A POEM

THAT MONUMENT

Mr Kumalau Tawali

While their lips speak deceiving words
   of DEVELOPMENT
and their minds imagine vain
   economic justice
their hearts lust after
   housing estates
   great luxuries
   foreign investments
   PROFITS!
The Six-Mile dump dwellers
   can wait
until the next election!
stinking bread is good for them.
Let us build a political monument –
   an immortal symbol
of our debts to foreign money houses.
The people cry for bread
   but are given snakes to EAT!
even maggots at BARUNI RUBBISH DUMP!
the people long for the hope
   of a place to sleep
but are given that cold monument
   to worship.
Is this the hope
   we promised our people
when from mountain tops and islands
   we pledged with solemn words
to serve and bring to fruition
   the aspiration of our people’s
   HEARTS?
Noble men and women
called into one household
voices of a thousand tribes;
stand tall and strong!
    let your people hear and SEE.
Let the stream of integrity flow through your
    hearts.
Let truth and sacrifice in you
    be the offering to our people.
not a monument of Italian made in marble
    but the living streams of life
in your hearts,
    in our people’s hearts
from mountain tops to palm-covered shores
    from simple village huts to skyscraper
in our lakes and rivers
    and from deep in the soul of the ocean,
TRUTH, INTEGRITY, SACRIFICE.