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The **Epitome** */iˈpitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

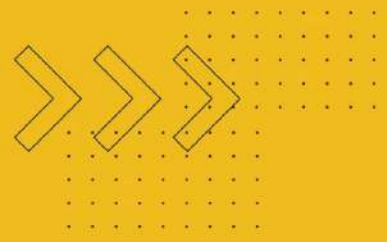
Unleash the epitome
of creative writers

Volume 2 Issue 6

2026

The
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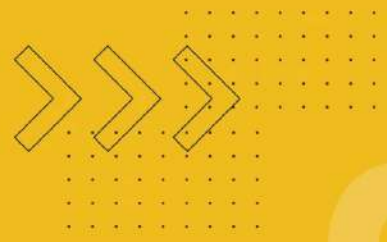
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Synopsis

The Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) is thrilled to unveil the vibrant sixth edition of its e-magazine, The Epitome. This publication celebrates our passionate commitment and unwavering dedication to the art and craft of language and literature.

THE EPITOME emerges as a dynamic platform for a community of writers, educators, scholars, poets, and researchers, all eager to share their unique perspectives, breakthroughs, wisdom, and tales. This edition showcases a mix of creative writing genres, from the dramatic twists of Playwriting to the introspective depths of Personal Essays, including Short Stories, Songs, Speeches, Memoirs, Literary Journalism, Humorous Writing, Lyric Essays, and Innovative Essays. With a rich tapestry of voices, presenting and embracing works in English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic, each adding its own uniqueness to the realm of language and literature.

Synopsis



The
Epitome
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Preface

Puan Robekhah Harun
Acting Head of Faculty
Academy of Language Studies
UiTM Kedah Branch

Welcome to Epitome, the 6th Issue. Epitome is the platform where writers transformed moments into meaning and emotions into language, offering readers a mirror in which they may recognize parts of themselves. The theme for this publication is Stories That Stay - A timeless collection of powerful narratives – memories, questions, friendships, losses, and life-altering choices.

Stories That Stay is a quiet yet powerful reminder that the most enduring narratives are often born from moments of reflection rather than spectacle. The stories collected within this bulletin encourages readers to pause, to listen, and to engage with experiences that linger long after the final page is turned.

The writers have approached their work with sincerity and depth, transforming personal moments into shared understanding. In doing so, they remind us that stories do not end on the page; they continue within the reader, shaping thought, emotion, and perspective.

I extend our heartfelt congratulations to the editorial team and all the contributors for bringing Stories That Stay to life. Your dedication, creativity, and thoughtful curation have resulted in a body of work that resonates with sincerity and depth. May this publication serve not as an endpoint, but as a beginning. Continue to write, to publish, and to trust in the power of your voices. The world needs stories like these – stories that stay.

May Epitome serve as both recognition and encouragement for writers to continue to write with honesty, to publish with purpose, and to trust that your words matter. In a world that often moves too quickly, your willingness to slow down and tell stories that endure is invaluable.





Editor's note

Assalamualaikum and warmest greetings,

Dear gentle readers,

Alhamdulillah, by the grace of Allah SWT, we are delighted to present the 6th issue of our e-magazine, centered on the theme "Stories That Stay." These are not just stories – they are living reminiscences, deepest questions, treasured friendships, deep losses, and life-changing choices that remain with us long after the moment has passed.

Every narrative in this issue carries a spark – a reminder that our journeys are written with wisdom, by the One who knows us best. Some stories teach, some heal, and others strengthen us when we feel we cannot go on. May these pages offer you reflection, comfort, and renewed strength, Insha-Allah.

As the Chief Editor, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors who poured their hearts into their writing, and to you – our beloved readers – for your continuous support. May Allah bless your path as you read, reflect, and grow through these timeless stories.

Happy reading, and may your heart find what it needs.

**With love and gratitude,
Hajah Razanawati Nordin
Chief Editor**



table of contents

1

A FAREWELL GIFT

By: Nur Syahindah Zulkeflay & Nor Syamimi Iliani Che Hassan
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, UiTM Kelantan

3

A PIECE OF HANDKERCHIEF AND A FRIEND GONE?

By: Yasmin Farani
University of Merdeka Malang, East Java, Indonesia

5

A ROOM OF QUESTIONS

By: Mimi Sofiah Ahmad Mustafa
Department of Law, UiTM Cawangan Melaka, Kampus Alor Gajah

7

CAHAYA DALAM GELAP GELITA

By: Mohamad Zain Hashim
Civil Engineering Studies, College of Engineering, UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh Campus

9

FADING HEART

By: Zainab Razali & Roejhan Md Kawi
Faculty of Applied Sciences, UiTM Cawangan Perlis, Kampus Arau, Perlis, Malaysia, Faculty of Electrical Engineering & Technology, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Pauh Putra Campus, 02600 Arau, Perlis

11

HAIQAL

By: Noor Azean Anis Abd Aziz & Hafizan Hashim
Fakulti Perubatan, UiTM Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Sungai Buloh, Selangor, Malaysia, Kolej Kejuruteraan, UiTM, Kampus Shah Alam, Selangor

13

KERETA HIJAU BAPAK

By: Mohd Nur Fitri Mohd Salim
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Seremban, Negeri Sembilan

15

LAGU : ANAKKU

By: Nur Intan Syafinaz Ahmad
Kolej Pengajian Pengkomputeran, Matematik dan Informatik, UiTM Cawangan Johor, Kampus Pasir Gudang, Johor

17

MEMOIR DI BUMI MAFRAQ

By: Abd Rahman Jamaan
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A Farewell Gift



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11 August 2024

**"A year older, a year bolder!
You're invited to a day filled
with laughter and joy as we
celebrate Sara's 17th birthday."**

I received a text message from Aunt Nani, my best friend's mother. Sara and I had been close friends since we were little, as we grew up together in a quiet, peaceful town in Johor. Reading that message, I felt elated about celebrating my one and only best friend who knew me inside out. Nonetheless, I should admit that I felt a little anxious and sad as if it were my last time celebrating our birthdays together. Yes, not only were we close friends, but we also shared the same birth date, and every year, both of our families would celebrate the special occasion together. We celebrated our birthdays at different special venues, and the most memorable one was last year as we went to Tokyo Disney sea. It was actually arranged as a surprise birthday gift from our parents, and we only found out about it a few days before the departure. Indeed, that was an occasion that I would never ever forget.

This year's birthday celebration would feel very different. It had been six months since Sara and I stopped talking. No phone calls, no video calls and not even a single text message between us ever since she started avoiding me. Yes, it was my mistake, but I sincerely did it for her own good. I advised her about her relationship with Zayn, a boy from another school in our town. She was extremely cross as I advised her to break up with him, which she thought I did it out of jealousy. No, I was not jealous at all! I happened to bump into Zayn who was hanging out with a group of older boys, smoking and illegally riding motorcycles. Sara thought I was only making up stories about him and started to avoid me there and then. I tried to console her, but she simply would not accept any of my explanations. It was a sad reality that was really hard for me to accept – my selfish action had driven a wedge between us.

I spent nearly one week thinking about Aunt Nani's invitation. How would she react if I showed up at the party?

Would that mend our friendship or just drive us further apart? Eventually, I made my decision – I would join her birthday party out of respect for Aunt Nani and out of love for Sara. I went to almost every shopping mall near my home and could not find the right gift for Sara. I gave up. Maybe I should just tell Aunt Nani that I would not attend the party. My mind started thinking of all sorts of excuses I could tell her.

31 August 2024

I stood still in front of the large French-inspired gate of Sara's three-storey bungalow. I used to come here every weekend to study with her. We would do the homework given by our teachers and supplement that with extra practices for every subject, preparing for the SPM exam at the end of the year. Sara and I were nominated for the Excellent Student Award because we had always achieved excellent results in all school examinations. We made a promise that we must win the award, which was only granted to outstanding students based on their SPM results.

I tried to keep myself composed and walked towards the beautiful garden filled with various colourful flowers, which Aunt Nina tended herself.



A moment later, I spotted Sara. I could only gaze at her before she approached me. I gathered my courage and handed her the gift. "Happy birthday." That was all that I could say to her. She smiled at me awkwardly and returned to the living room. "I shouldn't have come here. I shouldn't have come here." I kept murmuring that to myself and decided to just leave. I started tearing up as I knew I had lost one good friend because of my insensitive, unthoughtful attitude. On my way out, my vision became blurry, and after that, I could only see blackness in front of me.

I opened my eyes and scanned the unfamiliar place. I saw my parents, my siblings, Aunt Nina and Sara. I was puzzled, not knowing where I was. Then, a man wearing a pure white scrub and a woman wearing a white uniform and cap came to check on me. Only then did I realize that I was in a hospital ward, lying on a hospital bed. The medical wires felt uncomfortable. The doctor was busy explaining to my family, but I did not understand at all. Then I heard them sobbing. The sobbing sounds became faint, and I fell asleep.

1 September 2024

Sara was sitting next to me, holding my hands tightly. I could only utter her name, "Sara..." She smiled at me, the sincerest smile I had ever seen. Her eyes were swollen, I assumed she had been crying non-stop. "I'm sorry, I'm really sorry Diana." Honestly, I did not have the energy at all. I could only blink my eyes. Then, I opened my eyes and said to her, "Sara, thank you so much for being my friend. I... I... love you." She squeezed my hands till I could not feel her touch anymore. My eyes gradually closed, and tears cascaded down my cheeks. Someone recently told me that in the last moments before death, one could replay memories in as little as seven minutes and in those final minutes, all that I saw were my loved ones: Sara and my family. I was diagnosed with stage 4 liver cancer a year ago. Nobody knew that except for my family.

I even kept it a secret from Sara because I knew that I did not have much time left. I only wanted to create happy memories with Sara throughout my remaining days. Little did I know that I had left some scars in our friendship. Anyway, my wish to spend my final moment with everyone that I loved was fulfilled. I hope they will not be grieving for too long and will move on and live a happy life again.

Dear Sara, my beloved friend,

Thank you for being with me since we were born. Honestly, I feel blessed having you as my closest, dearest friend. You aren't just a friend; you're my soul sister who understands me very well and knows me better than myself. We've been together through thick and thin and have done so many things together. All those wonderful memories are engraved in my mind and my heart forever. I'm sorry Sara for my selfish act. I hope you'll forgive me.

My dear Sara,

I hope you'll accept and cherish the polaroid camera I got for you. That's the last birthday gift I will ever be able to give you. When I'm gone, don't grieve for too long over my passing. I wish you would travel far and wide and appreciate the beauty of the world. Capture all the wondrous moments, learn from your every journey and I hope you'll think of me too during your travels. I wish you the best of luck in SPM and may you earn the Excellent Student Award even without me by your side. Your perseverance will surely pay off!

*Love,
Diana*

There were two outdoor party tents installed in the garden, specially for the party. There were approximately 50 guests there. My heart was beating very fast, and my hands were trembling, so I almost dropped the birthday gift wrapped in a purple-and-white-coloured gift box. Purple was Sara's favourite colour, while mine was white. I decided to attend this birthday party after being convinced by my mother who believed that this special occasion could heal our pains and fix our friendship. Aunt Nina caught my presence. I kissed her hands, and she gave me a warm hug. "Let me go and get Sara. I think she's in the living room with her cousins."

Biodata of author(s)

Nor Syamimi Iliani Che Hassan holds a Ph.D. in Pragmatics from Universiti Malaya, a master's degree in applied Linguistics from Universiti Utara Malaysia and a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. She began her academic career in 2009 as an English language lecturer at Universiti Teknologi MARA Kelantan Branch. She teaches English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes. Her research interests include English for Specific Purposes, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, and Intercultural Communication. Passionate about teaching and researching, she continuously seeks to bridge language, culture, and communication.

Nur Syahindah binti Zulkefley is a student of Diploma in Information Management at Universiti Teknologi MARA Machang. I have a keen interest in geography, history and the universe since childhood. In my free time, I enjoy watching science fiction, fantasy and action movies, which allow me to explore imaginative worlds while improving my English vocabulary. I believe in self-improvement and holistic personal development as it helps me manage emotions, reduce stress, and build self-confidence. My hobbies and interests reflect my curiosity and passion for continuous learning, helping me maintain a balanced and rewarding life.



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