

UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Close by the bloody Sanananda Trail
A splint'ry weathered board leans its head,
In a clearing slashed out of the tall kunai,
Toward the wax-petal blossoms of the frangapani.

Upon this grim faded paling is inscribed
A tale of suffering and thirsting pain;
Of sickening fatigue, desolation and death
Which crept as miasma thru the jungle depths.

The scrawling words there are faded cold
But they tell a story of heroism in Papua;
They mark the lonely grave of a Tufi guide....
Saying merely, "Unknown Native Boy"
.....and the date.

His name perhaps was Maiona, or Ganoli,
His father may have been Tokuri or Namu;
No one ever learned it....they couldn't
So swift was the death the invaders sent.

In the Battle of Buna perhaps he died,
One of freedom's martyrs on Maggot Beach;
Or on the Road to Gona he met his end,
Searing shell spilling his life in the sands.

But death was not in vain for Simbri,
Or Tuga, or Kise....this jungle-wise Boong-boy
Who knew no fear but uncovered the trails
That led to his enemy's annihilation.

Now in the presence of his tamboona,
Into whatever heaven the good Tufi go,
He will stand a hero, and it matters not
What his name....Kalahi, or Merem, or Orimu.

He will eat the kai-kai of rich gardens
And stalk ethereal maw-rook and pigeon;
He will dine on winey fruits of the dee-wigh
And live a chieftain in his paradise.

For the graven words on his worm-eaten board
Tell of a hero's death in New Guinea;
Tell of a brave warrior's freedom fight....
Saying merely, "Unknown Native Boy"
.....and the date.

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30/APRIL/1944