



The **Epitome** */I'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Cawangan Kedah

*We are back!
Welcoming the epitome of artistic ideas &
astonishing writers!*

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SYNOPSIS

The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah is thrilled to announce the release of the second edition of its e-magazine, The Epitome. This publication exemplifies our steady dedication to fostering creativity in language and literature.

The primary objective of THE EPITOME is to offer a platform where writers, educators, scholars, poets, and researchers can come together to exchange their ideas, discoveries, expertise, and narratives. Our special focus revolves around an array of creative writing genres, encompassing Playwriting, Short stories, Songs, Speeches, Memoirs, Literary Journalism, Humour writing, Lyric essays, Innovative essays, and Personal essays, with a goal to embrace diverse linguistic expressions, with content available in four languages: English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic.

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Every day is learning curves...

Dear Readers,

We are back! We are thrilled to present a collection of articles that we believe capture the essence of the writers. Our team has worked diligently to curate content that we hope will both engage and resonate with you.

In these pages, you will find a diverse range of perspectives on life, from joy to sorrow. We hope these pieces inspire reflection and spark meaningful conversations.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to our talented contributors for their time and expertise. Their dedication is what makes the second issue of Epitome possible.

As always, we value your feedback. Please do not hesitate to reach out with your thoughts and suggestions.

Thank you for being a part of our Epitome community.

Warm regards,

Razanawati Nordin
Editor-in-Chief,
The Epitome

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Fat Barbie

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Today, I feel like reading a poem. The poem Barbie Doll by Marge Piercy seems to attract my attention out of all the poems that I've searched. I read the poem with a hot cup of Earl Grey tea by my side. I read the poem all the way through to get the gist of what this poem is about. Okay, this is not a happy poem. My initial assumption was utterly off course. It's a depressing poem for such an innocent title. One line stood out to me the first time I read this poem. You have a great big nose and fat legs. That line hit me like a brick. I am suddenly feeling quite vulnerable.

Tears are building up in my eyes. Throughout the poem, I can sense what the theme is. I would not want to say much on my first reading, as I didn't go through it enough. However, I can feel that my mood is going to change, and not for the better.

It's coming out. The tears are coming out whether I like it or not. The second reading is hard. I've always been a cry-baby since I was little. It is little to no surprise that I would be affected by this poem, especially when I am experiencing this body shaming myself. Yes, the narrator definitely was a body-shaming victim. A great big nose and fat legs, her classmate said.

This brought back tons of memories, never good ones. I was a victim of body shaming, or should I say I still am? My body has always been on the heavy side. I am aware of that, and I am still struggling with it. The eating disorder has always been in my book. It never left. However, the closest ones chose to ignore it, hoping it would not be mentioned in our daily conversations. Out of sight, out of mind perhaps. Gemuk, badak, ikan paus were a few of the countless demeaning names my primary school peers had called me. Surprisingly, the indelible insult that I received wasn't regarding my body size.

"Syaza, kau dulu lahir dalam hutan ke?" he said.

"Tak ada lah. Kenapa?"

"Sebab muka kau hitam, hidung kau kembang, rambut kau kerinting. Buruk."

This happened when I was 10 years old. I still remember it to this day. I've almost forgotten all the other verbal abuses, but not this one. I've wondered about it to this day. She was healthy, tested intelligent, possessed strong arms and back... she went to and fro apologizing, everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs. Yes, ditto. I consider myself to be an intelligent girl, mature for my age, healthy with a great sense of humour, and I pride myself on being kind to all beings. Yet, I was not identified as those characters as much as I am the fat girl. My great qualities were undermined by that one flaw deemed by society: being overweight.

My mood has been going downhill since I read the poem. This line “She was advised to play coy... exercise, diet, smile and wheedle”. She was told to brush it off, to change her looks, and to let it go when other people bullied her. This is what is wrong with society today. Rather than punishing the abuser, you tell the victim to stay silent. That is messed up. Verbal abuse is done by all, regardless of your gender and age. Yet, it had been the boys in my case. When I seek help, they would say, “Oh, boys will be boys”. No, boys will be held accountable for their actions. Bullies and abusers should be held responsible for their actions.

The girl in this poem couldn't take it anymore and perished. Suicide, perhaps. She gave in. In the end, the girl couldn't take it anymore. It really is devastating to read that her life was cut short. This nameless girl in the poem can be any one of us. I can put myself as the narrator in the poem, and it still makes sense. Doesn't she look pretty? Everyone said. Consummation at last. To every woman a happy ending. I think the writer wants to convey that women face criticism, comments, and insults for as long as they are alive. We women must endure that every day till the day we die. Even Miss World is not beautiful enough in someone's eyes. I indeed agree with that.

I think this poem is dedicated to women, hence the title. Women have always been looked down on by society. To gain respect is hard work. We have always been looked at as an object. Before others, physical appearance has always been the main thing that society sees. There are many things that I can say, that I want to say. I survived the abuse, the body shaming. I was barely hanging, though, years ago. I had no one I could turn to. I just wish that whoever reads this poem could grasp that body shaming women can do so much harm. For those who could resonate with the poem, please remember that you are beautiful, you are enough, and you are loved.



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