

Special Contribution

Breathe

(In conjunction with the Suicide Prevention Month, Sept 2021)

by Aina Syasya Arifin

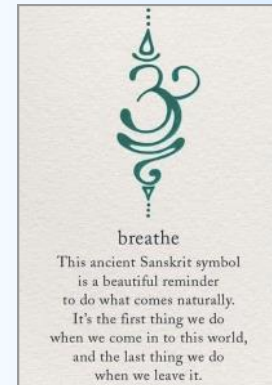
(Former student of the Diploma in Occupational Therapy,
Faculty of Health Science,
UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Kampus Bertam, 2017 intake)

I'm breathing,
but the flowers between my rib cages are wilting,
the thorns pricking my lungs,
the leaves numbing my tongue,
now I can't feel my own phalanges,
while my eyes flickers, I wonder;
maybe I'm not real.

I'm breathing,
although barely,
it's better unexplained
because no one is expected
to fill the void
behind my orbs.


I told my demon;
I'm breathing,
but would you stay
until my softest cartilages harden?
until my compact bones soften?
Say, would you stay?
Let's taste this poignancy together, for eternity.

For all I want is to be left alone



The Lost Traveler

by Reza Murad*, Stafford (2007)



The falter of leaves, empties my soul,
The endless darkness, eternal sorrow,
When I view my memories, recesses of old,
Of smiles and sunshines, all is now narrow.

My clarity dims, visibility low,
Hopes of yesterday disappear, sights of the future unclear,
Leafless trees, covered in snow,
As my frame of mind, encapsulated by uncertainty and fear.

Cold breeze pricks my senses,
I shiver, yet I stand erect,
As wide as the field of my dreams,
As firm as the bordering fences,
Though steadfast, it may seem,
Bravery eludes me, an unfortunate fact.

As my destiny lurks between my fingers,
Slowly slipping through, with little resistance,
A glimmer of hope, an ounce of strength lingers,
This is my journey, with a clenched fist...
I traverse the distance.

* Reza is an ex-student of Dr. Rofiza and Pn. Nazima

Dua Puluh Lima Tahun, UiTMku

by Dr. Rofiza Aboo Bakar

Enam bulan tertubuhnya dikau
Aku pun dijemput menyertaimu
Perasaanku mulanya galau
Maklumlah engkau gedungnya ilmu

Elok sekali engkau mendidik
Sepanjang kelmarin, hari ini, esok dan lusa
Kuharapkan pekertiku baik
Menabur bakti pada bangsa dan nusa

Riang hati melihat kedidi
Merayau-rayau di laman suri
Aku terima banyaknya budi
Tak kurang juga kadangnya iri

Kini dua puluh lima tahun telah berlalu
Rakan dan taulan silih berganti
Walau kadang hati merintih pilu
Setianya aku tetap di sini

Dua puluh lima tahun sudah usiamu
Meniti jalan kian berliku
Engkau kini bukan engkau yang dulu
Kematangan terserlah, pacuanmu laju


Jatuh dan bangun semalam
Kenangan indah tiada berdebu
Kejayaan terus-terusan kau genggam
Aku bangga menjadi wargamu

Adat manusia bila bertamu
Harus sekali pandai membawa diri
Halalkan semua tunjuk ajarmu
Esok lusa bila ku pergi tak kembali



Satria Pujaan

by Hanani Ahmad Zubir



Di kaca mata dunia
Kalian hanya manusia biasa
Namun berbekalkan semangat juang
Diiringi doa insan tersayang
Menyaksikan air mata berguguran
Anak kecil yang inginkan perhatian
Kalian tetap gagah kan?
Mengatur langkah bukan senang
Tanpa menoleh ke belakang

Tiada gentar mendepani musuh
Walau maklum maut bakal ditempuh
Menggapai sekelumit harapan
Mendambakan kebebasan
Merintis hak dan peluang
Demi keamanan pewaris yang mendatang
Kami sanjung jerit perih kalian
Akan teguh mendukung tinggalan
Berganjak tiada, kukuh bertahan
Biar getir datang membadai
Tanah air ini takkan ku gadai

Bendera Putih

oleh Noraziah Mohd Amin



Berkibar, melambai
Tangan cuba menggapai
Simpati insan melewati
Menghulur bantuan seikhlas hati
Demi kelangsungan hidup
Yang kian redup...



Redup mata disapa duka menghembus
Menatap wajah-wajah lapar dan haus
Buntu fikiran mencari jalan
Sudah puas segala cara diusahakan
Bekalan yang kian habis menambah resah
Dalam diri dihambat malu, mereka pasrah...

Pasrah dan berserah, bendera putih diangkat
Bukan tanda kalah atau gagal mengguna kudrat
Bukan culas mencari pintu rezeki
Bukan juga gemar menerima dari memberi
Tapi tangan yang dirantai, kaki yang dipasung
Keterbatasan yang tiada penghujung...



Penghujung 2019 punca segala
Yang membunuh manusia, melumpuh dunia
Lantaran wabak COVID-19 pencetus bencana
Sehingga ada menjadi papa kedana
Dan suara mereka kian tenggelam tak terdengar
Maka mereka mengusul bendera putih agar dikibar...



Dikibar untuk tatapan sesama rakyat
Bagi yang menabur bakti mudah melihat
Tapi niat murni bendera putih jadi agenda politikus
Cuba mengukuh kuasa sebegitu rakus
Diteguhkan hujah mereka tidak gagal
Kononnya rakyat terbela dan tiada sangkal...

Sangkal pada birokrasi menghulur bantuan
Sebegitu banyak borang dan soalan
Diri yang dihimpit waktu hanya disapa hampa
Bantuan tidak mudah bertukar tangan pada yang meminta
Bendera putih perlu dikibar membawa khabar hidup yang lumpuh
Sebelum kain putih jadi pembalut tubuh...



Tubuh sekadar ingin terus bernyawa
Bukan mencari salah siapa
Kita perlu saling berganding tangan
Membantu meringankan beban
Nasib rakyat yang masih berjuang bernafas
Entah esok mereka tidak mampu lagi dan tewas...



Bukan Main Lagi

oleh Che Nooryohana Zulkifli

Lajunya di situ, pantas pula menyudu,
siapa yang ada, keras dipalu,
tidak kau kira siapa yang terkedu,
apa kau kira malu?
Bukan main lagi.

Ada yang tersentak, tak kurang juga yang sentap di jiwa,
apa saja kau rasa, kau muntahkan juga,
betul, bukan main lagi.

Tangisan hiba, ahh, apalah sangat!
Hari ini menangis, esok ketawalah!
Kau teruskan juga, kutukan demi kutukan,
perjuanganmu memang sedap,
amboi, bukan main lagi.

Siapa yang murka, kau cantas segera,
kau seperti tiada bermuka, seolah tidak bernyawa,
ditembak jua sesedap rasa,
bukan main lagi kau bermaharajalela!

Jadi beginilah wahai sang perwira,
aku kira takut belum menerjah,
masih ampuh minda dan tubuh nan gagah,
kerana ada yang belum bersuara,
Mungkin kau lupa, Dia sentiasa ada di sana.

Nanti kau tunggulah pula,
mereka pula berteriak di telinga,
'bukan main lagi kau bersuka-ria,
apa kau ingat, dunia ini kau yang punya?!'
Ketika itu, kau pula berkata,
'aku tidak mahu main lagi'.



You and Your Giant Fist!

by Che Nooryohana Zulkifli

I know you're there,
been following wherever I go,
Yes, you can't hide, I can recognise your shadows.
From the brightest daylight, and the darkest night,
you are never far from my sight.

How I wish you'll sing me a lullaby,
but it's not easy for you because you never know how.
I've been walking with you and after every goodbye,
you say hello again and we get into another row.

They say you and I are never meant to be,
because it's been too much to mend,
your drama makes me tired and your script blurs my mind.

My hands are freezing cold,
I can't stop thinking about what you've told me,
it seeps into me like blood and I can never let it out.

If this is wrong, what is right, then?
You're still here and I'm still bent!

They say befriending you is just a phase,
but you're slowly rotting me, so I'm losing my pace.
All around I hear laughing shrills and giggles saying 'whee'!
While I'm wearing this smiley mask,
waterfalls of tears are gushing in me and no one sees.

It's been *perhaps* all the way,
and I've been fighting you to prove I'm okay.
Because your giant fist is not made of clay,
but after every battle, there goes my day.
You're winning every time but never walk away.



Yeop and Rendang

by Che Nooryohana Zulkifli

Just like any other day, that day was scorching hot, and I barely felt the wind from the fan. It was already at the highest speed, but my back was already drenched in my sweat! I quickly got up, walked to the main door and sipped a long breath - expecting that the natural wind could do me a favour, but all I got was dry and torrid air.

I was parched and walked to the kitchen to grab some icy water, and that was when I saw her. It was not the first time, and in fact, it became too frequent that I began to doubt her motives in life. My father was sitting beside her and talking about too many things that I failed to remember the details. All I knew, she interrupted him every now and then, making him lose his interest, and there were times that he started to lose his cool. I heard him raise his voice and repeated his points, usually more than three times because she couldn't hear him.

Every time I walked past her, she gave me one genuine smile, and it was indeed warm and comforting. My father made me sit beside him and explained to her that I was already a teenager. She smiled again, and without saying a word, she turned to her side, stared out of the window and left us clueless amid a conversation! My father let out a loud guffaw, and I couldn't help mimicking what he was doing. She turned her head again and asked, "What happened?" We broke into another bout of laughter.

It was 3 p.m., and the noonday sun was merciless still. I wanted to go outside, but my father wouldn't agree to that, and I hated stressing him out. I stared at the other kids who were so occupied with their video games on their phones, making all sorts of noises which mostly expressed their excitement. God knew how many times I've been standing and going back to sitting again to kill off my time. I was out of my seat when my uncle wheeled her to the living hall. She grabbed my left arm and made a gesture asking me to sit beside her, and so I did. I looked at her closely. Wrinkles inundated her whole face, and I couldn't really tell what the colour of her eyes was. As she leaned closer, I could see she was trying to say something but the noises

blocked her out. Not long after, my father came and shushed the kids. He puffed up the cushion and landed on the couch, right beside me. His skin was rather sticky that made me flinch when it touched mine.

"Do you like eating *rendang*?" She asked and fastened her eyes on me. My mouth twitched towards a smile. "Yes, I do! I love it so much. I had a lot just now. It was good!"

Silence.

"I am going to cook *rendang* tomorrow. We haven't had it for quite some time. It tasted better when I was young, but now with this condition, I find it difficult to make a good one. I learned how to cook it when I was your age. My mom's *rendang* was extraordinary! I love how she caramelised the curry and tenderised the meat! Tomorrow it is. You'll like it!"



I rounded my eyes and wiped some drops of sweat running down my temple. "We've had it just now. You had it too. Too much is never good," I told her.

She winced and chewed her tongue and said, "The last time I had *rendang* was many years ago, so I am going to cook it tomorrow. You must remind your father to get all of the ingredients!"

My father softly pressed my knee and whispered, "Let it go. She doesn't even know what she said to you five seconds ago."

I shook my head and continued with a nod. The temperature from my father's body doubled up the heat I'd had that day. I got up and sat on the floor instead. When my father inched closer to her, she asked, "When is *Yeop* going to come? He hasn't seen me for many months. You know, he called me yesterday and promised to visit. Go and call him

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again. Ask him to hurry. It might rain later."

My father sighed and chuckled before he firmly said, "Mother, we have done this many times, haven't we? *Yeop* died six years ago, and listen, nobody called you yesterday."

She was silent for a few minutes, fiddled her fingers and continued, "I feel sorry for his children. He has been bedridden for several years, and his daughter couldn't go anywhere, or even get a job because she has to stay home and take care of him. It's good that he doesn't have to suffer for long. He has always been a good brother to me."

My father simply took in the message, uttered nothing, leaned his back and closed his eyes. He almost fell asleep. Perhaps fatigue was filling him up, but he jolted when a bomb of cheers broke the silence! It was from the kids, and I was very sure they were winning their games. I knew she disapproved the noise that she quickly shouted to everyone. I sensed her anger spilt through her voice. My pulse raced when she screamed, "You have no idea what would happen if I can stand on my feet! It's better off if you are not here! You can go screw yourself and go back home!"

The shrieking immediately silenced the kids. Some sighed, and some even rolled their eyes. *Are they resenting her? Am I too?*

I can hear my father's grunt when she had lost it. After a few minutes, she looked calm again, nudged his arm and asked, "Have you called *Yeop*? I am making *rendang* tomorrow, and he must come! He has always loved it. He can never say 'no' to it."

I gazed down to the floor, feeling sick of having to go through the same thing all over again. My father didn't react to it, so I raised my head a bit and stared into his eyes. He was stiff, but he smiled at me while putting his arm around my shoulder.

I can't wait to see my mother that day. She was at work, and she would usually buy snacks on her way back home. I can see the clouds darkening. Thunder could be heard in the distance. I felt like jumping off the roof! It was going to rain! Before any spitting happened, the blustery wind was whipping the entire area, and I couldn't help smiling because it felt so good!

That feel-good sensation didn't last long when she started to yell at the top of her voice, "Close the door and switch off the fan now! It's going to rain! Now!"

Nobody seemed to bother what was happening. She became hysterical, started crying and recited some *Quranic* lines along with the shudders that went all over her body. My father jumped out of the couch and pushed her to her room. Her sobs were still loud, and I can see that my father was trying to say something to her. The rain had started to ding furiously on the tin roof, and I hardly heard him. I wanted to help him close the room door, but he signalled me to just leave it ajar. I loosely let my eyes follow his actions all along. He lifted her and placed her comfortably on the bed, where she got to snuggle with her pillows and blanket. He bent down to sit beside her and grabbed her hands in his. As the storm roared, again and again, she continued to whimper. She agitatedly grabbed her pillows and covered her ears. When I started to understand that my father was actually trying to soothe her, my mother patted me on my shoulder. She peeped through the door and pulled my hand to our room.

My mother dropped her handbag to the floor while I was throwing myself on the bed. I said to her, "Can you see that she is like a baby? When are we going back to our house?"

She sat beside me and smiled. "You just got here, and you miss home already?"

I narrowed my eyes, and even before I could tell her what happened that day, she leaned closer, exhaled and said, "I know. But if I were her and you were him, would you leave me?"



Nothing else slipped my tongue afterwards.