

the Vine of
Ratu
Naitokowalu
(From a Tale of Old Fiji)

first draft
11/22/64

In the days before men
Fought wars over words
Lived a prince called Lutu
Maitotakowale.

5 I ruled by the rain from his mountain
Vhamsibutubutu;
Kadawa his island
Where vines grow in Fiji
Where springs ever present
10 and climates refreshed.

How women of beauty
As known through the winds
And destined to serve
A prince as a princess.

15 Such was a Tongan
Of Nukunolofo
The fairest, most praised
On the islands Pacific.
Each prince in the Tongas,
20 Fijian, Samoan,
And Tongalese too
Attempting their prize
Had failed in his strength
Or wrongly brought gifts

25 To win in affection
The hand of this beauty
Whose father had hid her
Away for safe keeping.

30 Hartotokowalu
Wind whispered these acts
Designed to obtain her.

35 But having no boat
Or canoe which to sail
He pleaded the case
Of two goddesses who
Lived in protection
On the south of his mountain
In charge of the vine
Kiki-sake-ki-Toza
110 (This vine serves as ferry
To Tonga's islands).

From the glory that's love
This vine's magic came
To this noblest of use.
45 With a call to those ruled
Came gifts and royal foods
Piled tremendously high
They reached from the sea
To the heights of the peak
50 Ulvinaibutubutu.

When sailed on the vine
Were the fruits of the isle,
Two days were they loading
Such presents on leaves.

55 Kadawa gave blessing to
Mautatolowa

The mountain being prime
Who learned from an goddess
Commands and the words

60 To ferry this vine
To Tonga's sought isle.

The uppermost leaves
Served the rest for later
And then the vine grew

65 As he repeated those words,
And the thoughts in his head.

Over the earth flew

The vine turning red

70 From the rays in its course
Which bent on command

Of the master who knew
That red was the sign

For descent to the reef
Of Mukuatofa.

75 On Tongatabu

The vine disappeared
Leaving gifts at its roots

In the shadows unseen
Where a widow made welcome
30 Her house for a home
To the prince after prisoners.

As the island was famined
The foodstuffs were found
and raised for their plenty
85 Which raised the spirits
Of Tongatapu.

Since anxious the King
To find out the cause
Of these prisoners unclaimed,
10 He first took all of two weeks
For his servants to carry
From surf to the palace,
He ordered a search
and discovered Latu
15 Waitotokowalu.

They summoned and ordered
His presence before
The King and his queen
Who judged him beyond
100 any warrior seen.
Most handsome and sashed
With a beautiful masi
Shone the broadest of chests

114

Shining scented with oil
He shouldered a club
Tending regal his carriage.

116

after thanking the service
His presents had rendered
They called forth their daughter,
The princess who knew
On the sight of Ratu
Haitatokowala
That him she would marry.
Fate forest a fire
When it kindles lower flame.

117

Retiring as perogee
The prince went away
To the widow who housed him.

120

That night sent the princess
Her lady-in-waiting
To summon the prince
To the palace to talk
Of Fiji and Tonga
Of pleasures and rights.

121

In his haste was no loss
To adorn himself right;
The Fiji prince went
In his mare owned best.

His guide took him to

13030

The prince's room

Where, on being alone,

This prince with his princess

Found words failed their tongues;

The thoughts over thoughts

13435

Which joined in their hearts

Were speechless and shy.

But love has its way

and lost in their silence

Her tender words formed

140 140

To tell of her hopes

of Frigis clear air

someday to share.

Wartokunala

at once found in courage

145 145

The strength of his love.

The ball that lights fires

showed the sky total clearness:

On the day followed after

The king and the queen

150

Their daughter's wish granted

uniting Kadavu

with Wukuslofu.

No feasts of rejoicing

could surpass those raised

155

By the Tongans to honour

This prince thought a god
For his famine's food fare
And the princess he chose
As Goddess to rule
160 Whimsibutubutu.

When the day came to sail
The Tongans well wondered
How the deed would be done
As no ships were to harbor
165 No sails fluttered wind.

But when the one given
at the word that was uttered
carrying Ratu the prince
Waitotekowala

170 Their princess, her maid,
Well grew they astonished
at the power they saw
In the secrets of Frigian
and the robe Kadavon.

175 On returning home to
Whimsibutubutu

To some shrunk in a pool
Where the princess
Waitotekowala
180 Often cooled in a swim
From the heat of the tropics.

To this very day
The pool keeps its name
"The pool of the Tongar"

185 And the slopes of the mountain
Still grows there this vine
Its magic the goddess
Possesses for use

190 To those who can find her
To those owning love
The love for a princess
As strong and as true
as Waitotekowaku!