

On Thursday Jan 28 I went hiking across the mountains with some young men I met. We traveled up a steep slope into the jungle, then followed a beautiful little mountain stream to its source. Then we kept climbing higher up to the crest of a ridge to overlook the whole island at the top. It was very steep, and we had to grasp onto plants and roots sticking out of the soil to pull ourselves up. Toward the top I was getting pretty exhausted and had to stop to rest for a bit. Unfortunately, before we got to the top it started pouring down rain, heavier than I've ever seen on the island. We got thoroughly soaked. At first I was thinking it was bad, but the rain was so warm that it felt like taking a shower. It also cooled off my sweating body, which was getting dangerously overexerted. I stood under a tree where the water was streaming down from the upper branches, and opened my mouth to drink the running water. Because of the thick clouds that enveloped the top of the mountain there was no view at all, so we climbed down the other side. Then we stopped and ate some bananas, mangos, and drank some coconuts taken right from the trees. Delicious! By the time we walked to town it was over six hours later. We had walked from one side of the island to the other. We dropped into a bar and had a very well-deserved beer.

The next day it poured down rain again, so I stayed home and did some writing. Same thing on Saturday. At least the rain is cooling off the intense heat of last week.

Yesterday evening (Saturday Jan 30) I had an interesting and enjoyable time. I met T. and walked around town with him. Then I took him to dinner. I wanted to go to a restaurant, but he said he was not used to eating with a knife and fork, and would rather get a burger at a roadside stand where he could eat it with his hands. I was going to go out fishing with his father, but the rainy weather made that impossible. So instead I went to see the Rarotongan traditional dance show at Metua's bar where the locals hang out. It was a good show, and afterwards I complimented one of the male teenage dancers. I have no reason to think he is gay, but when I said this he smiled brightly and put his arm around me. We walked out of the bar and into the parking lot, in full view of people, arm in arm. He felt no hesitation at all about doing this, even though he knows I am gay and prefer sex with males. After that he left with his uncle and some others from the dance troupe. I am continually impressed with the ease of body contact among males here.

After that I just sat by the seashore for awhile, looking at the beauty of the waves in the moonlight that was peeking thru the clouds. I felt extremely happy at the very nice day, and indeed practically every day while I have been here. Even those days lately when it has rained have been nice to cool off the heat, and I decided to stay in my room and focus on my writing. There was a bus leaving town at midnight (the last bus), so about 11:40 I walked over to the popular Banana Court bar to enjoy a few minutes of music before I had to catch my bus.

To my surprise, there inside was the le-le I had been trying so hard to meet (see Jan 26 fieldnotes, when I was waiting for the last bus of the evening). It seems my karma to only run into this person when I have to catch a bus. Anyway, this le-le had obviously been drinking, and was happily dancing away with a group of female friends. He was dancing more wildly than anyone else there. He was wearing pants and a little skimpy ladies' blouse. Despite his long hair and fingernail polish, no one would mistake him for a girl. In the loose blouse, and from his firm arm muscles, one could clearly see he had no breasts. He was not wearing any bra or

undergarment. Not wanting another opportunity to pass where I did not meet him, I overcame my shyness and walked over to where he was sitting with his female friends. I leaned over and said, "Nice dancing!" He turned around and looked at me questioningly, then I guess he remembered me from the bustop a few nights before and he offered a big smile. As the next song was beginning he grabbed my hand and motioned for us to go dance. I was a little hesitant because no one else was on the dance floor, and I was not sure how the crowd would react to two males dancing together. Nevertheless, he pulled me onto the dance floor, and I resolved not to worry about it. He started dancing very seductively. We parternered danced, and he seemed to love it as I twirled him across the dance floor. He was a bit wobbly, and not a good follower, but he made up in energy what he lacked in grace. I got the impression that people were looking at us, but I'm not sure why. Was it because they knew he was a le-le and they found it unusual for two males to dance together, or was it because they wondered if an unsuspecting tourist thought he had picked up a real woman, or was it just the wild way he was dancing. Whatever the case, I saw no negative reactions. Soon others joined us, and we danced the night away for several dances.

I kept trying to ask him his name, but I could not hear over the music. He introduced me to his female friends, and I asked them his name but again I could not understand. I asked where he lived and they just said "near us." Where is that? "Over in that direction." I could get nothing more definite. I was worried about missing the last bus of the evening, so I gave my card to him and told all of them where I was staying. I asked him to call me; I hope he will. He insisted I dance a slow dance with one of the women. I did for awhile, but then he came out on the dance floor and stood beside us. I told the woman I thought "she" was beautiful. The woman said, "that's not a she, it's a le-le" I said, "It doesn't matter. I think HE is beautiful." She smiled. I don't know if the le-le was reluctant to dance a slow dance with a man or not, but I asked the woman if I could dance with him. She politely excused herself and I took him in my arms and we danced a slow dance together. It was very romantic. We then went back to the group and I explained I had to go catch the last bus. It was 11:59. I cursed myself for not renting a motorbike. The women encouraged the le-le to go with me back to my motel room for the night. Nothing was said about sex, but it was obvious they accepted the fact that their le-le friend was sexually attracted to me. Still, he seemed reluctant to go with me, and I was relieved because I knew he was drunk. As I left he gave me a big juicy kiss, full on the lips. I ran out of there, and ran all the way to the bus stop. The bus was just pulling out, and I thought I had missed it. But fortunately the last bus made a quick loop of the bars in town before leaving. I jumped on the bus and rode home, hoping the le-le would call and I could get in touch with him. I still do not know his name or where he lives. This is frustrating.