



ASEAN-IPR Publication of

ASEAN Peace Poems

ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

2022

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Editor
Okky Madasari

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	
Secretary-General of ASEAN	i
Foreword	
Chair of the Governing Council 2021	iii
Foreword	
Executive Director of ASEAN-IPR	v
Profile of Experts	vii
The Unrelenting Soul - Yizhi Ria Riangmi	1
calm after the storm - Abigail Lim Kah Yan	3
A Dream World - Bunga Tiara	4
Incantations For Statesmen (Mantra untuk Negarawan) - Hamzah	5
Mercy On Me (Ampuniku) - Elvy	7
Forced Displacement - Anisa Farida	9
Capitalism Not - Mary Pauline O. Santos	10
Peacekeeper - Firnita	11
The Death Counts Roses - Fassya Tamara	12
A SONG OF SALIENT SAGA - Deden Rahmat Hidayat	14
Ræd (Mærah) - Hamzah	16
Julid - Ramita Paraswati	17
The Siege of Zamboanga - Earl Carlo Guevarra	19

No Place Like Zamboanga - Earl Carlo Guevarra	20
(NOT) A Mini Quiz - Mutiara Rachmadini Effendi	21
Wasteland - Fassya Tamara	23
A City of Rain and Drought That Follows (Kota Hujan dan Kemarau yang Menyertainya) - Hamzah	24
Uterus - Anisa Farida	25
The Seesaw - Lee Xin Ru	26
Final Breaths of a Crowned Scepter - Juditte Mae B. Din	28
innerpeace - Ghina Athirah Furqan	30
joy of life - Al Oetomo	31
Where Peace Rests - Laurensia Vonny Xaviera	32
Muted TV - Firnita	33
The Formula of Peace - Dani	34



FOREWORD

Secretary-General of ASEAN

One of the most significant achievements of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) since its formation in 1967 is its ability to keep the peace throughout the region. ASEAN's founding document, the Bangkok Declaration, laid out regional cooperation in the economic and socio-cultural realms as the foundation for this regional peace.

Similarly, the establishment of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 1976 embodies ASEAN's approach towards addressing conflicts through the renunciation of the threat or use of force in settling disputes. The fact that we currently have 33 non-ASEAN states, including

all Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as High Contracting Parties to the TAC is testament to ASEAN's efforts in socialising the norms of peaceful resolution of conflict and the primacy of international law in the region and beyond.

Although peace is often seen in the context of the absence of war, the threats to it can be more pervasive and potentially encroach on many levels of society. This ASEAN Institute of Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) publication of ASEAN Peace Poems recognises this important dynamic and provides a good reminder that peace begins, but could also crumble, in the minds of individuals. The poets whose works are featured in this volume have utilised their mastery of words to share their experiences, aspirations and observations on peace.

ASEAN's experience has taught us that peace requires a positive and dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged as differences and disputes are resolved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. The evolution of an ASEAN approach to peace, from the TAC to the recognition of the right of the peoples of ASEAN to enjoy peace as proclaimed in the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration and the ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society, demonstrates our long-standing and enduring quest for regional stability and peace in all aspects of the ASEAN Community.

This collection of poems highlights the extraordinary strength and courage of people longing for peace and a more stable future. Their heartfelt words of hope and tolerance serves as a call to spur collective action towards

sustaining and promoting peace. This publication also sheds light on local and indigenous perspectives on peace and pays homage to ASEAN's peace champions. Advancing understanding and solidarity among diverse peoples and cultures must be part of our conscious and continuous efforts.

I would like to express my appreciation to the poets and contributors to this volume for their relentless championing of a peaceful ASEAN Community. The publication of ASEAN Peace Poems this year is especially meaningful as ASEAN and ASEAN-IPR marks their 55 th and 10 th anniversaries of their respective foundations in 2022. I convey my highest commendation to ASEAN-IPR for their stellar work as the region's leading institution on peace and peace-building, especially in expanding the discourse on peace and broadening its constituents.



H. E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi
Secretary-General of ASEAN

FOREWORD

Chair of the Governing Council 2021

Since its inception in 2012, the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) has progressively played a significant role as an ASEAN's knowledge hub and centre of excellence on issues of peace, conflict management and conflict resolution. Against the challenging backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, I am pleased to witness that the ASEAN-IPR continues to adapt to the new normal and expand its engagement to promote a culture of peace in the region in various ways and mediums, including by leveraging on art, which is loved by many and is open to many interpretations.

The ASEAN-IPR Publication of ASEAN Peace Poems presented before you, showcases a collection of 25 selected peace poems, which express diverse perspectives and experiences related to the concepts of peace. I am delighted that the project received almost 200 open submissions of poems from across the Southeast Asia region, in particular from the youth. The project complements the priorities of Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2021, under the theme of '*We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper*', which recognised the important role of youth in peace and security agenda as well as the need to instil in our youth an appreciation for peace and a sense of responsibility towards the society for an inclusive and sustainable peace.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to a panel of literary experts for their participation in the selection process of the poems for this publication, and to the writers, for their contribution to this important initiative, in particular in expressing their creativity and narrative of peace through meaningful poems. It is with earnest hope that this publication can forge and foster peace in the ASEAN Community and the world at large.



**H.E. Pengiran Hairani
Pengiran Tajuddin**

Chair of the Governing Council 2021

FOREWORD

Executive Director of ASEAN-IPR

Peace itself could be considered universally as the greatest goal one could achieve whether as an individual or as a member of society. People from all walks of life, upbringings, races, and cultural backgrounds interact peacefully with one another every single day. Albeit beautiful, differences derived out of diversity are bound to clash. This volatile situation might lead to hostility, conflict or even war, the antithesis of peace. History has witnessed that peace is not something that is given, it is something that we have to seek, forge and foster actively together.

ASEAN is envisioned as a peaceful, secure and stable region. But in reality, we are still facing various challenges that pose a threat to the stability and culture of peace in the region. The region has made, and is making, countless efforts to promote and spread peace through different channels and mediums. The pursuit of peace is not an easy feat, thus we have to explore and find new ways to forward narratives of peace.

The arts, specifically the art of poetry, has been used to convey messages in different cultures for centuries, including messages of peace. It is said that “Poetry is a matter of life, not just a matter of language.” While the hope for peace may be universal, its definition is unique to each and every individual’s perception and experience. These personal depictions of peace, or the absence of it, are much more than worthy of being heard. ASEAN-IPR

recognized the untapped potential of peace poems, among others, as means of intercultural and transnational dialogue, and how ASEAN could benefit from these varied perspectives to create a more sustainable and peaceful society.

The ASEAN-IPR Publication of ASEAN Peace Poems features 25 peace poems from all over the region that are testament not only to the artistic talents of ASEAN citizens, youth in particular, but also their concerns and interests regarding peace in the region. Through this initiative, the Institute hopes that by involving more people to participate in conversations about peace, ASEAN's culture of peace would continue to grow and flourish.

It is my greatest pleasure to present the ASEAN-IPR Publication of ASEAN Peace Poems to you all. I would also like to express my gratitude to the authors and the Panel of Experts that have made this project become a reality. I hope this publication will serve as an inspiration for fellow ASEAN citizens as well as the rest of the world to harness the power of the arts to encourage and endorse positive peace to our community in our beloved region.



H. E. I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja

Executive Director of ASEAN-IPR

PROFILE OF EXPERTS

Okky Madasari



Okky is an Indonesian novelist, essayist, researcher and a PhD candidate with the National University of Singapore. She is the founder and CEO of Omong-Omong Media (omong-omong.com), a story and news analysis website, and OMG! My Story (www.omgmystories.com), a social enterprise dedicated to critically unveil realities through storytelling and provide a medium for creative talents in Southeast Asia to showcase their works.

She has also published 11 books since 2010, and is known for her exquisite portrayals of Indonesia's social and political conditions. Her works have been translated into English, German and Arabic. She has been a judge for a number of international and local literary competition and events, including Singapore Book Prize, Golden Point Award (an award for manuscript held by Singapore's National Arts Council) and Indonesia's Khatulistiwa Literary Award.

Melizarani T. Silva



Melizarani T.Silva is a Malaysian writer and spoken word poet, with notable performances at ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival and TEDxGateway. Her first book, ‘Taboo’ is a poetic exploration of her Masters’ thesis on the constructs and representations of the Malaysian Indian Identity. Her poems have been translated into French and Bahasa Malaysia. She co-founded If Walls Could Talk: Poetry Open Mic, the Malaysia National Poetry Slam and has co-published an anthology of 100 poems by 61 poets from Malaysia titled ‘When I Say Spoken, You Say Word!’. Presently, she serves as co-editor of the literary magazine SingPoWriMo.com. She can be found at melizarani.com.

Hariz Fadhilah



Hariz Fadhilah is a Bruneian poet and theater actor. Hariz writes his poems in both Malay and English mostly touching on love, nature, youth empowerment and mental health. He was a recipient of the ASEAN Literary Festival Residency Program in Jakarta, Indonesia. He published his debut poetry collection *Flowers in the Chakrawala* in 2019, and subsequently the chapbook *Cut Flowers*. His Malay poem *15 Julai* was aired by Radio Television Brunei to commemorate His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei's 74th Birthday. In 2021, he began to expand his portfolio by working with local and international commercial brands to feature his writing.

On stage, he has acted in local playwright Michelle Fung's *Case File: The Unsettled Souls*. His writing will be featured in an upcoming anthology of poems comprising of 12 poets from Brunei.



The Unrelenting Soul

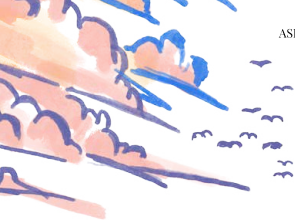
Yizhi Ria Riangmi

The scent of carbon smoke,
the scarlet glares of houses set aflame,
the thunderous shells of cacophony,
the spilled blood of men, and the weeping of families;
All too familiar in recent memories.
From Hkakabo to Merauke, and the stretches, folds and waters
in between;
Along the trails of the Irawaddy and Mekong, to the waves over
Celebes and Banda,
the gales have blown violently against us, yet now we stand firm
against what is now a breeze.
Unrelenting, unyielding, unshaken against the menaces that
proceed.
The smoke that now wafts come from the flavourful kitchens of
our neighbors;
The scintillating embers of coal flicker under the satay, while
the reverberations of the gamelan and kendang merrily roar
amid the bonhomie of our people
dressed in the harlequin of our batik and the eclectic flora on our
heads.
We remember hardships like change in our pocket, but live on
the currency of the present vivace.
We resemble the carmine rubies mined from our blood, sweat



and tears;
The lush forests rooting our sanctity;
The rivers that flow with our forefathers.
Gems hidden in plain sight, diamonds in the rough from the
biding years of inferno.
We've bled, we've grieved, we've sacrificed—but never
surrendered;
For our children and theirs after to grin, to sing, to dance and tell
no tales of sorrow.
For you, for me and for whatever may come tomorrow.

#1



Calm before the storm

Yizhi Ria Riangmi

When peace comes,
you will not find her on the edge of an olive branch,
or a ceasefire;
she will not be in the silence of the Tabernacle
or in the gentle waves lapping against your calves at the beaches;
only remnants of her remain in the temples,
not even on quiet hills overlooking sleeping skyscrapers.

If peace comes,
you will feel her on the brims of tidal waves just as they cascade
across the shore,
after a fire, when the walls are dampened, blackened with
lingering soot, ash thickening the air,
in hospitals, during a doctor's long shift; they always say silent
hallways are a bad omen;
in the thick of a protest, voices reverberating across the streets,
the aftermath of a break-up, when the lovers leave;

When peace comes,
you will not find her serene.
Instead,
she courts chaos
like Saturn yearning for Jupiter's kiss,
long awaiting his passing
for her moment of bliss.

A Dream World

Bunga Tiara

Thump, thump, the first beats drum
One, two, the first cry, too
Three, four, the first smile pour
Five, six, the first words mix
Seven, eight, the first steps interrelate
Nine, ten, here comes the first life, again

The sun shines so bright and the night is accompanied by the moonlight
The wind blows and the plant grows
The rain falls and the clouds crawl
That is a dream world that whorled

T'was greens for sceneries, now, it's only brown that makes me frown
T'was fresh air to breathe, now, it's only smoke that choke

The rain falls and the clouds crawl
That is a dream world that whorled

#3



(Incantations for Statesmen)
Mantra untuk Negarawan

Hamzah

In this story
I submit and testify
On the matter of skies and winds
washing lobes
drying dams
at the edge of my eyes.

A realm screaming on Agni's nape
time acts without lattices
the gas ignited anger stinks
the verge of restlessness rings
often ashtray's residuals
drowned within blocks of wood on fire.

Anchored night on river's body
chunked rocks by ogre's stampede
flowed water send a headstone
for alien anxiety
disguised as a figure
of giant with a club hammer, yet...

Dalam cerita ini
aku berserah dan bersaksi
perkara langit dan angin
yang membasuh cuping
dan mengeringkan subak
di mataku pada tepi.

Ada alam jeritan di tengkuk Agni
waktu bertingkah tanpa kisi-kisi
kemarahan sangit disulut bensin
ambang rusuh berdenging
sering sisa abu asbak
diredam bilah kayu pada api.

Malam bersauh tirta kali
batu bongkah diserbu gergasi
air bergerak ligat menghantar nisan
untuk kegelisahan asing
menyaru jadi sosok
raksasa berpalu gada, tapi...



Adam shouted serenity certainly
 pocketing resignation and cooperation
 also
 snarls from mother earth against
 villains and thugs
 broken by hurricane and pestilence
 fiends deliberately being refused
 for a line of smirk and grin on both
 cheeks.

Past faith on frenetic
 cracked pride swallowed by affection
 lumped noise, broken by pieces
 only peace is here to stay
 on every beginning of songs
 on every heart of sentences and spells.

Adam menyeru tentram dengan yakin
 bersaku kepasrahan dan kerja sama lagi
 gertak dari bumi bagi penjahat dan
 preman
 lantak ditelan puyuh dan gering
 padu memang sengaja ditolak
 demi kulum pada baris dan sungging
 pipi.

Iman silam pada hingar-bingar
 angkuh rekah dilumat afeksi
 bongkah sudah damat, hancur nian
 semata damai bermukim
 di mula-mula bait nyaring
 serta di ulu kalimat dan jampi.

(Mercy on Me)

Ampuniku

Elvy

I never see your face
I have yet to know your name
But I want you to see
Your future worries me.

If we meet later
In a matter of decades
Will your smile bloom?
Or your face full of gloom?

For disaster comes without alarms
Lives in peril due to human-led harms
Blinded by ego, greed, and power
Anyone's inner voice speaks out?

They said our motherland has
boundless beauty
Praises for her come from here
and there
Yet no one's seen her
treasured Emerald
being pawned by her own
children for short-term gains?

Aku tidak tahu rupamu
Aku belum punya namamu
Tapi aku mau kamu tahu
Aku resah akan masa depanmu

Jika kelak kita berjumpa
Dalam hitungan dasawarsa
Akankah senyummu merekah?
Atau justru parasmu penuh lara?

Karena musibah datang tanpa aba-aba
Nyawa terancam punah oleh tangan-
tangan manusia Membuta karena ego,
ketamakan, dan kuasa
Adakah nurani yang berbicara?

Katanya ibu pertiwi elok dan kaya
Pujian kepadanya di mana-mana
Apakah tidak ada yang melihat zamrud
pusaka miliknya Tengah digadai
putra-putrinya demi
keuntungan sementara?

To you I dare not pretend
Pieces of single-use plastic bags
Huge slices of imported beef
Fossil-fueled vehicle rides
Each of them I still consume, I still
enjoy.

But if the sky is no longer blue
If the forests disappear
If clean water is scarce to quench your
thirst
How will your life be without them, my
dear?

Have mercy on me
Climate crisis is worsening
Its impact is critical like the pandemic
I hereby contemplate
To change for the Earth and living
rights.

Padamu aku tidak ingin munafik
Bercarik-carik kantong plastik
Potongan besar daging sapi luar negeri
Kendaraan berbahan bakar fosil
Masih dikonsumsi, pun masih
kunikmati

Namun jika langit tak lagi biru
Jika hutan berubah tandus
Jika air bersih tak lagi cukup
mengobati haus
Bagaimana hidupmu nanti tanpa itu,
anakku?

Ampuni aku
Krisis iklim kian menggerogoti
Dampaknya kritis seperti pandemi
Dengan ini aku bercermin diri
Untuk berubah demi bumi dan hak
asasi.

#5



Forced Displacement

Anisa Farida

Forcibly displaced
Means home's safe haven no more.
At our wits' end; lost.

Forcibly displaced
Means leaving the world we built
To start from scratch; nil.

Forcibly displaced
Only with clothes on our back
And hands to hold; us.

Forcibly displaced,
Seeking shelter and refuge
In foreign land; hope.

#6

Capitalism Not

Mary Pauline O. Santos

Sirens wailed the streets
Overlooking the plain sight of
Cropped images of people-
Inadmissible faces cry hope
As they walk on shards of glass-
Laudable despite the misfortune

Ignorance was to blame
Not the half-truths they made
Just is a word that
Unveils the ways of morality-
Sad circumstances where
The society labels us
In accordance with hue- but why?
Cut us all up to see and
Examine the color we bleed

Inequity reveals itself
Slaying innocence it comes across but

Now they uphold, holding hands-
Ever oaring themselves against it
Vitality together to aid our own land,
Each of our differences makes unity
Realizing what's wrong is fidelity

Feared as it was of the above-
Reluctance was provoked
Ecclesial or not link side by side-
Eagerly marched forward to the
Dawn of a new beginning where
Oppression dies at the
Matrimony of peace and just

#7

Peacekeeper

Firmita

Peacekeeper as white as a dove
as elegant as a dancer
as solid as a palace
as pure as a newborn
only one drop of blood
makes them dirty
like a-year-old mop, filthy
like a pool of vomit, nasty
like a rotten fruit, spoiled
like a dead body, polluted
like a peacekeeper

#8

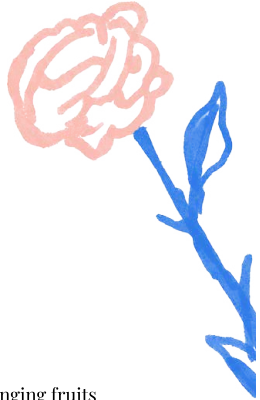


The Death Counts Roses

Fassya Tamara

The death counts roses
like withering pollens
blowing in the air
as if dusts of a raging
wildfire. It takes
sprouting flower buds
full of life ahead as I
keep count of each one. I put a dollar sign for
each petal. To nourish,
to sustain, to help
the underserved garden grow. To better?
You bet to better.

Every stem here has
an origin, and every leaf has a name. I never
remember any of them, they are but numbers
to me: one, two, three,
a hundred thousand.
A million signs for
dollars. They were
organic and now I sell
them pesticides. My farm is granular on my
radar and yet, it is
never at all.



There are no means
to this end, there are no low-hanging fruits
in this estate of mine.
I must step feet
on the grass and bask
myself in the sweet
fragrance, I need to taste
the wildfire from a mile away. It took long for me
to see that there are no possibilities I could ever sell the agony
of the flowers who are not me.

#9

A SONG OF SALIENT SAGA

Deden Rahmat Hidayat

Malati ligar na ati...

– Jasmines are blossoming in heart...

She recounted a merry rhyme
From her mother tongue vividly over
the time

She felt like she was a jasmine
Aroma of her logical mint
Aspiring to conquer the hike
To the light she wanted to bide

Kembang eros lir tumaros...

– Roses are like probing...

Her whisper instead of talks
Holding a bunch of thorny stalks

The earth questioned her will
A hope a girl should always kill

The class of a rosy pass
In the house she ought to cast



Kembang wéra ngéra-ngéra...

– Hibiscus are humiliating...

A ballad of rising tones
An anger she must have thrown

Packing up her tears
To wed she left without heels
The reality she'd never sewn
At thirteen with joys that prone

There she keeps chanting the ode
A song of her salient saga
At the veranda she always recalls
A remorseful age featuring the falls

A drizzling note storming the garden
Reminisce into a postmortem

Kembang tanjung nu gumulung...

– Spanish cherries are in a full bloom....

#10

Note:

Italic words are from Sundanese Language, West Java, directly translated after each line



(Ræd)

Mærah

Hamzah

only red
 brought oxygen
 to senses
 filling up decadent pupils and retinas
 only high-pitched strings
 steaming head against liturgical verses
 smoke. then smoke.
 then, steam.
 only a fist of skin
 thicken and twisted
 on twenty-nine
 joints and hinges
 only an upset
 massacre like finishing
 is only a thrill.
 afraid of intention without neglect.
 until a swing of an axe
 or shot of a gun
 Only a human pretends to be a God but
 more vicious.

adalah merah
 membawa oksigen
 pada indra
 memenuhi pupil retina dekaden
 adalah gesekan bernada tinggi kepala
 didih pada sajak liturgi asap. lalu asap.
 lalu, uap.
 adalah kepal kulit
 makin tebal melilit
 pada dua puluh sembilan ruas dan
 sendi
 adalah gusar
 pembantaian bagai pemungkasan
 adalah getar.
 takut pamrih tanpa pengabaian.
 hingga ayunan kapak
 atau bedil menyalak
 adalah manusia merasa tuhan hanya
 galak.

Julid

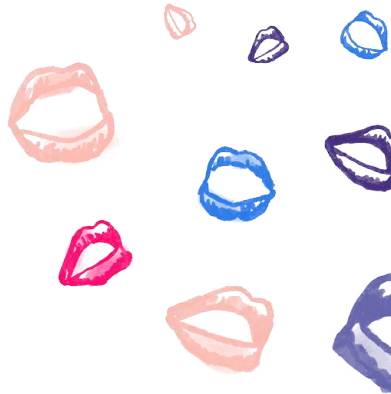
Ramita Paraswati

Peace my earth
Peace my region
Peace my country
Peace my province
Peace my town
Peace my village
Peace my family
Make a peace with me

But.....
Where can I start?
My heart or my brain?
Maybe not both
But avoiding all negative thoughts
Is that enough to make peace?

Or.... from my family?
Ah, how is that possible
Every morning is filled with an anger of my father and mother
Maybe it's better if I turn up my music
And I listen to their bickering no more
Is that enough to create peace?

Or.....my village?
Ah, how come



My neighbors make me insecure
When I want to start something, I'm afraid to be the subject of
their chit-chat
When I'm silent, they won't stop talking about me either
Where can I contribute to the peace of my earth?

The country's leaders are fighting over the place to start peace
Collaborate to create a more peaceful atmosphere
Trying to put women in peacebuilding
They are educated women
Get ready to take on that role
But they forget to fix the root
A habit of gathering to talk about other people
How many people on my earth are like that?

And I.....
Still here, hiding in the idea of eternal peace
Trying to escape from the shadow of a village girl
Closely related to the word "kanca wingking"
Dreaming to take a role in peacebuilding
Building a productive village
To stop the "Julid" tradition
Giving the courage to inspire
Closing the space for rebuttal
And supporting each other and collaborating

O ruler of peacebuilding
See us,
Free us from the tradition of "Julid"
So that we can be with you
Building a peaceful earth

#12

The Siege of Zamboanga

Earl Carlo Guevarra

Every day I hear cannon shells falling
As I wake up before the sun rises
At night, I see endless tracers flying

When the village *tanod* comes patrolling
We all sigh as we look out our houses
Every day I hear cannon shells falling

As all the men took turns guarding
Drinking coffee to stir up their senses
At night, I see endless tracers flying

When we all heard gunfire the next morning
And my *kuya* took our gun to those places
Every day I hear cannon shells falling

When the airplanes dropped bombs in the evening
Making fireballs that shocked our faces
At night, I see endless tracers flying

Even as I board the cargo plane that morning
With throngs of people raising their hands and praying
In my dreams I hear cannon shells falling
And at night, I still see tracers flying.

No Place Like Zamboanga

Earl Carlo Guevarra

I say that there's no place like my hometown
Where the sun sets over the Sulu Sea
Yet I can't go back now to my own town

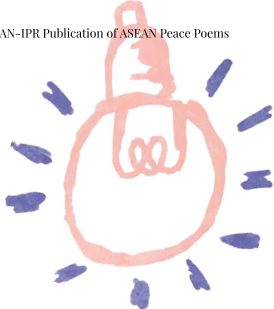
The crabs and lobsters are fresh in my town
There are pink sand beaches for all to see
I say that there's no place like my hometown

My loved ones all wait for me to come down home and have a
party under the tree
Yet I can't go back now to my own town

These pure islands have palm trees as their crown with fine sand
beaches for all to roam free
I say that there's no place like my hometown
There are rivers and falls just outside town
Inside virgin woods that would make one glee
Yet I can't go back now to my own town

Everyone's taking selfies in another town and post on Instagram
of the great sights they see
I say that there's no place like my hometown
Yet I can't go back now to my own town

#14



(Not) A Mini Quiz

Mutiara Rachmadini Effendi

There should be no question here,
because we have gathered the answers.

But...

Even after we gathered what we learned,
We are still puzzled about the solution.

Then...

I realized that the void is always there to be filled.
Perhaps, I should not stop asking.
I should list the questions on my own.

So, again, what is the issue here?

#15

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	E	N	V	I	R	O	N	M	E	N	T									
2		C	O	N	S	E	R	V	A	T	I	O	N							
3		E	Q	U	I	L	I	B	R	I	U	M								
4			E	C	O	C	E	N	T	R	I	C		S		K			W	
5					A	N	T	H	R	O	P	O	C	E	N	T	R	I	C	
6														I	O			S		
7			C	O	M	M	U	N	I	T	Y			E	W			D		
8			S	Y	M	B	I	O	S	E	S			N	L			O		
9														C	E			M		
10				E	C	O	L	O	G	Y				E	D					
11					N	A	T	U	R	E					G					
12						H	A	R	M	O	N	Y			E	T	H	I	C	
13													O							
14				F	A	I	T	H					U							
15							G	O	D				T							
16						H	U	M	A	N	H									
17					L	O	V	E												
18					I															
19					F															
20					E															

Wasteland

Fassya Tamara

I used to live in a town of clear waters
where the sun rose and set not for another hour— birthing
longer days and later nights. The rivers were clean and trees
green, distances were close and bridges long.

Passing a bridge I could take in the vast uninterrupted skyline:
all the buildings standing low, proudly showcasing all the colors
of the sunrise.

The evening sky was a bright stream teeming with stars, forming
constellations as if an arsenal. My hometown is no longer
recognizable. I am home and I cannot find myself in the wind
rustling through the gooseberry trees.

My child will have to live with dead fishes and oil spills washing
up the ocean shores. She will find skyscrapers closing in the
horizon, looking up to a thin smog like a sheath over the heavenly
synagogue.

I will have to apologize as I listen to her laughter, watching her
play under the blazing orange sky. I will weep quietly for she will
never have seen the moon in her scraps of life, the blue dot now
a wasteland.

**(A City of Rain and
Drought That Follows)**

**Kota Hujan dan Kemarau
yang Menyertainya**

Hamzah

Perhaps here's how condensation
happens: when waters are flown by
wind because fire refuses the earth and
chooses to
wrestle in the sky while the sky floor is
as frozen as machines
in my head while the weight
of longing compels rain to fall on your
temple and your cheeks.

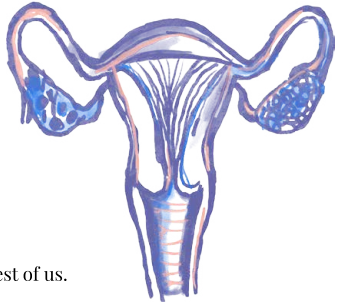
A whirring and humming fan and water
splashing
become a scene where we
knot promises
and swallow our tongues
through screen
and beats guarded with tranquility.

Barangkali kondensasi
terjadi begini: kala air
diangkat angin karena
api menolak bumi dan memilih
bergumul di langit sementara lantai
langit sama beku dengan
mesin-mesin di kepala
sementara beratnya
rindu memaksa air jatuh di
pelipis dan pipimu.

Deru dan desau kipas
angin dan tempias air
menjadi latar bagaimana kita
menyulam janji-janji
dan mengulum lidah kita
masing-masing lewat layar
dan degup yang dijaga dengan
tentram.

Uterus

Anisa Farida



There is a “u” in uterus.

You, who have none.
Yet claim to speak for the rest of us.

You, trying to regulate
When, how, and if we should ovulate.

You, labeling us “slut”
When our uterus takes a whole lot.

You, calling us “lesser women”
When our uterus is barren.

But let it be known,
This uterus is mine and mine alone.
It is not a property for you to own.
Carve this epitaph on my tombstones.

#18

The Seesaw

Lee Xin Ru

(Dedicated to my mother)

The seesaw is not designed to be balanced

The seesaw is made to tilt

This was what I was told

When I was six years old

Born to be a bride, a mother

The identity I am assigned

I am told that is all I should want

I am told that is what all women want

I am on the seesaw, high up in the air

All I see are clouds: soft illusions of promised bliss but I never
liked cotton candy

I like sour plum candy

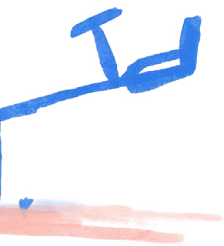
I savor the victory of sweetness

As I conquer the sourness

They are on the other side of the seesaw, down on the ground

Weighed down by pride, held down by privilege, roaming the
world as they wish, taking what they want while I am chained to
my seat on the seesaw





The seesaw was not designed to be balanced
The seesaw was made to tilt
And this is my place on the seesaw
Whether I like it or not
This was what I was told
When I was six years old

Now I am ten years older
And I am tired of the seesaw
I did not ask to play to begin with
I do not want to play any more

I pack my bags
But before I leave

I cut my hair in the bathroom
It is messy
It is crude
The ends pinprick my neck
And I realize

My neck is bare:
The chains are no longer there

#19

Final Breaths of a Crowned Scepter

Juditte Mae B. Din

The spiteful breeze gushes anew
Past desensitized flesh,
Then a citadel of viridescent hue,
Jaded, cold, almost lifeless

Pavements whisper mundane
Stench of smog from rain

Sap flows no longer
In streets that iron conquer
The last woman standing—
Upright and surviving
Glabrous and still,
Weak yet still.

Anitun Tabu shall rule today
Colonial marks will fray
Along sheets that are crumbling
Vilomah lives another evening
To see regal nimbuses embedded Missionaries suspended
Dampened arms and fingers
A final simulation of vigor.

The sound of wet cascades
Blankets the mem'ries of those who betrayed Crowns embrace
the loving tears
Forgets the ruthless frontiers
And the roaring chainsaws
By storm it withdraws

A mother shall not fall tonight—
Not tonight.

#20



Inner peace

Ghina Athirah Furqan

Today I took things slow.
I stayed in bed a little longer, I rose when it felt right.
Today I gave myself permission to listen to my body
and let go of any pressure.
Today I allowed myself to say "Not today."
It was splendid.

#21

Joy of Life

Al Oetomo

i.

straight through the firmament
the boy held his gaze
the sun told him to wait
there will be better days they said
ever safe and sound

ii.

the tree
shudders
leaves scattering
hither thither
the twig snaps onto halves
the city falls
asleep like a newborn
sleeping in his mother's battered gown
the mother regarded
her son with a frown
elongated shadows traipsing around
the city that falls
asleep like her newborn
ever safe and sound

iii.

'mother i am cold'
don't be
scared
there will
be a light
the sun will rise
and should there ever be a new dawn
the city will fall
asleep before long
there will be
a new september
the cold draft passes over the bald
mountain
quietly she drapes the blanket over her
son's shoulders
'mother i am cold'
don't you worry, my dear, my darling
the night is not half as dark as the city
that falls asleep after dawn
ever safe and sound

#22

inspired by the "Joy of Life" sculpture by Czech sculptor Jan Hana, given to Japan by Czechoslovakia Socialist Republic in 1980 as peace symbol, in commemoration of the Nagasaki atomic bomb

Where Peace Rests

Laurensia Vonny Xavier

first, it comes from the om
as it was there before all.

Followed by assalamualaikum
chanted by children, as they rushed to their Friday prayer.

Then in scent of a burning incense
blooming as trails of white dance around the red

Also, on the space between my eyes
to my chest, left shoulder, right shoulder.

At last, in the silence of your prayer,
and how your lips formed the quiet

Amen

#23

Muted TV

Firnila

My teacher taught me
when it's silent, it's peaceful
No barking dogs—peaceful
No yelling parents—peaceful
No blaring sirens—peaceful
No honking horns—peaceful

But my teacher didn't teach me enough

On one Sunday, my father muted the TV
He was talking loudly on the phone but I swore I couldn't hear his
voice. I heard whispering gunshots,
I recognized roaring fire,
I saw shrieking smoke,
inside the TV screen.
Someone was talking on the mic but all I heard was a silent cry.



The Formula of Peace

Dani

A little girl asked Einstein, “What is the formula of peace?” She thought it would be the most challenging question and the most serious scientific problem Einstein had ever encountered. “The greatest physicist in the world, can we really have perpetual peace?” She wondered why war happened. She could not accept, if humans were longing for peace, why they still committed violence from time to time.

“Is it the universal theorem of physics, the absolute law of the universe?” She was severely disturbed, why people could conduct heinous crimes against humanity in the name of peace. Thus, the little girl asked Einstein again, “What is the formula of peace?”

“ EMC^2 .”

Empathy, Mindfulness, Critical Inquiry and Compassion.”¹

#25

¹ While the equation is widely known as Einstein’s theory of special relativity, it is also used by Duraiappah and Singh (2019) of UNESCO MGIEP as a framework of social and emotional learning for peace education, in particular in relation to SDG 4.7. See: The Science of Social and Emotional Learning and UNESCO MGIEP Annual Report 2019.

About ASEAN-IPR

The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) was established as an action line under Provision B.2.2 of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint (2010-2015), which aims to “strengthen research activities on peace, conflict management and conflict resolution”.

At the 18th ASEAN Summit on 8 May 2011, the ASEAN Leaders adopted a “Joint Statement on the Establishment of an ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation”. The Terms Reference (TOR) of the ASEAN-IPR was adopted by the 45th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) in July 2012, and subsequently the Institute was officially launched on 18 November 2012 by the ASEAN Leaders during the 21st ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

ASEAN-IPR is mandated to be an ASEAN institution for research activities on peace, conflict management and conflict resolution; promote and/or fulfil activities agreed in the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint; as well as possible additional activities. The five functions of the Institute includes research, capacity building, pool of expertise, networking and dissemination of information.





Forging and Fostering Peace

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