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# The Epitome /iˈpɪtəmi/

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

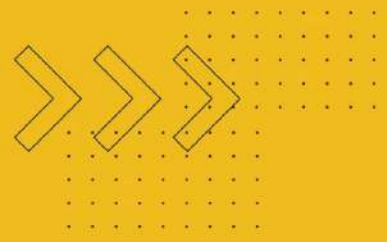
Unleash the epitome  
of creative writers

Volume 2 Issue 6

2026

*The*  
**Epitome**  
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eISSN 3009 – 0075

Published by:  
UiTM Kedah Branch,  
Pn. Razanawati Nordin, Chief Editor,  
UiTM Cawangan Kedah, Kampus Sg. Petani, 08400 Merbok, Kedah  
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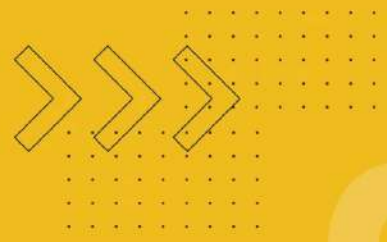
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# Synopsis

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**  
/i'pitəmi/

# Preface

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

Welcome to Epitome, the 6<sup>th</sup> 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





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*MEMOIR OF SITI KHADIJAH*

# MY IIUM JOURNEY

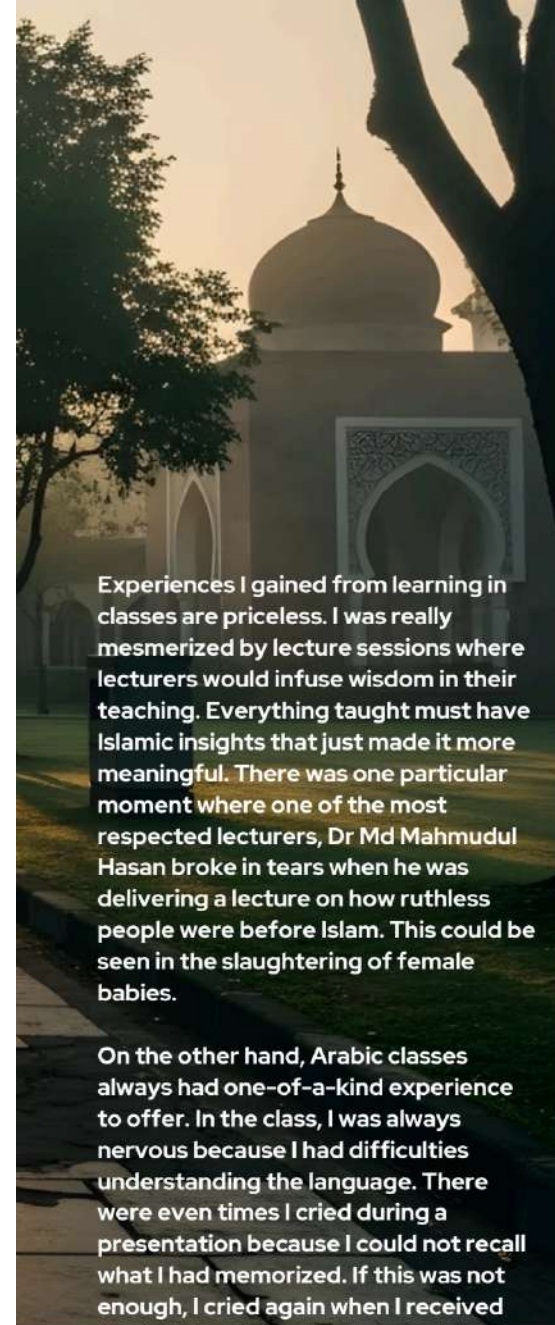
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**“Fall seven times and stand up eight”. I have been holding on to this principle my whole life. I used to be and I think I still am a regular and plain Jane. There is nothing extraordinary about me, but I always subscribe to the idea of hard work. I come from a regular family. My mother did not have the opportunity to gain proper education. She had to stop going to school when she was in standard 4. My mother was a strong woman. When she was young, she did three different jobs a day to provide for me and my siblings. She did people’s laundry, worked as an assistant at a restaurant, and also as a cook. She sacrificed everything to make sure that I did not have to go through the kind of experience she had. I received a good education because of her hard work.**

On my first day at school, I did not have a bag. She could not buy one for me because she had not received her payment from the employer. My school uniform was even donated by one of her friends in the neighbourhood. Though we did not have the means to live comfortably, we valued the importance of education. My mother used to say, education can bring us to a place we have always dreamed of and it is the only thing that can change our lives. I was not a genius, but I believed that fortune favours the brave. I was brave and driven to change our lives.

One of them was the moment where my application to enrol in International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was approved. I was happy because I managed to make my mother proud and I knew that my late father would be happy too though he was not around anymore. But in the back of my head, I got a little too worked out over thoughts of what was going to happen once I became an official IIUM student. I started as a foundation student. During that time, they had students staying in Nilai and after a few ridiculously ‘cramping’ semesters, I moved on to the next level, which I enrolled in the main campus. When I first got there, I really could feel and see the differences between the previous campus and the current Gombak campus. For some reason, I felt at home. The recitation of Asma’ul Husna during my walks to class and the atmosphere of the Islamic campus made me feel at peace. Besides, IIUM has a unique tradition that promotes togetherness displayed through greeting others by “brother” and “sister.” As far as I am concerned, this tradition sets us apart from other universities.



Experiences I gained from learning in classes are priceless. I was really mesmerized by lecture sessions where lecturers would infuse wisdom in their teaching. Everything taught must have Islamic insights that just made it more meaningful. There was one particular moment where one of the most respected lecturers, Dr Md Mahmudul Hasan broke in tears when he was delivering a lecture on how ruthless people were before Islam. This could be seen in the slaughtering of female babies.

On the other hand, Arabic classes always had one-of-a-kind experience to offer. In the class, I was always nervous because I had difficulties understanding the language. There were even times I cried during a presentation because I could not recall what I had memorized. If this was not enough, I cried again when I received the tests' marks because I always barely managed to keep my head above water compared to my friends' marks. Every time I received a result, I would give my mother a call and every time I rang her, she always said I had done my best and told me that I had to be strong. After all, I bear the name of Siti Khadijah who was one of the greatest women of all time. Every time I got knocked down, I got back up and kept ploughing through.

What makes IIUM such a beautiful place to learn is the learning culture. I can still remember one of my best friends ever, Shifa Zambry, who helped me with Arabic where she would draw mind maps for better understanding. Doing assignments was always fun for all of us. My friends and I were assigned to review Nai'ma Roberts' "From My Sister's Lips." We decided to communicate with the author herself through Twitter and surprisingly, she replied. Speaking of doing assessments, I would like to share that I got full marks for one of the ENGL 1515 tests under the supervision of Tanja Jonid, which made us glow with confidence.

We always had troubles with the internet connection. Therefore, we had to go to the library for this reason. Sometimes, we went to a fast-food restaurant that provided Wi-Fi hotspots to do our assignments. However, this was not the biggest issue when it comes to doing assignments. Plagiarism, which was not supposed to happen in the first place, appeared to be a bigger problem than that. My lecturer for the Critical Thinking course once warned us saying that there was a Doctor of Philosophy whose doctorate got stripped because he did not acknowledge the source he took and used in his writing.

It was compulsory for all IIUM students to take co-curricular subjects to graduate. I took the most exciting course which was cooking class. In this class, we learned all the necessary and basic cooking skills. The best part of the class was we got to eat whatever we cooked. We prepared a different menu every week. The class was scheduled to be every Wednesday of the semester. So came Wednesday, my roommates would be waiting to try my masterpiece. We used to call Wednesdays "Buy Nothing Day."

Not only that, I have an experience catching a bus in the morning which I cannot ever forget. There was a time I missed the bus in the morning at 7.45am. So, I had to go for a long walk to class and reached the class that began at 8am, at 8.25am. I thought that missing the bus was terrible enough, but I was mistaken. The teacher locked the door that prompted me to try and give legit justification. But I only had the chance to explain right after the class ended. One lesson I learned that day was "don't be punctual, be early!" From that day onwards, I was never late again. I became very particular with my schedule.

I cannot deny the fact I miss IIUM so much. I used to tell people around me that I could not wait to graduate. Now I have to admit that I want to be there as much as I want to graduate. IIUM was and is the best. I could feel a wonderful Islamic environment. IIUM lecturers were the best of the best. They were so humble despite having remarkable achievements in their resumes.

I do not really have two cents to offer. But if existing or future students happen to want a piece of advice, I would say, be yourself. Be aware of our fitrah. Most importantly, we cannot do something that goes against our fitrah because it is a serious violation of our nature. One thing for sure is, IIUM will always be my second home and close to my heart forever.



### Biodata of author(s)

Siti Khadijah Omar is an English lecturer at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) where she teaches English skills to undergraduate students. She graduated from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) with a bachelor's degree of Human Sciences (English Language and Literature). She obtained her Master of Applied Linguistics from the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Her research interests include pragmatics, linguistics politeness, cross-cultural pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.



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