



DI STOARI A

HILDA

(wahn chroo chroo stoari)

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In the Kriol writing system each letter represents just one sound. There are no silent letters. Following is a brief guide to reading some of the more unfamiliar symbols:

- 'long a' = 'ay' as in 'wayt' (wait)
- 'long i' = 'ai' as in 'bwai' (boy)
- 'long e' = 'ee' as in 'teech' (teach)
- 'long o' = 'oa' as in 'bloa' (blow)
- 'long u' = 'oo' as in 'hoo' (who)
- 'double short a' = 'aa' as in 'yaad' (yard)
- 'tr' – 'chr' as in 'chrai' (try)
- 'nasalization' – 'hn' nasalizes the vowel as in 'kohn' (come)

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Di Stoari a Hilda

Ai baan da Naadan Lagoon. Mi ma ahn mi pa liv deh. Mi pa nayhn da-mi Mista Jan Josef Shimishil di Calvaat di Maat Slosa. Mi ma mi nayhn Marian Walis. Mi pa da-mi wahn woodkota. Ih peel lag ahn ih kehr dehn owt da Voag.

Wen Ah kohn tu mi sensiz, Ah si oanli mi ma, bot no pa. Mi Pa oanli kohn da wi bowt evri chree monts. Sohntaim wi get op da maanin taim ahn notn deh fi eet. Mi ma wuda seh, "Wel

The Story of Hilda (a true story)

I was born at Northern Lagoon, where my mother and father lived. My father was Mr. John Joseph Shimishel di Calvert di Maat Slusher. My mother was Marianne Wallace. My father was a woodcutter; he stripped bark off logs and took the logs out of the bush to the company called Vogue.

When I first became aware of things, I was alone with my mother. My father would appear about every three months. Some mornings we would get up and there would be nothing to eat. My mother would say, "Twain



Twayn gyal, mek wi goh fishin. Mek wi goh da
rivasaid goh chroa wi lain." Wen wi dehdeh, wi
aalwayz kech wahn lee taapong.

Ahn wen wi kohn hoam bak, ih wuda seh,
"Gyal, goh dig op sohn koako, kasaava, sohn sweet
pitayta ahn goh pap wahn too plaantin."

*girl, let's go fishing. Let's go to the river bank and throw
out our fishing line." When we went, we would always catch
tarpon.*

*When we got back home, she would say, "Child, go
dig up some yams, cassava, and sweet potatoes, and break
off a few plantains."*

Den ih wuda tel mi, "Yu noa fi mek di faiya noh? Put aan di lee pan. Goh da di waatasaid ahn goh geh saal waata. Peel di pitayta, peel di grong food, ahn put ahn aan fi bail."

Wel, ih aalwayz ga fat. Soh ih wuda tel mi, "Gyal, mek wi geh wahn tomayto ahn lee ail ahn lee onyan ahn frai it op." Dat da weh wi eet; dat da wi bitl.

Da maanin taim wen Ah get op, Ah wuda seh, "Ma, Ah waahn sohn tee." Shee aalwayz mek wahn lat a janikayk; wel, dehn stayl, rait?

When I got back, she would say, "You know how to make the fire, don't you? Well, put the little pan of water on the fire and go to the waterside and get some salt water. Peel the sweet potatoes and other ground provisions and put them on to boil."

She always had some kind of shortening. So she would tell me, "Child, fry those things together with a tomato, a little onion and a little bit of oil." And that is what we would eat.

When we got up in the morning, I would say, "Mother, I want some breakfast." There were always johnny cakes on hand, because she would make a lot of them at a time, but they were often stale.

Ih seh, "Gyal, Ah noh ga notn fi jrink tee
wid, oanli dis stayl bred."

"Aarait, Ma." Di sayhn janikayk weh wi
gat deh, Ah wahn brok ahn an eet ahn wid sohn
shuga ahn waata. Kwait hapi!

Laik weh Ah tel yu, lang taim mi pa bayli
kohn een. Ih wuda kohn mosi bowt chree tu foa
mons. Wen ih kohn, ih aks mi ma, "Marian, Ah
kohn. Weh Twayn deh?"

"Twayn deh rait ya."

"Well gyal, mee, yoo, ahn Twayn gwain da

*She would say, "Child, I don't have anything for
breakfast except this stale bread."*

"That's o.k. Mother," I would reply.

*And I would take the biscuits, break them in
pieces, and eat them with sugar water. We were quite
happy.*

*As I have already said, we hardly saw my father.
He would appear about every three or four months.
When he did come, he would say, "Marianne, I'm here!
Where's Twain?"*

"Twain's right here."

"Well gal, you and Twain and I are going hunting



bush goh hontin."

Ih geh ih shatbag weh ih hav ih kaachrij
eena, ahn di ting dehn fi wen snayk bait, ahn ih
medsin kit.

"Twayn, if Ah kil eni dyaa, gibnat, pikayri
er hamadili, Ah waahn yu kehr ahn da di

in the bush."

*Then he would get his hunting bag in which he
kept his cartridges, his medicine kit, and the items he
would need if a snake bit him.*

*"Twain," he would say, "if I kill a deer or a paca
or a peccary or armadillo, I want you to take it to the*

benksaid ahn skin ahn. Sel ahn tu Misa Laad
ahn di res a pipl dehn kraas di neks said a di
riva, mek wahn lee too sent."

Ahn wen ih geh di moni, ih wuda seh,
"Marian gyal, beta hoal aan tu dis. Ah gwain da
Bileez."

Wen hihn goh da Bileez, ih noh bring
notn bak. Ih yoostu bai dehn big pan a Paradais
shuga plom. Dat da weh ih laik eet, ahn
sohntaihn ih gi wi sohn.

Soh wan day now, Ah mi gaahn wid mi ma
gaahn fishin. Ih mi oanli week. Soh wen wi mi
deh da di rivasaid, wahn big taapong jreg ahn

*water side and skin it. Then go across the river and sell
it to Mister Lord and the rest of the people there to
make a few cents."*

*I would do that, and when he got the money, he
would say to my mother, "Marianne girl, you'd better
hold on to this. I'm going back to the city."*

*When he would go to the city, he would never
bring anything back with him. He used to buy big tins of
Paradise sugar plums. He enjoyed eating them, and he
would sometimes bring us some of those.*

I remember one day I was fishing with my



eena di waata. Ih mi kyaahn help ihself ataal.
Soh ih si wahn man di paas oava di ada said a
di riva, ahn ih baal owt, "Hay, Misa Man," ih
seh. "Help mi noh!"

Ih aks ahn, "Weh hapm tu yu, Mis
Laydi?"

mother. At that time she was very weak. She caught a tarpon and it was so large that it dragged her into the water. She couldn't get out. She saw a man passing by on the other side of the river, so she yelled out to him, "Sir, help! Please help me!"

He asked, "What's the problem, ma'am?"

Ih seh, "Di taapong pul mi eena dis
waata," ih seh, "an Ah kyaahn get op."

Di man mekays kohn kraas. Ih help ahn
ahn ih tek di fish aaf a di lain.

Den Ma tel ahn, " Yu kud tek haaf a dis
fish," ih seh, "kaa ih tumoch fi mi ahn mi lee
gyal."

Sohntaihn wen wi mi deh da di lagoon,
dehn ga wahn ting weh kaal "tap gyalan flod."
Di hows ful op wid waata ahn di boat dehn ku
kohn way een. Wen yu si ih noh rayn, evriting
aarait. Bot di minit yu si rayn, fish ku kohn
eena di hows.

She said, "A tarpon pulled me into the water and
I can't get out." The man came across and helped her to
her feet, then he took the fish from the line.

Mother said, "You may have half of the fish,
because it's too much for my little girl and me."

When we were living by the lagoon, there were
times when the river flooded. Sometimes the water in
the house would get so deep that boats could come in. It
wasn't a problem during the dry season, but as soon as it
began to rain, you might even see fish in the house!

Soh wi gaan aan, wi gaan aan, wi du di
sayhn ting, wi eet, kuk evriday. Bot wahn day
moa an aal, Ah si mi ma lay dong eena ih bed.

Ah seh, "Ma, Ma, yu kyaahn get op?"

Ih seh, "Noa, mi baybi.

Ah seh, "Weh hapn tu yu?"

Ih seh, "Ah sik, gyal." Ih seh, "Yoo ku
chrai du weh Ah du noh?" Ih seh, "Chrai si if
yu ku get sohn lee tee fi wi jrink," ih seh. 'Goh
da di bush, dig di pitayta, an dig di kasaava," ih
seh, "ahn pik di plaantin," ih seh, "ahn goh da
di rivasaid ahn get di waata, ahn mek di faiya,"

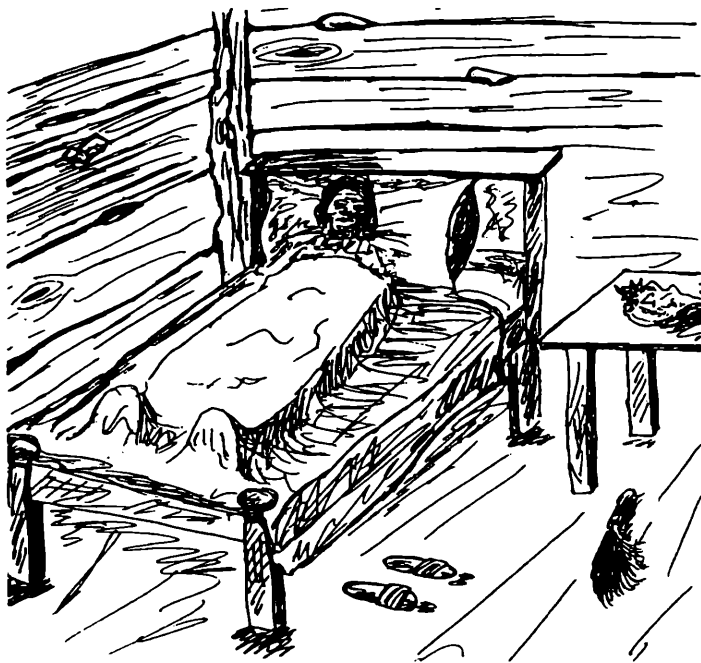
An so we kept on in the same way, cooking and
eating day after day. But one morning I got up and
found Mother lying in her bed.

I said, "Ma, can't you get up?"

She said, "No, Baby."

I said, "What's the matter?"

She said, "I'm sick, child. Could you try to do
what I do? See if you can get a little breakfast
together. Go dig up some yams and cassava and get a
few plantains. After that go to the river and get some
water, then you can make the fire and cook the



ih seh, "ahn kuk it fi mi."

Aarait, Ma." Den Ah gaan ahn du it. Bot
no fish, kaa Ai kyaahn goh fishin kaa mee too
yong.

Soh wi gaahn sleep di nait. Wen Ah wayk

provisions for me."

"Alright, Ma," I said. So I went and did what she
said. But since I was too young to go fishing, we had no
fish to go with the other provisions.

That night we slept as usual. But the next

op, wen Ah luk, mi ma kyaahn wayk op.

Ah seh, "Ma, Ma, Mama, weh du yu?"

Mi ma ga ih aiy shet dong.

"Ma!" Ma noh moov. Wen Ah luk, Ah
si sohn jankro bai di benksaid. Ah seh,
"Weh hapm tu mi ma?" ahn Ah staat tu krai.

Ah aalwayz si mi pa tek konk shel ahn
ih bloa ahn, soh Ah du di sayhn ting. Ah bloa
di konk shel, ahn wen Ah luk, Ah si bowt
chree man dehn kohn eena wahn doari.

morning I saw that Mother couldn't wake up.

I said, "Ma! Ma! What's wrong with you?"

But Mother's eyes stayed shut.

"Ma!" But she didn't move. When I looked
outside, I saw some buzzards there by the bank of
the lagoon. I said, "What's happened to my mother?"
and I started to cry.

Then I remembered that my father used to
take the conch shell and blow it [when there was an
emergency], so I did the same thing. When I looked
up, I saw about three men coming in a canoe.

Dehn aks mi, "Weh hapm tu yu?"

Ah tel dehn, "Ma kyaahn wayk, sa."

Dehn seh, "Laad!" Wan a di man tel mi, "Yu
ma ded!"

"Mi ma ded?"

Dehn aks mi, "Weh yu pa deh?"

Ah seh, "Ah noh noa weh mi pa deh. Ih
mosi deh da Bileez."

Pipl yoostu kohn ahn goh fahn deh tu
Bileez. Ih luk pahn wan a di man ahn ih seh, "Mi
bali," ih seh, "yu noa wehpaa Joa deh?"

They said, "What's the matter?"

I said, "Mother can't wake up, sir."

They said, "Lord!" One of them said, "Your mother
is dead!"

"Mother's dead?"

Then one of them asked, "Where is your father?"

I said, "I don't know. He must be in Belize City."

It was common for people go to Belize City and
back from where we were living, so one of the men asked
another one, "Hey bud, do you know where Joe is?"

Ih seh, "Bwai, ih yoostu werk wid mi da Voag."

Ih seh, "Luk," ih seh. "Goh tel ahn seh ih uman ded. Ih waif ded."

Wen wi luk, wi si wahn krowd kohn, polesman ahn ada pipl fahn di naybahud. Wan a di man seh, "Gyal, yu ma ded fi chroo."

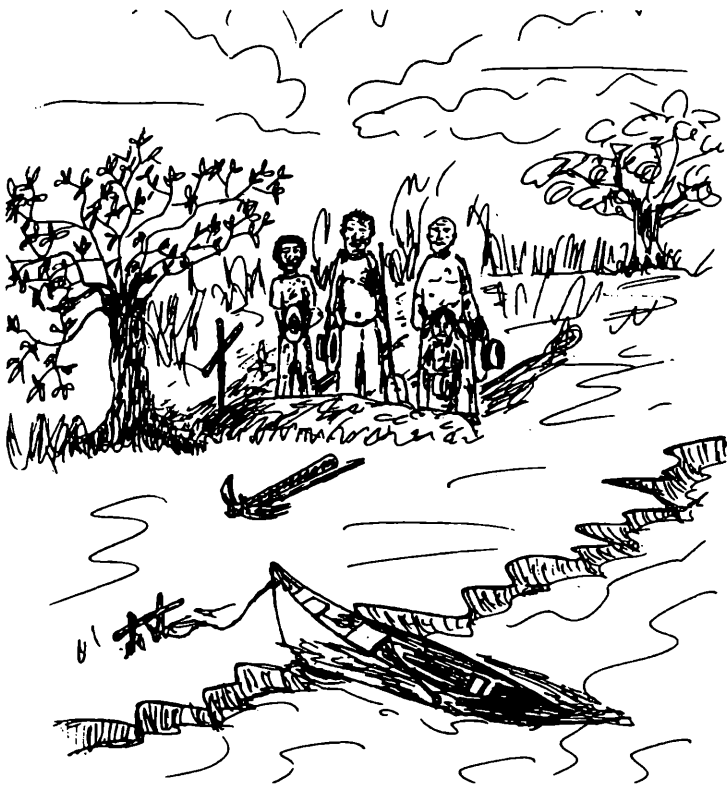
Wel dehn bring kloaz ahn dehn put ahn pahn mi ma. Dehn mek op wahn kaafin owt a sohn pees a boad, ahn dehn beri ahn rait anda

He answered, "Well, he used to work with me at Vogues."

The first man said, "Go tel him that his woman is dead. His wife is dead."

By that time a crowd of people were coming: policemen and other people from the neighborhood. One of the men said to me, "Child, your mother really is dead."

They then brought clothes and dressed my mother. After that, they made a coffin out of some pieces of board and buried her right there under a



wahn kashu chree bai di benksaid deh.

Soh now wen dehn don du dat, mi pa
seh, "Twain, Ah kyaahn kip yu ya, bikaa nobadi
deh fi main yu." Ih seh, "Yu ma ded," ih seh.
"Yu hafu goh da yu kozn."

cashew tree by the side of the lagoon.

When that was all over, my father said to me,
"Twain, you can't stay here anymore because there is no
one here to care for you. You're going to have to go to
your cousin."

"Kozn? Hoo dat?"

Ih seh, "Wahn laydi weh liv da Bileez."

Soh wen Ah geh redi fi goh, Ah doti. Mi hyaa noh koam, an Ah noh gat aan noa andakloaz. Ah noh eevn ga noa shooz. Ah mi hafu waak bayrfut eena di painrij ahn wahn lat a prikl juk op mi fut. Ah noh eevn feel mi fut batam, ih tik tik tik tik tik.

Yestiday wahn fren a di faamli mi-di tel mi bowt it tu. Ih seh, "Gyal, yoo tof. Yu servaiv gud," ih seh, "bikaa yu ma ded ahn lef yu, ahn

My cousin?" I asked. "Who's that?"

"A lady who lives in Belize City," he said.

So I got ready to go, but I was dirty. My hair wasn't combed, and I didn't have on any underwear. I didn't even have any shoes. I had been walking barefoot in the brush and there were a lot of thorns in my feet. As a matter of fact, the bottoms of my feet were so thick that I had no feeling in them.

Yesterday a friend of the family was talking about it. "Girl, you're tough!" she said. "You managed to survive even though your mother died and left you, and

yu pa neva tek keyr a yu. Look how yu mi doti
wen yu pa bring yu da Bileez!"

Soh wen dehn bring mi da Bileez now, di
laydi weh rayz mi, mi kozn, seh, "Laad!" ih seh,
"luk how yu luk!" Ah tel yu, dehn hafu put mi
eena wahn bowl, tek soap, bayd mi gud, wash mi



your father didn't take care of you. Look how dirty you
were when your father brought you to the city!"

Anyway, when they brought me to the city, my
cousin took one look at me and said, "Good grief! Look at
you!" To get me clean, they had to put me in a tub, take

hed. Wahn lat a dert kohn aaf a mi, dehn tel
mi. Ahn mi fut dehn -- dehn put mi fi sidong,
den dehn grees mi fut ahn da soh dehn staat tu
tek di prikl dehn owt a mi fut. Doti! Doti! Ahn
mi pa hihn, wel hihn neva eevn doz main mi.
Hihn neva gi mi notn.

Afta wen Ah reech ayt yaaz, Ah staat
tu werk fahn den. Di laydi weh rayz mi yoostu
mek janikayk, bred ahn bon, an ada ting fi sel.
Evri maanin Ah bayd mi skin ahn put aan mi
kloaz, bot Ah noh goh da skool soon. Ah goh
goh sel da Mis Shavaan an aal di res a pipl dehn

soap and bathe me good, and wash my hair. They say a
lot of dirt came off of me. As for my feet, they sat me
down and greased them to get out the thorns. I was so
dirty! As for my father, he didn't give me anything. He
never did take care of me.

From the time I was eight years old, I began to
work. The lady who raised me used to make a variety of
johnny cakes and bread as well as other items to sell.
Every morning I would take a bath and get dressed, but
I wouldn't go early to school. I would go to Albert
Street to sell baked goods to Miss Shavaan and the

rong Albert Schreet deh. Ah goh da dehn til
nain, bikaaz skool neva kaal-een til nain aklak.
eena dehn dayz. Yu jres ahn yu goh da skool
bayrfoot, bot yu kleen.

Eena dehn dayz deh, Ah mi neva noa mi
ayj. Ah neva noa wen Ah baan.

Di maanin taim wen Ah mosi bowt
terteen yaaz oal, Ah yehr dis ting di hib dong,
bap! bap! Ah tel di laydi, Ah seh, "Mis Ani, Miss
Ani, sohnbadi eena yu yaad."

Wen ih luk, ih seh, "Oo, da yu pa!"

Ah seh, "Mi pa?"

other people in the area. I would do that until nine
o'clock, which is when school started in those days. We
kids would go to school barefoot but clean.

In those days, I didn't know my age, nor did I
know my birthday.

One morning, when I was about thirteen years
old, I heard something that sounded like something was
pounding on the ground. I said to the lady I was living
with, "Miss Annie, someone's in your yard."

When she looked, she said, "Oh it's your father!"
I answered, "What do you mean, my father?"



Ih seh, "Yes, da yu pa dat. Joa, kohn ya!
Kohn ya!" Wen ih kohn, ih seh, "Si yu daata ya."
"Oa yes, mi daata."

She said, "Yes, that is your father." Then she
called to him, "Joe! Come here!"

When he came, she said, "See your daughter
here?"

He said, "Oh yes. That's my daughter."

Afta dat, ih tel mi, "Yu nayhn da Hilda
May Slusher. Yu mi baan di 20th a Maach 1924.
Yu soh moch ayj."

Ah seh, "An aal dehn taim Ah mi tink Ah
oala dan dat."

Ih seh, "Noh, gyal."

Den ih seh, "Ah wahn krisn yu." Bikaaz
Ah neva geh krisn. Ah oanli bles da Aami, kaa
da Aami skool Ah mi di goh. Big gyal fifteen
yaaz oal, ahn now dehn wahn krisn mi."

Di minista kohn an ih bles mi. Ih tel mi

Later on, he said to me, "Your name is Hilda May
Slusher. You were born on the 20th of March, 1924."
And he told me how old I was.

I replied, "And all this time I've been thinking
I'm older than that."

He said, "No you're not, child."

Then he said, "I want to get you christened."

The reason why he said that was because I had
never been christened. I had only been blessed at the
Salvation Army, because that is where I went to school.
And now here I was, a big girl of thirteen, and they're
going to christen me!

And so the minister came and christened me. He

mi nayhm ahn wen Ah baan ahn soh. Mi pa gaan
da rejischri ahn rejista mi, an Ah get mi
birtpaypa an Ah han ahn tu Mis Ani.

Afta dat, ih dehdeh wid wi. Wi kyaahn
put ahn eena wi hows fi sleep, kaa noh moa
room noh deh. Soh hihn yoostu goh da Glenz
Ges Hows pahn di kinel said weh di Salvayshan
Aami gat. Da deh wehpaa ih sleep fi faiv sens a
nait.

Wen ih kohn da wee, erli da maanin ih da
gyada op wud ahn chap ahn, kaa wi noh oanli sel
bred. Wi sel wud ahn koal an ada ting tu. Hihn

told me my name, when I was born, and so on. Then Pa
went to the Registry and got me registered. I was given
my birth certificate, which I handed to Miss Annie.

After that, my father stayed with us. He
couldn't sleep with us because there was no room for
him, so he used to sleep at Glen's Rest House, a building
by the canal which was owned by the Salvation Army. He
paid five cents a night to sleep there.

After Father came to us, he would get up early
in the morning and collect wood. He would then chop it
for us, because we didn't only sell bread; we had wood
and coal and other things to sell as well. Father would



kohn fi ih tee da maanin an ih dina, an ih goh da
nait goh sleep.

Wan day ih tek een wid wahn payn, ahn
wahn shaatnis. Ahn wen wi kehr ahn da

come for breakfast in the morning and stay for dinner;
then at night he would leave us and go sleep.

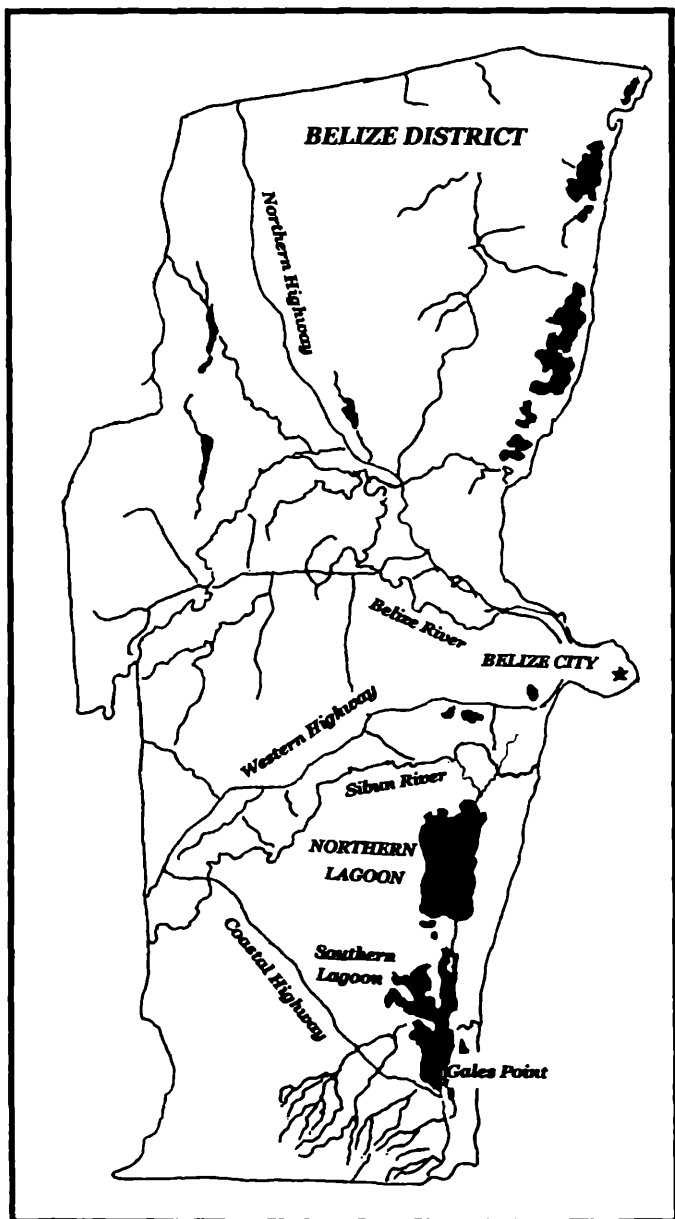
One day he was taken by a sharp pain and with
shortness of breath. When we took him to the hospital,

haspitaal, dehn admit ahn. Dakta seh ih gat
stapij a waata ahn schroak. Ih neva heng op; ih
ded.

Ahn da soh Ah geh fi noa mi ayj. Ah mi
wahn bee wahn big uman ahn noh eevn noa mi
ayj. Bot Ah mi hav wahn terabl laif wen Ah mi
eena di wildanes, mee, mi ma, ahn Gaad.

they admitted him. The doctor said he had a stroke and
was unable to urinate. He died shortly after that.

So that is the way I got to know my age. I could
have been an adult and not even known my age. But I had
a terrible life when I was in the wilderness. We were by
ourselves: my mother, myself, and God.





Yu mi reed di ada buk deh'n eena Kriol?

Anansi Ton Wahn Oal Man

Anansi ahn di Domplin Chree

Layzi Saiman

Faiyaans Teech Kakroach wahn Lesn

Stoariz frahn Crooked Tree Villij

Sohn Stoari fahn Gaylz Paint (Malanti)

*Di Chree Chreez Dehn (wahn lee Krismos
stoari)*

Ada Kriol tingz:

Di Birt a Jeezas (tayp ahn lee buk)

*You Can Read and Write Kriol
(wahn buk fi help yu laan fi reed
ahn rait Kriol)*