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The Epitome /iˈpɪtəmi/

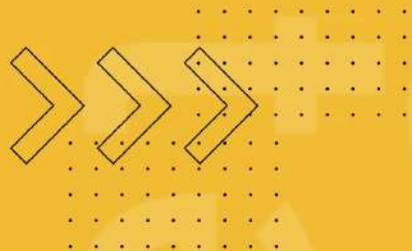
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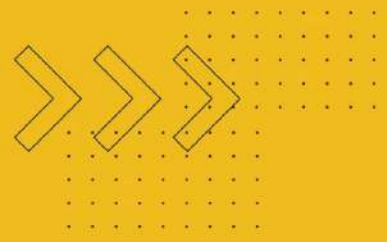
Unleash the epitome
of creative writers

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2026

The
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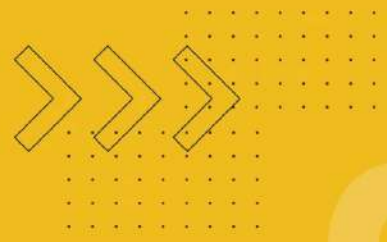
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Synopsis

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



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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





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The Monty HALL OF LIFE

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The first time Aili decided she was not smart was when she was four. She was at the park, watching a girl riding a pink bike. It had two large tires and two small tires at the back, balancing the bicycle so it would not fall. Eventually, she watched the girl hop off to play at the nearby playground.

Out of curiosity, Aili walked over to the pink bike. She climbed on and gripped the handlebars. She saw how the girl had pushed on the pedals, so she pushed her feet forwards. But no matter how hard she strained, the bike would not move. Aili decided to use momentum. She tried to use her body weight to move the bike forwards, then swung her body to the side.

The movement ended up toppling the bike sideways. She fell, the bicycle landing atop her. "Hey!" A woman shouted. The heavy sensation of the bike disappeared as the woman picked it up. "What do you think you're doing? If you don't know how to ride, don't! It's not even yours," the woman scolded, wheeling the bike away.

And Aili thought, I can't even figure out how to make a bike move.

When Aili was ten, she became good friends with Lisa. Lisa came from a very rich family. She loved to read books and went to a different school from Aili – the better school half an hour away. The only reason they became friends was because Aili had climbed a tree to save her kitten.

Sometimes, Aili would spend time at Lisa's big house. They'd turn on the TV some afternoons and watch random shows. One day, they watched a TV show where a man had to choose between three doors.

"There are sheep behind two of the doors. But behind one door is a million Ringgit," the announcer said. "Let's see whether he can win the money."
The man chose the middle door. The announcer walked to the left door and opened it, revealing a sheep.

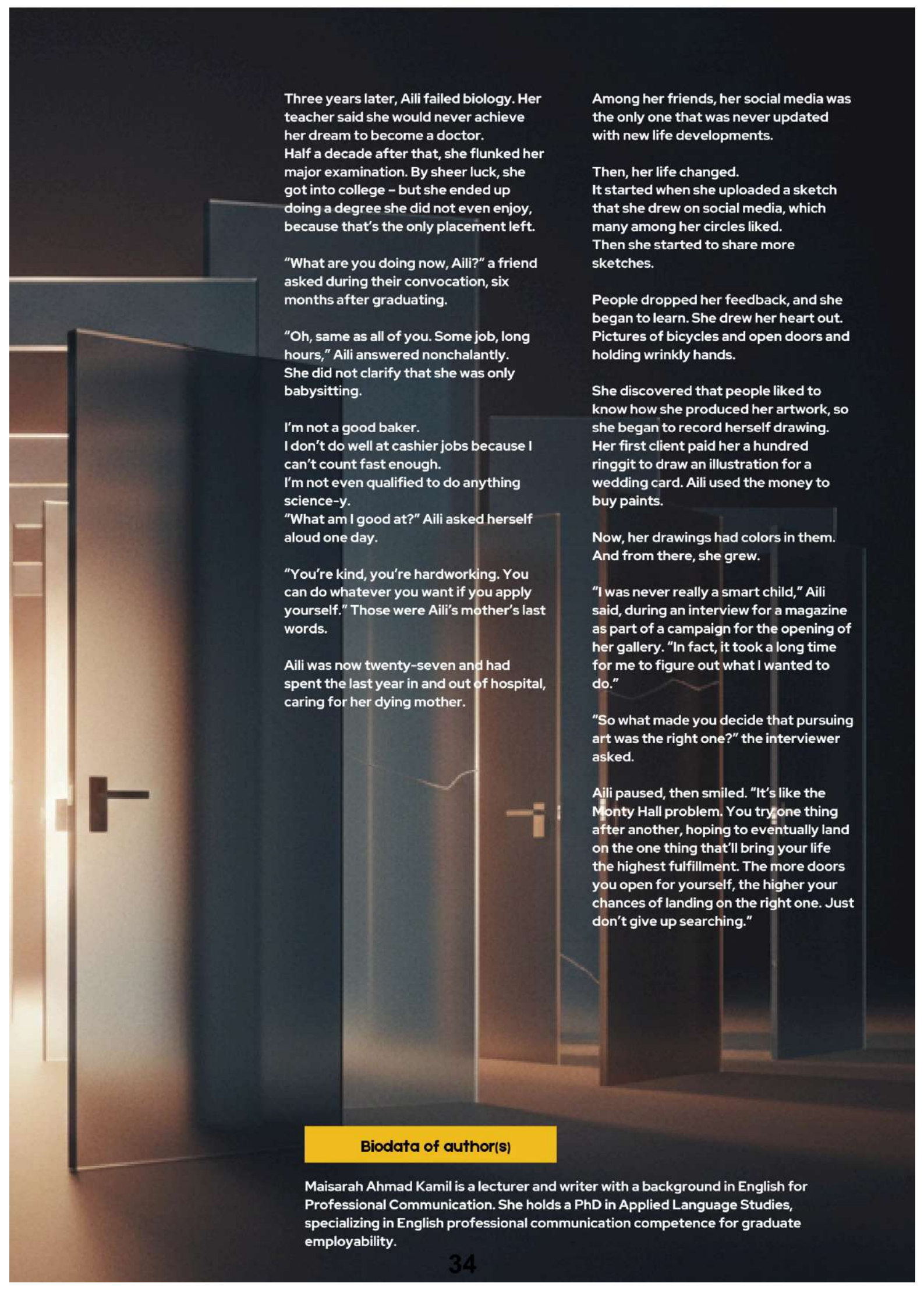
"Well, as you can see now, we have a door with a sheep behind it. That means there are two doors left. The middle one that you chose, and the other door. Do you want to stick with this middle door, or do you want to change your mind and choose the other door?" the announcer asked the man, who started to look agitated.

Lisa snorted. "Obviously he should change the door," she commented, her eyes on the screen.

The man decided to stay with the middle door. The announcer walked to it and opened it, revealing another sheep. "See, I told you," Lisa said. "How did you know that?" Aili asked, befuddled. "It's the Monty Hall problem." "The what?"

Lisa turned to stare at Aili. "The Monty Hall problem," she answered. Aili said nothing. Lisa pursed her lips, then settled back into the sofa, flicking the channels on the TV with the remote control. "I read it in a book. It's a problem of probability. When the man chose the first door, he only had a third chance that he would pick the right door. But when the other guy opened the wrong door, the probability shifted. If he switched, he would have two thirds of a chance to win. So, the question now is whether you want to increase your probability of winning or not."

None of it made sense. But Aili had another thought. I can't even figure out probabilities.



Three years later, Aili failed biology. Her teacher said she would never achieve her dream to become a doctor. Half a decade after that, she flunked her major examination. By sheer luck, she got into college – but she ended up doing a degree she did not even enjoy, because that’s the only placement left.

“What are you doing now, Aili?” a friend asked during their convocation, six months after graduating.

“Oh, same as all of you. Some job, long hours,” Aili answered nonchalantly. She did not clarify that she was only babysitting.

I’m not a good baker. I don’t do well at cashier jobs because I can’t count fast enough. I’m not even qualified to do anything science-y.

“What am I good at?” Aili asked herself aloud one day.

“You’re kind, you’re hardworking. You can do whatever you want if you apply yourself.” Those were Aili’s mother’s last words.

Aili was now twenty-seven and had spent the last year in and out of hospital, caring for her dying mother.

Among her friends, her social media was the only one that was never updated with new life developments.

Then, her life changed. It started when she uploaded a sketch that she drew on social media, which many among her circles liked. Then she started to share more sketches.

People dropped her feedback, and she began to learn. She drew her heart out. Pictures of bicycles and open doors and holding wrinkly hands.

She discovered that people liked to know how she produced her artwork, so she began to record herself drawing. Her first client paid her a hundred ringgit to draw an illustration for a wedding card. Aili used the money to buy paints.

Now, her drawings had colors in them. And from there, she grew.

“I was never really a smart child,” Aili said, during an interview for a magazine as part of a campaign for the opening of her gallery. “In fact, it took a long time for me to figure out what I wanted to do.”

“So what made you decide that pursuing art was the right one?” the interviewer asked.

Aili paused, then smiled. “It’s like the Monty Hall problem. You try one thing after another, hoping to eventually land on the one thing that’ll bring your life the highest fulfillment. The more doors you open for yourself, the higher your chances of landing on the right one. Just don’t give up searching.”

Biodata of author(s)

Maisarah Ahmad Kamil is a lecturer and writer with a background in English for Professional Communication. She holds a PhD in Applied Language Studies, specializing in English professional communication competence for graduate employability.



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