

The last two days I have spent getting established into my little guesthouse I rented for the month, at Are Renga (PO Box 223) in the Arorangi village near the Cultural Village. I cleaned the room, went into town to get money at the bank, bought an electric voltage converter for my portable laptop computer, bought groceries, and mailed letters to USA with my address. Restie called from Los Angeles, it was good to hear his voice, but I could not really talk freely since the phone is in the living area of my landlord and there is no phone in my quarters. He will mail me a surge protector, which I need for my computer.

Today is another murderously hot day, so I don't really feel like staying in my room. I went into the town of Avarua to visit the library at the University of South Pacific Cook Islands Extension Center, a nice little museum, and to buy a fan. I caught a ride home with the nice woman who sold me the fan. When I asked her how I would go about meeting gay people here, since I am gay myself, she giggled a little, but then told me they are called "le-le" here. "But actually, le-le only means those who are like a woman." She said there was not a name in Maori for masculine males who prefer to have sex with males. She is originally from Fiji, and said there are "quite a lot" of le-le in Fiji, more than are in Rarotonga. She thinks that is because so many Rarotongans live in New Zealand.

Only 6,000 total population live in Rarotonga island now, and probably more than half of Rarotongans live abroad now because they can get better jobs in New Zealand). Many I have talked to say they have lived in NZ for at least a few years, and though they like it they would rather come back here to retire once they get money.

I like my room, which is only a block from a gorgeous whitesand beach, and looks out on a jungled mountain with coconut trees, breadfruit trees, avocado trees, banana trees, mango trees, and other fruit trees in abundance all around. Chickens roam the yard freely, sometimes even trying to come inside my room. A pigpen is nearby, and the big pigs are tied to a rope by the leg, and kept under a fruit tree where they eat the fallen fruit which is not picked by the owner. The room is comfortable, with electricity and a little refrigerator, but it gets very hot in the daytime. I put up a screen over the doorway to keep out insects. But the main problem is at night, when really huge roaches appear. They crawl over everything. They are not shy at all, crawling even over my computer keyboard as I am trying to type. One fell from the ceiling onto my back. Yuck! I bought some insect spray, but they still seem to keep coming. At least they go away in the daytime. I also was forced to kill the biggest spider I have ever seen, which was crawling around too close to my bed for comfort. Other than insects and heat, this place is really ideal, though it may be a bit too far from town to get townspeople to come visit me. I need to meet more people who live nearby here, but they do not seem to be particularly forthcoming. It is not like Java, where the people were so friendly and outgoing that it was very easy to meet someone.