

Pantun, Within, Dugout on the Bank, Hill vs the Sea, An Admirer of Skies, Where are the Clowns?

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Pantun

demikianlah
dua petak citra, dua landas baris,
maksudnya: bayang tipis di lengkung perasaan.

Dalam

di mana pun aku kembali
air mengalir di antara batu
dan memberi tangga kepada padi,
ke mana pun aku berangkat
aku membawa harum beras
dalam kantung kesedaranku.

dalam padi ada beras
dalam beras ada waktu
dalam waktu ada diri
dalam diri ada alir sejarah.

Pantun

that's how it is
two plots of images, two rows of lines,
its meaning: a thin shadow across a feeling's curve.

Within

wherever I go
I hear water flow between the rocks
and pave terraces for the padi,
to each place I depart
I carry the fragrance of rice
in the pocket of my memory.

in the padi there's rice
in the rice there's time
in time there's the self
in the self flows history.

Jalur Di Tebing

di sini,
di antara pohon purba,
jalur tua dilahirkan
dari isi waktu.

kalau kita kembalikan
air ke hulu
dan usia ke pangkal lahir
maka keluargaku
kembali kepadanya,
ayah di lubang petang
menunggu jelawat
atau lampam,
anak belajar berkayuh
untuk meminjam beras
dari tetangga seberang

kayu merah daging
mewah di air
tapi semua yang merah
akan jadi merah tua,
lusuh, uratnya diseratkan.

dari jalur
banyak yang dijeritkan—
salam atau geram,
kerana jalur juga menyimpan
seumur perasaan
yang dilahir atau dipendamkan,
sarat dalam hikayat kayuhnya.

ke manakah
pergi kita
setelah kuala bertemu laut?

10.10.2000
Sungai Jeli, Malaysia

Dugout on the Bank

here,
among the ancient trees
a dugout is born
from time's fibres.

if we return these waters
to their source,
and age them to its point of birth
then my family
shall return to it,
the father in an afternoon pool
waiting for the *jelawat*
or *lampam* fish,
the child learning how to row
or borrowing rice from a neighbour
on the other bank.

the meat-red wood
soaks in the monsoon water
but everything in red
shall turn maroon,
veins growing from fibrous time.

from the dugout
tales screamed forth –
greetings or anger –
for the dugout also stows away
a life of feelings
that are born or suppressed,
in the history of its journeys.

where shall
we go
after the estuary meets the sea?

Bukit Iwn Laut

di hotel
bukit dinilai
lebih murah dari laut,
kerana diukur kaki langitnya
dan didarab dengan dolar.

jadi aku mengadap bukit
yang suka menyimpan pagi
dan menakung emas petangnya.

kuhitung tualang
dan kutanya usianya,
dan kapur bagaimana pula?
atau meranti memerah di dalam.
dan bongor asyik berbunga
ada rahsia lebih tua,
pada hutan yang tidak kuseberangi.

enggang memanggil dari jauh
tapi helang tidak menyahut.
ungka berbahasa sendiri
– semuanya
mungkin tiada terlalu murah
untuk orang kota
yang tenggelam benang kesedarannya.

09.06.2002

Langkawi, Malaysia

Hills vs the Sea

at the hotel
the hill is valued
cheaper than the sea,
for the horizon is measured
and multiplied with ringgits.

so i trudge up the hills
that safe keep the mornings
and collect the saffron of the evenings.

I count the *tualang* trees
and demand to know their age,
and ask of the *kapur* plants
or the *meranti* of the red flesh
and the *bongor* that retains its blush in the flowers.
there are older secrets
in the forest i have not traversed

the hornbills call from afar
but the eagles do not reply
the baboons squeal in their own dialect
– these
may not be so worthless
for the guest from the city
who finds his consciousness sinking.

Peminat Langit

kau peminat langit
aku ahli tanah,
kau subur
aku kerdil,
kau rendang
aku rendah,
kau gergasi
aku si ketot.

aku datang kembali kepadamu
cucu kepada jiran moyangku,
aku pencari tenang tua
yang kau simpan dalam rahsia bayang,
aku memohon damai yang kau petik dari hidup.

aku buntu
sewaktu kau teriak dengan kepastian.

alamku
moyangku
moyang kepada cara,
penghulu kepada jiwa,
sabar dan kata-kata.
kau mengajar hak
dan juga berkongsi hak
kau menuding simpang
tapi juga menganugerah tuju.
kau menumpahkan hujung
atau menyaring tebing
memunculkan puncak selepas awan
tapi setiap hari memetik tangkai daun.

kau guru,
pengulang yang tekun
dan taulan
yang mengajar dengan berbuat.

10.10.2000
Jelai ke Tembeling, dalam perahu

An Admirer of Skies

you are an admirer of the skies
I am a consultant in soils,
you are a fertile lake of memory,
I am fragile and absentminded,
you spread a shade for the meadows
I am tall as grass,
you're a hoarse giant
I am diminutive and anxious.

I return home
a descendant to the neighbour of my ancestor
I seek the peace of age
that you hide under your shadow,
I ask that you share the peace of the trees.

I am wordless
when you shout out your certainties.

my nature
my ancestor
forebears of my habits,
a captain of my soul,
patience and words.
you teach us rights,
and how to share them
you show us junctions,
but you bestow destinations.
you spill the edges
or sieve the river banks
release peaks beyond the clouds
but each day detaches the leaves.

you are teacher,
the patient repeater
and friend
who teaches through gestures.

10.10.2000
Jelai to Tembeling, on a boat

Where are the Clowns?

where are the clowns?

bring in the clowns

Stephen Sondheim dalam
"Send in the Clowns"
dari *A Little Night Music*

ya bawalah badut masuk,
ke pentas sesak lagi busuk.
di sini manusia disihir
bau sendiri dan warna kuasa serta wang.

belum pernah kudengar ketawa,
selama berabad,
yang dipekik hanya arahan keras
dengan suara keris
dan mata yang menikam pemandangan.

tiada yang berani senyum di pentas,
tiada yang pandai menggerak otot pipinya.
yang diingat ialah
rancangan menebang hutan
bijih yang perlu dikorek
dan kuasa yang harus dikekang
tanpa sudah.

bawalah badut masuk
cepat,
supaya kita dapat ketawa kembali.

28.10.1995

Where are the Clowns?

where are the clowns?

bring in the clowns.

Stephen Sondheim in
"Send in the Clowns"
from *A Little Night Music*

yes, bring in the clowns
to this crowded and foul-smelling stage
here the protagonist is hypnotised
by his own odour and the colour of cash.

for a whole century
i have not heard laughter in the air,
only harsh orders shouted out
with voices of the keris
and eyes that slash the landscape.

on stage nobody dares to smile,
nobody dares to move his cheek muscles
memory is dense
with fallen trees
ores that haunt the miner's dreams
and freedoms that must be curtailed
without end.

yes, bring in the clowns,
quick,
so we may laugh again.