

ROAD MY BODY GOES

CLIFFORD GESSLER

Illustrated

A JOHN DAY BOOK

REYNAL & HITCHCOCK: NEW YORK



B. P. Bishop Museum. Photo by K. P. Ferry
In the shade of tall palms stands the village well of Tepuka Marua.

COPYRIGHT, 1937, BY CLIFFORD GESSLER

*All rights reserved, including the right
to reproduce this book or portions
thereof in any form*

Published by
JOHN DAY
in association with
REYNAL & HITCHCOCK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY QUINN & BODEN COMPANY, INC., RAHWAY, N. J.

*This is the road my body goes:
lost in the foaming sea.
Alas, alas, alas indeed!
Beneath the burning beat of day,
alas indeed!*

—Tabitiam Song.

ILLUSTRATIONS

In the shade of tall palms stands the village well of Tepuka Maruia	<i>frontispiece</i>
The sampan <i>Islander</i> , née <i>Myojin Maru</i> , lay at dock in her American home port, Honolulu, ready for the voyage to the Dangerous Islands	20
Sampan <i>Islander</i> at Papeete, still bearing her old name <i>Myojin Maru</i>	20
* The puka (<i>Pisonia grandis</i>) has given its name to many islands in the South Seas, among them Napuka, called by its inhabitants Tepuka Maruia: Maruia's Puka Trees. The puka was a sacred tree: its leaves, tied to the end of a carved stick, consecrated the turtle when that sacrificial reptile was slain on the sacred place	21
Tukua, the chief's daughter, when not dressed up for special occasions, wears the more comfortable house-dress of island custom: two yards of red cotton cloth wrapped around her like a towel	76
Tukua, in the cool gloom of Tiaki's house, was making string-figures as her companions chanted the legends which those intricate patterns of cord illustrate	76
At mid-week, the young men of Tepuka Maruia brought the papaya harvest from the windward side, cruising across the lagoon in canoes under a mat sail, for communal distribution on the lagoon shore	77

The island lies like a wreath upon the sea, its coral islets curving in a broken oval around its many-colored lagoon 77

"The food of the land is good food," said Te Uru te Po as he and his family gathered around the evening meal in his coral-strewn dooryard at Tepuka Marua 92

"The heathen time was better," said Te Uru te Po, as he demonstrated the use of the digging-stick, Tepuka's only agricultural implement 93

Women were plaiting coconut fronds to make the walls of a new house 172

Ternac's house was of the genuine old Tuamotuan style: strongly woven of pandanus and shaped like an inverted clothes-basket around its dark and rather close but scrupulously clean interior 172

Octopus—commonly called "squid"—when properly prepared is the most delicious sea food of the islands. Hung from branches to dry, they give the appearance of weird foliage 173

"Ternata, daughter of Maru, has made witchcraft" 188

Tinaia, the wife of Toriu, shared with him the mysteries of Tuamotuan medical skill 189

Two of the ancient Tuamotuan ships, built of slabs of *tonu* wood sewn together with coconut or pandanus fiber, are still in use at Vahitahi, for voyages to islands far out of sight of the home port. This specimen, xii

Tevoroa ia Raka, is 23½ feet long. It is said much larger ones were built in pre-discovery times 240

Great trenches scar the landscape of many Tuamotu islands. At Reso and Pukarua they are still taro fields. Thus, even on the hard coral of the atolls, man bends the stubborn substance of nature to his needs 241

The charm of Tahiti is in the "districts," away from the colonial capital. There the sun-drenched days idle casefully into nights of song, and time seems a remote and artificial thing of little reality between the timeless sea and sky 248

The visitors at Tepuka occupied one of the finest houses in the village. . . . The children soon began to doubt that the white men would eat them 248

Wearing the ancient ceremonial dress of coconut leaves, the men and women of Vahitahi still dance the sacred figures in the food ceremony, and lure the demon Moko into a coconut shell to be buried in the sand 249

starboard-after corner of the cabin. The ship looked otherwise much like any other large sampan—long, relatively narrow, with a high sharp bow from which the sides curved away steeply to a flattened shallow V of bottom and a square low stern. A mast was being rigged for wireless communication and the two hundred horsepower Diesel was making a great racket as it was being tuned up in the hot smelly engine room below.

"You can have your choice of these bunks," said Bill, pointing down the hatch into the fo'c'sle. There were six, built into the wedge-shaped peak of the bow, among massive timbers, coils of rope, and bundles of canvas. From the engine room, fumes of burning oil sifted dustily into the narrow space where scarcely more than one man at a time could stand between the wooden bunks.


"That boat will never get farther than Molokai. . . . It will turn over when a sea hits it. . . . It won't stay afloat in a blow. . . ."

So the wiseacres of Honolulu, including not a few experienced haunTERS of the waterfront, predicted as they viewed the oddly remodeled craft.


"A sampan isn't built to carry all that superstructure," they pointed out. "You'll be lucky if any of you get home alive."

"I'll back my ship, for seaworthiness and comfort," Bill insisted, "against any boat of her size in the world."

Some formalities remained: permission from the Bishop Museum; "leave of absence" from the *Star-Bulletin*; defrayment of my share of Bill's expenses; registration as, like the scientist, a member of the crew. Delays clutched at us to the last. The two thousand or more people who assembled that Sunday afternoon in mid-April to see us off were worn out with waiting while a new crystal was ground for the wireless set and the mate adjusted some legal difficulty. Looking at the splintered wharf thronged with bon-voyagers, it seemed as if half Honolulu were there. They melted away before the



Pan-Pacific Press Photo by N. Furbush
The sampan *Islander*, née *Myojin Maru*, lay at dock in her American home port, Honolulu, ready for the voyage to the Dangerous Islands.



Sumpun Islander at Papeete, still bearing her old name *Myojin Maru*.

afternoon was over; but a sizeable handful remained: museum folk, divided between envy of our voyaging to far islands and self-congratulation that they were to escape its hardships; wives and relatives and sweethearts, anxious at heart but bravely laughing to the world; even some of the merely curious lingered to the last.

A luxurious yacht, sleek and black of hull, shining white of sail, departed just ahead of us from the adjoining pier.

"I wish you were going on *that* boat," murmured plaintively the wife of Dr. Cooke, leader of our expedition.

"I don't," replied that forthright man of science. "Because that boat can't go anywhere that I want to go."

Men swarmed over her yards, shaking out the great sails. A band played. Our low-lying, uncleanable fishing-boat looked very small and shabby beside that floating palace. But not a man aboard envied her. We were bound for ports where she would never venture.

The *Islander* quivered with the throb of her powerful engine. Last good-bys were said over again, a little wearily; and there were those who clung, for more than half of our leavetakers scarcely expected us to return.

Alec, Captain Bill's brother, danced an island step on the roof of the pilot house, chanting a Tahitian song, as the sampan slid swiftly out of Honolulu harbor, bound south with a following sea.

"Turn, turn the turtle . . ." the words blew away down the wind, as the misty mountains of Oahu faded in the gathering dusk. For more than half a year this little craft and the coral or lava earth of far, strange islands were to be our home. The northern summer would be gone and the sun turned again before our feet would retreat the ruddy volcanic soil of that justly celebrated integral part of the United States.

Captain Bill looked up from the wheel into the descending night, where a bird flapped wearily across our bow.



B. F. Bishop Museum Photo by K. F. Garey

The puka (*Pisonia grandis*) has given its name to many islands in the South Seas, among them Napuka, called by its inhabitants Tepuka Marula; Maruia's Puka Trees. The puka was a sacred tree; its leaves, tied to the end of a carved stick, consecrated the turtle when that sacrificial reptile was slain on the sacred place.

"If we can still be fond of her after that," I commented in English, "it will be a tribute to her personality."

"The best of our civilized friends," Keneti reminded me, "get seasick."

A hot drink, made with juice from those limes I had carried so laboriously over the mountain of Meetia, and sugar from our supplies, with water from the well, relieved the patient.

Tauhoa, too, had a touch of the malady, but was up and about, taming a pig by leading it at the end of a strip of bark. Maké, jesting even in illness, said she would die, and we must give her a big funeral. Thence arose a discussion as to whether she would go after death. Maké expressed the opinion, shivering with chills as she spoke, that it was better to go to a warm place; she feared heaven would be too cold.

There was debate in the village as to the source of the infection. Some were inclined at first to attribute it to our ship's arrival, but others pointed out that the *Islander* had been preceded a day or so earlier by one of the rare visits of the colonial government vessel, some of whose sailors had had colds. So our party was absolved.

This absolution was confirmed when we caught the infection, in turn, as was practically inevitable, the habits of the villagers being as they were.

Had I not already been coming down with it, I surely must have contracted it that Monday afternoon, when the children began to lose their shyness and gathered around me in the doorway while I amused them and at the same time practiced the language by trying to explain the pictures in our magazines.

The children from the first had been interested in us, but cautious, like young wild things. They would sit in our doorways, lovely in red loincloths against the smooth brown skin, combing one another's glossy dark or reddish-brown hair and inspecting it for lice, now and then snapping one up with the teeth—shy little girls, watching our every movement from



A. P. Bishop Museum Photo by K. P. Emory

Tukua, the chief's daughter, when not dressed up for special occasions, wears the more comfortable house-dress of island custom: two yards of red cotton cloth wrapped around her like a towel.



A. P. Bishop Museum Photo by K. P. Emory

Tukua, in the cool gloom of Tiaki's house, was making string-figures as her companions chanted the legends which those intricate patterns of cord illustrate.

great dark shining eyes, but turning away bashfully when we looked at them; and bolder little boys, chattering incessantly.

By this time, however, they had begun to doubt that the white men really would eat them, and the lure of the pictures brought them around me so closely that there was scarcely room to turn the pages. Little Riua, Kararo's youngest daughter, even sat confidently beside me, holding my hand in hers.

Tauria, who seemed already to have adopted us as kinsmen, was as much interested as the children, and commented intelligently on many things, including some he could never have seen. The young men and boys were especially taken with a cartoon of Primo Carnera, when I told them he was "the great fist-fighter." A pole vaulter puzzled them, but with the aid of some gestures from me, Tauria solved it with a native word meaning to dive or jump. A spark plug advertisement was an even more difficult problem. All I could tell them was that this object was "a thing inside an auto." Tauria's quick mind leaped to the Tahitian word for it. An automobile tire was another puzzle, when viewed detached from the vehicle, but when it was pointed out in another illustration showing a complete car, Tauria identified it as "rubber."

There were many questions, not all of which could be answered readily with a limited vocabulary, but the session seemed profitable for both sides.

The magazines were in great demand. Callers came every day to look at them and to take them home; and the circulation of several widely known American periodicals was extended to "readers" undreamed of by the publishers, as the worn copies made the rounds of the entire village.

Scenes of America and foreign countries, and of athletic sports, pleased the men, and they never tired of being told that this view was in the country of the Chinese; this in Germany; and that one of icebergs and polar bears in "the cold country." Most cartoons, and reproductions of modern art, puzzled them; the only explanation they could fathom was



E. P. Bishop Museum Photo by E. P. Enary

At mid-week, the young men of Tepeka Maruia brought the papaya harvest from the windward side, cruising across the lagoon in canoes under a mat sail, for communal distribution on the lagoon shore.

The island lies like a wreath upon the sea, its coral islets curving in a broken oval around its many-colored lagoon.

E. P. Bishop Museum Photo by E. P. Enary



"These expeditions," Teuri explained, "are voluntary, though in the long run everybody is expected to do his share. The groups go forth, making a picnic of it, and living on the land as they go. They may eat all they want of the fruits of the land while on the expedition, but may not carry away anything except the harvest which is the purpose of the trip and which is divided equally among the villagers."

The canoe lay under the trees near the lagoon shore: one of the larger boats built of planks in the Tahitian fashion, painted light blue and bearing the name *Marama*. Tupu, Tauria, Tetauru and I hoisted it on our shoulders and carried it over the beach flats to the water. Two women and two or three boys joined the party. One of the women sat on the narrow bench with me, looking up with large soft eyes and conversing as much as my small vocabulary would permit. She seemed pleased when I told her that her name was the same as that of a former princess of Hawaii, in the Hawaiian language, Kinau.

"Your skin is hot," she exclaimed, touching my hand, and then put her hands up to my face to see whether my cheeks, too, were "feverish." The skin of a white man seems so to a native, and the native skin cool to us. Some difference in texture and hence in radiation, in response to centuries of climatic influence, must account for it.

Other canoes hailed us as we set out over the lagoon. Tauria pointed out and named the "lands" as we passed them: the wells, the sacred places and assembly grounds. Once, pointing to a sandy islet where, beneath an overgrowth of shrubbery, lay the stones of an ancient temple, he remarked: "*Te ariki no Tepuka Marua, ko Mokia-ariki.*"

Misunderstanding, I thought at the time that this was the name of a land district, and it is so written in the faded, water-spattered list I brought home from that voyage, but now I know that he was saying: "The chief of Tepuka Marua, Mokia-ariki," and pointing out some land as associ-



A. P. Bishop Museum Photo by A. P. Snow

"The food of the land is good food," said Te Uri te Po as he and his family gathered around the evening meal in his coral-strewn dooryard at Tepuka Marua.

ated with the memory of that famous chief, his ancestor, who was to become, by adoption, mine as well.

The canoe drew up on the sands of a place called Mahora, and we waded in through the shallows. Men who had arrived before us were spreading copra on the ground to dry, and women came to take my hand and accept cigarettes.

Tauria and Tupu led the way to a small glade in the forest, denser here than on the village side of the atoll. They pulled down drinking-nuts with a hooked pole, husked them on a sharpened stake, and cracked off the ends of the shells with a large knife. Tauria brought me some of the orange-colored fleshy phalanges of a pandanus fruit, larger and sweeter than that of Hawaii, though somewhat fibrous in texture.

The women passengers remained at Mahora when we re-embarked. I took up a spare paddle and used it as I had learned to do in the canoes of Waikiki. The Tepuka paddles are easier to wield; they are shorter and lighter, with a longer and narrower blade, the older ones curved backward to slip more easily through the water. There was one such curved paddle in the *Marama*. Carved roughly on its surface was its name: "Hupiaparakau."

"You paddle well," praised Tauria, in surprise that the white man knew this native art. "Where did you learn?"

As we moved on over the smooth water, a large bird flew overhead, gleaming in the sunlight with a greenish sheen. Tauria identified it as a "havama."

"Do you hunt these birds?"

"Yes, with nets and with traps."

Tauria guided the canoe toward a coral shoal and grounded its outrigger upon the rock. Tupu donned goggles and dived with his spear, swimming about and peering under ledges, seeking fish. Resuming our journey, we drew into an inner lagoon and landed at a more heavily wooded portion of the island than I had yet seen.

Several houses stood along the curving shore, and a



B. P. Bishop Hawaii Photo by E. P. Eeary
"The heathen time was better," said Te Uru te Po, as he demonstrated the use of the digging-stick, Tepuka's only agricultural implement.

Ah Kui's ability, in more prosperous times, to provide such foreign novelties, as well as his control of the supply of dress-goods, that had won him the favor of the lovely Turina.

Ah Kui was pleased that I recognized the features of the two Chinese generals in the luridly lithographed poster on his wall, which depicted, from a strongly pro-Chinese point of view, events of a few years ago in Manchuria and around Shanghai. In that picture, a Chinese bomber hurled destruction upon Japanese warships, and Chinese soldiers with glittering bayonets were routing the invaders. As I called Tsai Ting-kai and Ma Chan-shan by name, Ah Kui's smile became a veritable sunburst. I could imagine him telling his neighbors later: "The white man knows these warriors; he knows that I come from a great country, a land of conquerors."

He was a Kuomintang man, he said; he had been in Honolulu and imagined that he could speak English.

"Hawaii, too muchee Chinees stop," he remarked in proof of this claim. (See, he prided himself, I am talking to the American in his own language!)

When I whistled a few bars of the "Song of the Jade Princess," his joy was complete. Producing, from some recess of his store, a pile of dusty Chinese records and a few ancient American hill-billy tunes, he spent the rest of the afternoon playing them on Keneti's long-suffering phonograph. Here, in this far country, among a people of whom he never could become quite a part, was the music of home. And as the "Song of the Jade Princess" tinkled into the sub-equatorial afternoon, I recalled the chant that records the compassion of these gentle islanders toward the stranger in their land:

"Pity it is for the land of the Chinese:
the children have no rice to eat.

The heart is sad from dawn until the night.
Women, be kind to the poor Chinaman!
Go, Chinaman, and satisfy your desire!"



B. F. Eubank Museum Photo by K. F. Emery
Women were plaiting coconut fronds to make the walls of a new house.

Tenase's house was of the genuine old Tuamotuan style; strongly woven of pandanus and shaped like an inverted clothes-basket around its dark and rather close but scrupulously clean interior.

B. F. Eubank Museum Photo by K. F. Emery

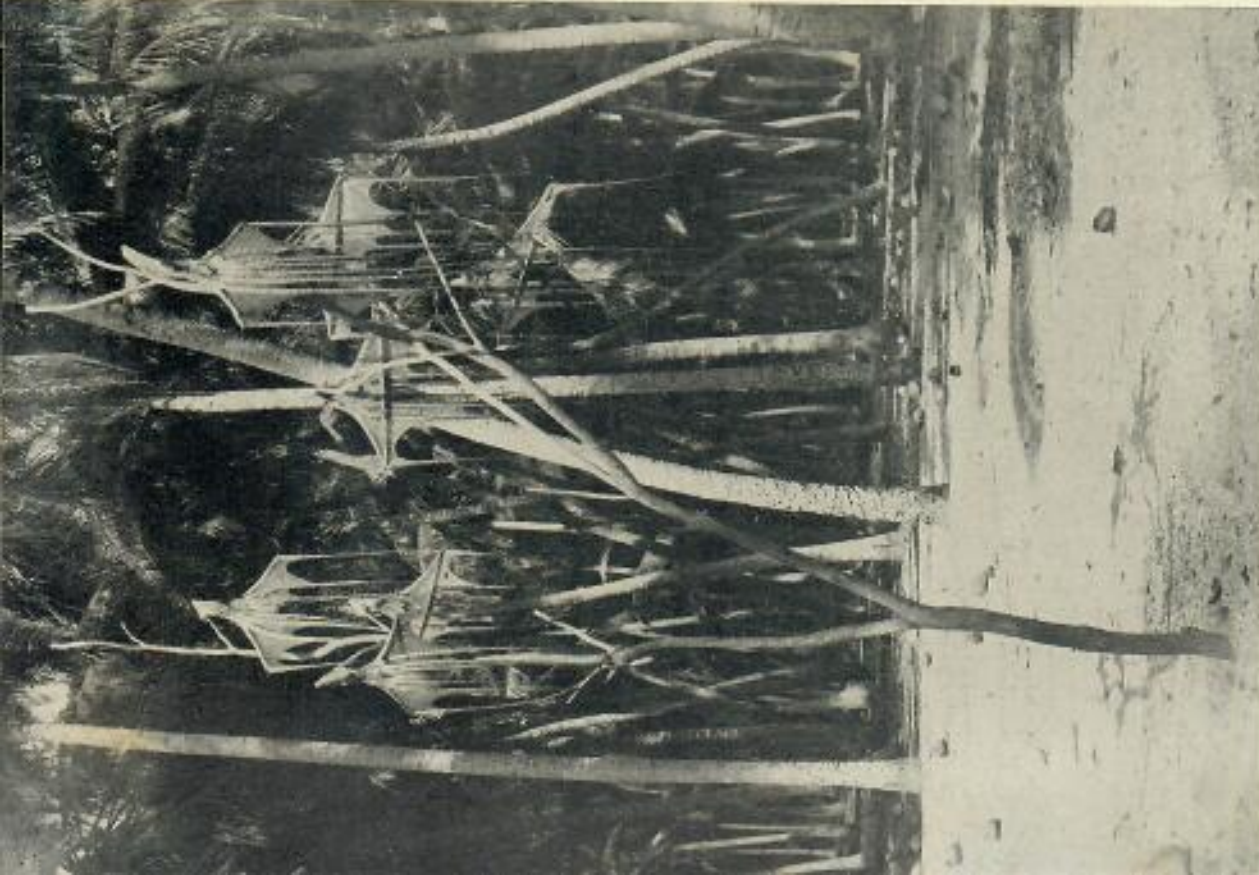


Thus I would make the rounds of the village, each day learning more of the language, customs, and mode of thought of the people. Some of the information thus acquired was trivial; occasionally it was authentic new data, clearing up puzzling questions of ethnology. This subject is better left to Kenedi, whose specialty it is; I was interested in penetrating into the atmosphere of the place, to discover the secret of its peace—a peace which, I became convinced, proceeded from the simplicity of its life, which admitted so few wants and entailed so few cares. But to do so, I must learn. And my education proceeded apace.

As the islanders realized my eagerness to be instructed, they took pains to teach. "Learn!" they would say, offering a section of ripe coconut or the almost cloyingly sweet haustorium of the sprouted nut, which is their only confectio: "Learn the root speech!" And they would give me words—fine, large, mouth-filling words, that I would savor as I savored the island food; learning to say, for example, instead of our dry "Thank you," the delightful expression: "There is joy." Memorizing these words one by one, I wrote them down each day, and the list grew with surprising rapidity. Before the end of our stay I had a vocabulary of more than a thousand words.

The speech of individuals varied in intelligibility. A sturring, muffled enunciation obscured much of what I heard. But the more thoughtful of our friends took pains to speak slowly and clearly, and to repeat in simpler language if not at first understood.

A detailed record of our days would be a repetition of small incidents: this or that kind of food, a new dance or chant; conversation with this or that old man who remembered pagan times; the arising and adjustment of some dispute in the community, to which we were interested witnesses. We arose at dawn, and walked by the shore, marveling at its peace and beauty; then went together or separately to con-



B. F. Bishop's Museum Photo by K. F. Ewery

Octopus—commonly called "squid"—when properly prepared is the most delicious sea food of the islands. Hung from branches to dry, they give the appearance of veined foliage.

ill there, they said; whether this detail had been communicated by the smoke, or they knew by other means, I never was quite sure. We remarked that the weather was threatening, and that it might not be safe to travel by canoe.

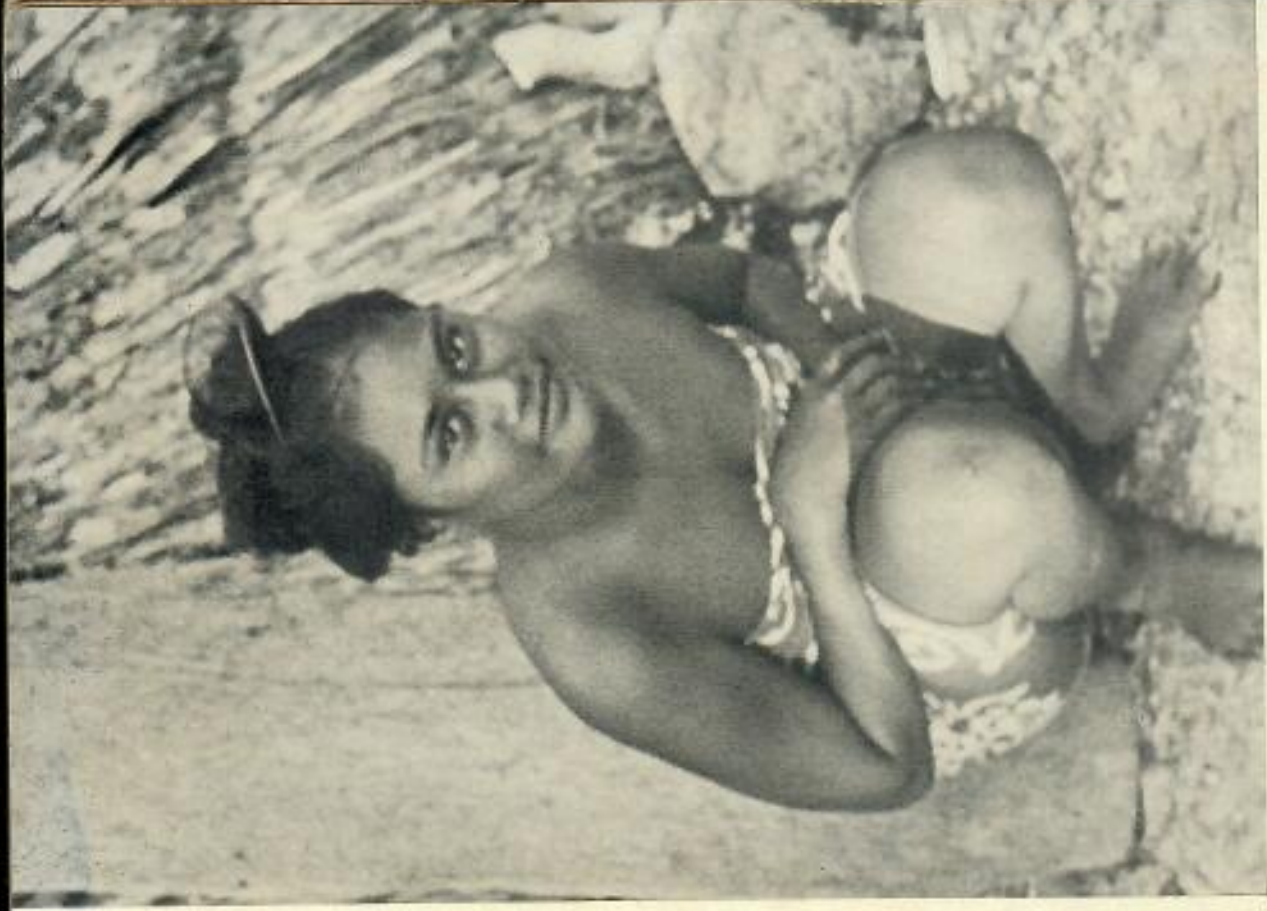
"There will be no storm," Temae reassured them and us. "Those dark clouds," he continued, repeating his earlier prophecy, "are only the sign that Maono is near."

The *Tiare* brought not only news but gifts: a box of scones and a bottle of wine from friends in Papeete. Acting Chief Teuri dined with us in state, remaining afterward, quite without embarrassment, to wash the dishes.

So the feverish world outside descended upon us with word of strikes and lockouts, of prices and exchange—yet, as evening crept gently over the land, the island life surged up; there was singing in the street; Tau, the sailor from the *Tiare Tahiti*, danced the love-dance opposite Fangu on the stony sand.

I slept that night on a mat laid upon dry coconut fronds under two trees on Temae's land. Starlight filtered through the palms; the long drum roll of nearby surf sounded through the night; the coconut midribs and pebbles under the mat were palpable, but, with the inurement of experience, not uncomfortable. It was good to lie thus close to the land, under the friendly stars. A confused murmur came from Tiaki's house, whence could be distinguished the harsh voice of Tangia and the thin cry of new-born Teahio-ariki; from the other side, the ghostly mumbling quaver of Temae, chanting. The slow breeze, the coolness, the freshness of low-island air were infinitely soothing. I awoke, as birds cried seaward and cocks crowed from the thatches, to watch the dull glow brighten the northeast.

We breakfasted royally on eggs of the sooty tern, those birds we had heard overhead on that first starry night at Maké's house. The eggs were fairly large, speckled, with reddish, sweet meat, and of remarkable keeping qualities. They



A. P. Bishop Museum Photo by K. P. Foote
"Temata, daughter of Maru, has made witchcraft."

were weeks old when we got them, and we ate them for two weeks more; only those spoiled that had been broken in the box.

"How much would it cost," inquired Kararo, "to charter your ship to go to Pukapuka and bring back a shipload of those eggs?"

Despite Temae's interpretation of the weather, rain squalls blew up toward noon of the next day, and questions were raised anew as to the chief's probable arrival. As Bob and I greeted Roki, where she was pulling down young coconuts for her pig, she told us she had had no food since the day before. So he invited her to lunch aboard the cutter, which was beating slowly up and down in the lee of the island.

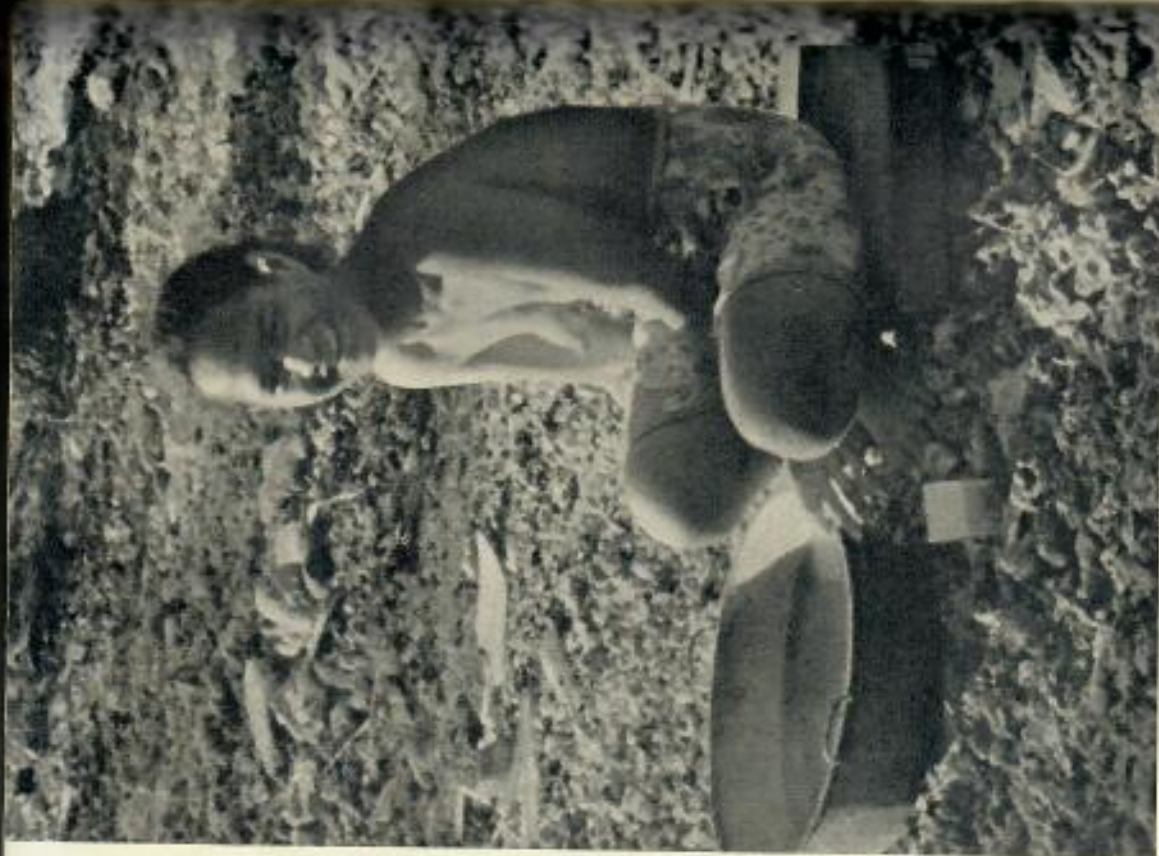
Squatting in a cold drizzle of rain over corned beef and yams, Roki was so disturbed by the ship's motion that she could not eat, even in the fresh air. Moved by her forlorn appearance, we landed again, whereupon she revived sufficiently to give a striking demonstration of Tuamotuan appetite. At the house, she ate a dozen terns' eggs, a pound tin of corned beef, three sweet potatoes, a large onion, and some warmed-over taro and yams, and drank a tin of pineapple juice, before indicating satiety.

"My stomach," she confided, "is in pain."

"From the food?"

"No, it is sore with grief because you two are going away. There are," she enlightened my ignorance, "three minds: one here, one here, and one here"—pointing to her head, to the region of the solar plexus, and lower in the abdomen.

Keneti, returning from a last excursion with Temae in quest of information about the ancient ceremonies, was besieged with requests for passage aboard the *Tiare Tabiti* to the neighboring island of Tepoto. He was disposed to agree, since the absence of a number of natives would free him from many interruptions in the work he had still to do. Our unexpected longer stay on the island had revealed additional



B. P. ni(A) Museum Photo by K. P. Emery

Tinaia, the wife of Toria, shared with him the mysteries of Tuamotuan medical skill.

young men lounged about the place, sitting on the broken enclosing wall or on the wooden floor.

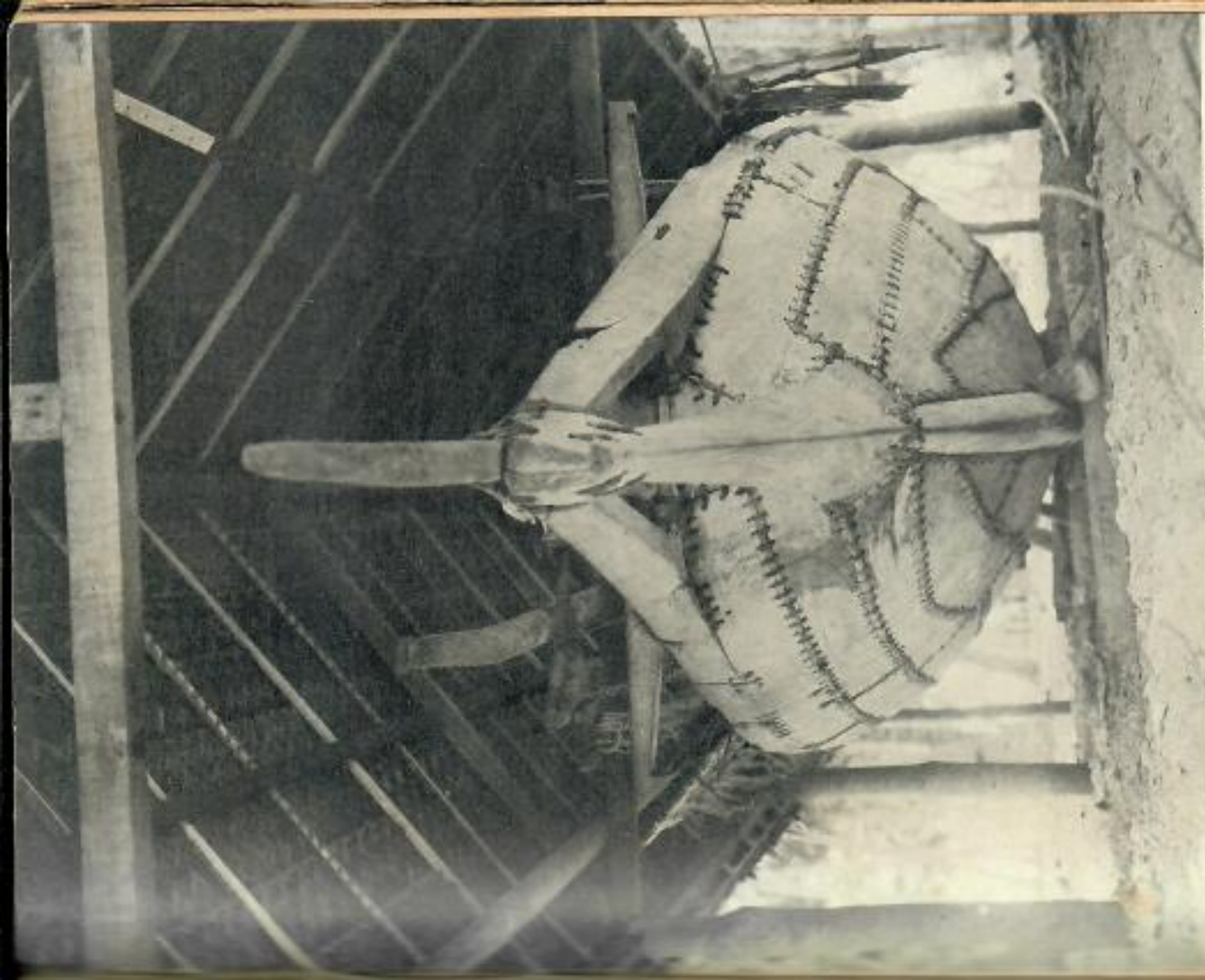
The house within was bare and uncomfortable in appearance. A coconut-leaf or pandanus-leaf house would not have seemed so, few as its furnishings might be. There is something desolate and depressing about nearly all the natives' borrowings from the white man's material culture. Clothing is ill cut and gaudy, and transforms the often superbly modeled native forms into grotesque caricatures; foreign food is likely to be ill cooked, and its use upsets the time-grooved balance of native life so that its effects are seen in decaying teeth, spotted complexions and more serious ailments. Native things, however crude, seldom offend the eye; but native adaptations of foreign things too often hideously symbolize the tragedy of native life where it has come in close contact with the white man's "civilization."

The dwellings of Vahitahi in general seemed less tidy than the coconut huts of the less "advanced" islands, partly because of their foreign construction and state of disrepair; partly by reason of the accumulation of possessions that had resulted from Vahitahi's comparative wealth and which, in default of other storage accommodations, were piled on the floor.

The occupants were singing a song that seemed somehow familiar. I listened closely.

*"Ena kona té no no, no no,
ena kona té no no!"*

Memory flashed back to the days when I had first heard that song: a small boy, walking in the street of a Middle Western village, passing the saloon which I had been told was the abode of wickedness; glancing fearfully in at the open door whence sounded the bump of heavy glasses beating time on the bar, and the jolly strains of "Ain't Gonna Rain No More."



A. P. Budoy Messens Photo

Two of the ancient Tuamotuan ships, built of slabs of *tau* wood seen together with coconut or pandanus fiber, are still in use at Vahitahi, for voyages to islands far out of sight of the home port. This specimen, Tevaoroa in Rakā, is 23½ feet long. It is said much larger ones were built in pre-discovery times.

As a guest, I must oblige with "Show Me the Way to Go Home," which no doubt has thereby been added to the Vahitahi repertory.

"But I like native songs better," I told them.

They sang several, among them the farewell songs that are numerous in these islands that know so many farewells. The haunting airs, admirably adapted to the three-chord technique of Tuamotuan guitars, sang themselves unforgettably into my mind.

Polynesian songs suffer greatly in translation. They are likely to seem flat and prosaic. There is a charm in the native syllables, themselves, that vanishes in the alien English; an aroma too delicate to persist in our harsher tongue. There is, too, something in Polynesian voices that clothes the baldest text with island magic; some subtle quality of enunciation, of pitch, of vocal timbre, that calls up all the associations of island life. Once in a San Francisco lunchroom, I fell to wondering about the waitress; she was as white as I, but there was something in her movements that recalled the sway of palms, the curve of surf on tropic beaches. It was only a suspicion, but when she spoke, in faultless English as she did, I knew. It was a Hawaiian voice, in that city of the chill mists, a voice out of Polynesia, mellow with the accents of an easeful race.

So now I never hum to myself the melody of a Vahitahi song but it brings the feel of the salt breeze over the coral land, the smell of coconut oil on ruddy-dark hair, and the island voices blending with the deep steady thud of guitars in a dark tenderness, full of the casualness and content, the easy joy and sudden sadness, of the South Sea. And the soft syllables mean, to us who have known them in their home, something in their own sound that vanishes when their approximate overt significance is set forth.

The visitor must dance, too, despite his protests of ignorance. Guitar-beat throbbed into the blood; feet that had



E. P. Bibby's Museum Photo by E. P. Jewery

Great trenches scar the landscape of many Tuamotu islands. At Reao and Pokarua they are still taro fields. Thus, even on the hard coral of the atolls, man bends the stubborn substance of nature to his needs.

with the exception of the man at the wheel, though Matini grumbled that this free and easy mingling was bad for discipline.

Tupu, the new member of the crew, was admittedly of little use at sea. Kenedi and I had long since awarded Tupu the distinction of being the stupidest native of Tepuka. But Tupu deserved more credit for good intention than any of us were inclined to give him. His unflinching good humor and his untiring readiness to use his mighty physical strength to help others should have gone far to make up for his slowness of wit and his untidy appearance. Looking back, I regret that I was not kinder to Tupu; for the brutish-looking half-savage was, I am convinced, sincerely fond of me. Even after I cast aside, at Tepuka, the name he had given me, and made him return the pocket-knife he had borrowed—with its nail-file blade broken off from trying to file fishhooks—he remained faithfully devoted. Long after I returned to my own country I discovered, in one of my notebooks, a pathetic appeal written in poorly spelled Tahitian in his laborious, uneven hand:

"Life be to you, my friend Pari-tané! I, Tupu, the son of Tahukanui, greet you. This is my thought: give me a shirt for our voyage to Tahiti."

Poor Tupu! I did not see the note till long afterward, and he went to sea in the clothes in which he stood: a faded pareu, a ragged singlet, a ragged pair of dungarees cut off at the knees, and the shreds of one of my old handkerchiefs bound around his head. He suffered with cold at sea, but he never complained—and he never answered even a reprimand without a smile.

At mid-morning of the second day we sighted Nengonengo—"one beeg island," as Matini had nominated it, and big indeed from a mariner's viewpoint, but consisting of only a few scattered islets between which the surf crashed on a long expanse of reef. It was a bleak and lonely looking land—miles of bare coral, and a few low trees on the farther side.



The charm of Tahiti is in the "districts," away from the colonial capital. There the sun-drenched days idle casually into nights of song, and time seems a remote and artificial thing of little reality between the timeless sea and sky.



The visitors at Tepuka occupied one of the finest houses in the village. . . . The children soon began to doubt that the white men would eat them.

We hove to in its lee, and sent Tupu and Tau ashore with spears. We could see them picking their way over the reef, now and then darting the pronged poles into a pool or crevice of the red shelf on which the waves curled.

Two hours later they returned with a big bucketful of fish: bright cerulean blue ones, brown speckled ones, and puffy ones with spikes all over them.

"At this island all fish are good to eat; there are no poisonous ones," Matini explained. Tau had even gathered a heap of conical shellfish, which Tehio served up in coconut sauce next day.

So, with fresh fish providing a welcome relief from a diet out of tins, we slid along steadily before the wind and sea, all day under the sun, all night under the southern stars. We were making fast time. The cutter was almost sailing herself; there was little to do aboard; Bob and I lay on the deckhouse, sunning our light-greedy hides.

The fifth day we passed Mectia, rosy and unreal in the early light. Tupu gazed at it with open mouth. It was the first high land he had seen.

He exclaimed in amazement: "It is a very tall land!" "Wait till you see Tahiti; that is much taller," replied Tehio, with a grin.

Tehio was in high spirits as we neared Tahiti, chanting a rapid erotic dance-chant at the wheel while the sharp peaks of Tautira notched the horizon.

Matini muttered, with traditional sea captain disapproval, as Bob rallied Tehio on his anticipation of a sailor's delights ashore among the flower-crowned charmers of Papeete:

"A captain should never be familiar with the crew. Keep them at a distance. That's the only way to handle them."

Matini, being half native himself, doubtless felt the necessity of asserting his white blood. To me, conditioned by long residence in Hawaii, and to Bob, with similar acceptance of the natives, derived from living in Tahiti, the drawing of ra-



Wearing the ancient ceremonial dress of coconut leaves, the men and women of Vahitahi still dance the sacred figures in the food ceremony, and here the demon Moko into a coconut shell to be buried in the sand.

B. F. Sjöbäck. Museum Photo by K. P. Lowry

Joseph J. Byrne

George H. Balazs

First Read 12/09 - 01/2010

PARTS RE-READ 9/27-9/ (2013) abo.
"RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS"

George H. Balazs

SCANNED 9/8-9/9/2024

for my website

www.GeorgeHBalazs.com

CA 6

PAC
120

Parts re-read 2018 home

George H. Balazs

Te. Remy Tel. Chong's

visiting the street - Remy Tel. Chong's

cross Churchy Park

Catholic Henry

George H. Balazs

1984

6 - MARS 2018

1984

Re-read Tel. Chong's

Parts Re-read Tel. Chong's

Visit Remy 30-5 Nov. 2019

October Wednesday George H. Balazs

8 GRAINS OF COARSE CORAL
SAND COLLECTED AT TEPUKA MARUVA BY

George Balazs

NOVEMBER

2019



15M
11/19/19

Te Uru

ABOUT 1964
PAEA
TAKITI

Te Uru, take me back
To the land of your birth.

Countless miles a century ago,

A few mere hours today.

Te Uru, why are you cast here in hell
While your sisters grow so far away?

The valleys, they are green
And the mountains, they are tall.

The sea, ~~for~~ a beautiful color.

But still we know that

This place be not your true mother.

Your form here is slender,

Your leaves do not shine.

Small fruit your sad arms bear

For that home left far behind.

Te Uru, take me back.

To the land of your birth.

Late 1960s By George H. Balazs
When GAZING UPON BREADFRUIT TREES AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MAHOA
CAMPUS

FOR TURTLES SEE:

P. 11, 13, 21, FACING 21, 63, 87, 95, 96, 106, 114,
118, 119, 123, 124, 128, 175, 196, 229, 304,
306, 309, 312, 313, 317, 318, 319, 329,

P. 87 "I AM NOT OF THIS AGE"

P. 191 TEPOTO

P. 63 Turtle shells

11 MARCH 2018

Anci Repuba	11 ans.
KAMAKE Julia	22 ans
KAMAKE Leticia	18 ans
ARAI Patricia	54 ans
KAMAKE PATHOA	118 ans.
KAMAKE MANUTEA	5 ans.
TEAKA HANIHAI	4 ans.

NEED - ORIOU

- CATALOG OF TEAKA MANUTEA (SPANISH)

- NECKER MAN

- THE AEROSOL LIFE - FOR TEAKA

- TEAKA FLOWER



PISQVIA
LUNGI
LUNGI
LUNGI
LUNGI
LUNGI

collected
BATHON
BATHON
BATHON

MAHORA
MARCH 8/18
FAKAREVA

GILBERT HARBOR

ATURONA
AIR STRIP

KAMARU
MARCH 8, 2018
ARAI

CAPTAIN
REMY GHB
X

NAME OF
SHIP TO NAPUKA

Xavier Magistella 3

3/6/2018 Remy's home

14.16421° S

141-27137 W

15 FT ELEVATION

FATA KAIGA - BONE PILE

**CLIFFORD
GESSLER**



**ROAD
MY
BODY
GOES**

**ROAD
MY BODY
GOES**



a
JOHN DAY
book

REYNAL &
HITCHCOCK

TO ALL who long to know what life really is on a South Sea island, this book will come like a fresh breeze across a lagoon. It is the honest, vivid account of months spent among an unspoiled people who had never known white men before, written by one who has both the newspaper reporter's passion for facts and the poet's perception of beauty.

