my island is a paradise
You think it's my island's beautiful white sand
You think it's your five star hotel
Or our warm weather

You love boat cruises
You love the restaurant
Where you order your hamburger and pizza
Your meal comes with ice cream and wine
And you love the gift shop
Where you buy the souvenir made in China

You are told at the airport
That we have big "Bula" smiles
And you love when we smile
But sometimes we frown, too

You go to the beach
You go to the sea
You go to the restaurant
You go to the gift shop
But you don't go to the Village

When you reach one village
Far from your hotel
That's when you reach the real paradise

Paradise is the smell of firewood
From every village house
It is the smell of curries at the evening
And coconut buns in the morning
It's the smell of Makosoi flowers

It is the sound of singing
And the ukulele late at night
It is the sounds of children laughing and playing after school
It's the sound of the rugby ball being kicked

And the cheers of people watching
It is the beating of the Lali drum calling us to church

It's the taste of fish frying over a hot fire
Its' the taste of coconut Water on a sunny day
It's the taste of my father's lemon leaf tea with his cow's fresh milk

Paradise is the mothers,
The first to wake up in the morning and the last to sleep
It is a wave from your neighbors as you pass house to house
It is the open door and invitation to come inside for tea

Paradise is my people's history of 3000 years
It is the celebration of our independence
It is the chiefs, It is the people, It is the family

When you come to my island
Go far from your hotel
And see the real paradise