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Acknowledgements

The organizers of the Jasmina Awards are grateful to 5 jury members who generously volunteered their time: Saras Manickam, Imran Ahmad, Charukesi Ramadurai, Beatriz Vasily, and Jasmina Kuka.

The organizers and previous winners of the Jasmina Awards are deeply appreciative of YBhg. Tan Sri Vincent Tan and the Better Malaysia Foundation for their support.

Note from the Organisers

When we first impulsively started this Award, we did not think it would generate the impact it has. We wanted to promote the philosophy of active ageing where the blessings of dozens of years lived, rich experiences and hard-earned wisdom were celebrated and enjoyed by all.

Over 4 short years, we have soldiered through a global pandemic and lockdown, received more than 330 applications which provided a glimpse into the lives and memories of many writers, as assessed by 14 judges, published 4 publications of heartfelt stories and poems, all run entirely by volunteers.

How can the sum of a lifetime be condensed into a few words? And yet, as reflected in this year's selected entries, brevity can be profoundly moving, providing a flash of insight into deeply personal experiences.

We must include a special mention: from the very first makeshift and earnest awards ceremony, Tan Sri

Vincent Tan of the Berjaya Group has been a staunch supporter and while there are no prizes for winners,
he has generously hosted them every year to a stay at the luxurious The Chateau resort in Berjaya Hills.

For this, we are deeply grateful, as it has provided an unforgettable memory for winners as well as fostered a tight bond between them.

We hope these writings will touch your hearts, as they have ours. In modern lives where an overload of senses and surplus of content is normalised, these writings will absorb you into a world where the pace is far more contemplative and sincerely heartfelt, where we can all better understand ourselves.

by Dr Jasmina Kuka and Sunita Rajakumar

1st Place

By Nirmala a/p Panchan

A Letter to My Father

You started the journey long, long way back with a heart filled with hope and aspirations, travelling on a ship to distant shores. You continued the journey travelling all over Malaya touching lives wherever you went. This journey included a beautiful young woman whom you fell for and married. A journey filled with five children, whom you moulded and emboldened.

You thought you have ended the journey at the age of 69 but you have inspired people to create a journey for themselves based on your ways of touching people's lives and leaving them better. Not for name and fame but because you can. You gave a hand without the other hand knowing it.

My journey on this earth was started by you. I hope that I have lived it in a way that you would be proud of. I pray that I continue living it your way Acha.

2nd Place

By Aisha Rashid

A Journey of Triumphs

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."... William Wordsworth

My favourite by this 18th century poet, it strikes at the heart of my life journey – from youth to widowhood. One full circle, from one consumed by wanderlust to being single again with responsibility only to myself.

3rd Place By Mary Lu

Eggs, Apple and Cabbage

In the fifties, we did not have eggs often. We would get to eat 2 eggs – a special treat only on birthdays.

That day, mother would ask: 'How do you want the eggs to be cooked?'

It was a dilemma: Hard boiled? Half boiled? Steamed? Or Fried?

During those days, father would only bring apple for the particular child who was unwell at home. The irony was the sick one did not feel like eating anything while the other siblings eyeing the red apple wished to be down with fever too.

It was tough raising 7 children, but my parents would make sure there was food on the table. One of my favorites was tinned sardines, steaming rice that went so well with cabbage soup (we could only afford the scavenged loose peels, I discovered the existence of a whole round cabbage much later).

Category: Photo Story

Category: Photo Story

1st Place

By Eugenie Hermoine Lariche

Eugenie Lariche: Her Story...



Eugenie Lariche

Her story...

Her Children...



Nagendram (1921-1969)



Eugenie

No Photo Available

1. Vijaya



3. Raymond (1954-2002)

- Raz 38
- Razine 37



5. Edwin— Neal 29

Nigel 29



7. Ivan



2. Shanta



4. Stanley

- Zandra 26
- Zabrina 24



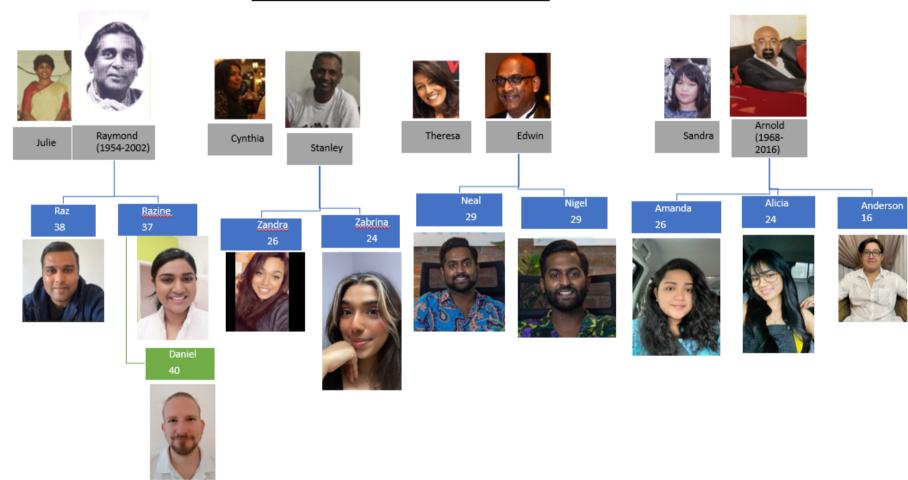
6. Nolan (1960 - 2010)

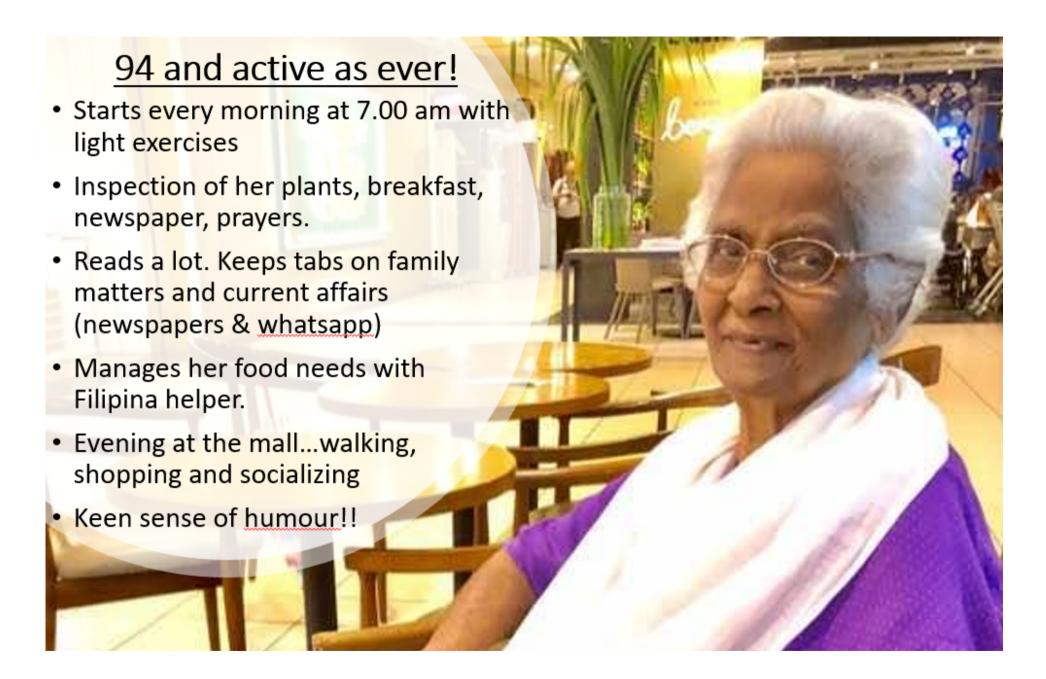


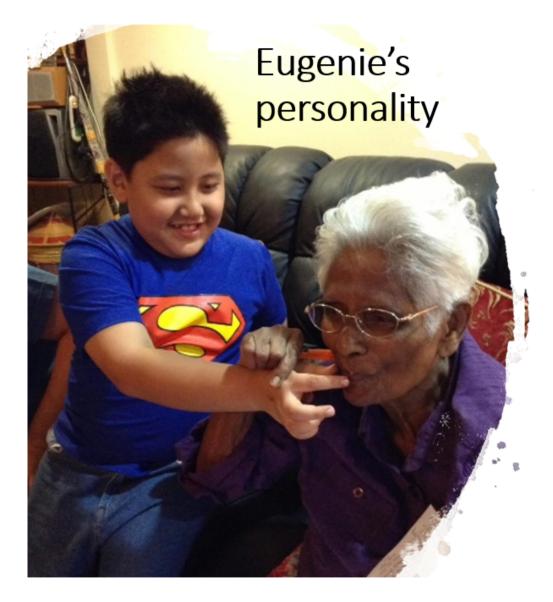
8. Arnold (1968-2016)

- Amanda 26
- Alicia 24
- Anderson 16

The Grandchildren





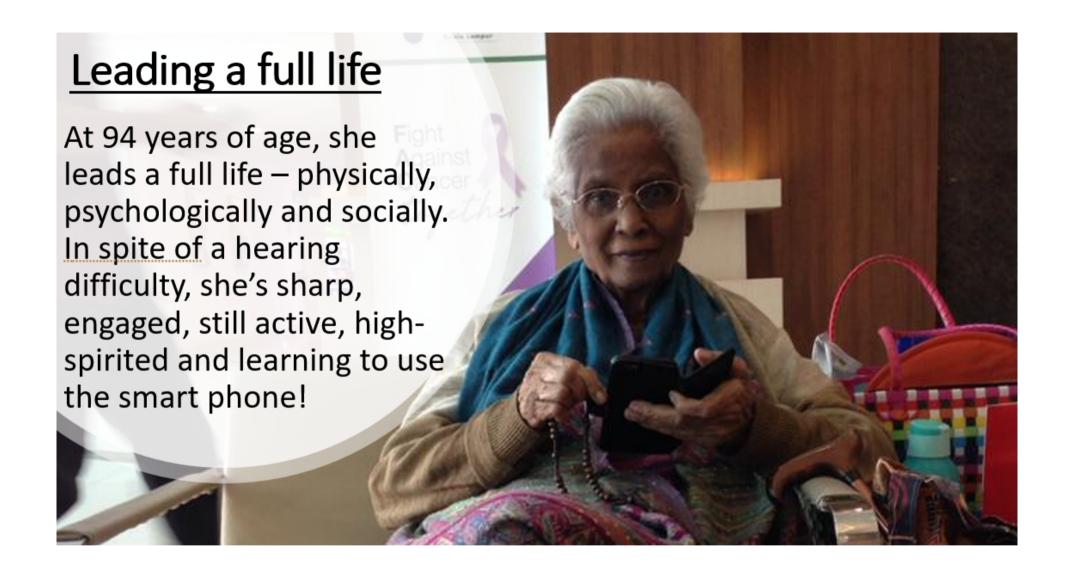


- Resilient, never say die attitude.
- Focused and relentless in her pursuits!
- An incurable optimist, looks for the positive and builds on it.
- She has an abundance mentality!
- Keen conversationalist
- · Open to ideas
- · Speaks her mind
- · Firm but fair
- No favouritism
- Supportive
- Makes time for everyone
- Remembers dates and events well
- Very thoughtful, considerate

Her motto, what she lives by...

- Spirituality
- Unity
- Integrity
- Peace and harmony
- Punctuality
- Responsibility





SNAP-SHOT OF EUGENIE'S JOURNEY 1927 - 2019



1917 Parents came to Malaya from Karikal India



1927/28 Born in Kelantan, 2nd. child in family



1941 Nurse at 14 in Japanese occupied Malaya



1945 At 18, back to school in Convent Malacca



1946 At 19, student nurse in Kuala Lipis



1951 Married her patient, a <u>27</u> <u>year old</u> Sri Lankan



1951 – 1968 Had 8 children in Pahang



Husband passed away leaving her with 8 children at 41



1973-1982 Served at Health Matron in 3 states



Retirement after 35 service from government at 53



1982-2002 Retiree, Entrepreneur, World Traveler, Networker



2002/07/16 3 sons called to the Lord -Raymond, Nolan and Arnold



2013 At 86, massive cardiac event



2022 At 94, and not letting up!!

At the very beginning...

- Her father and mother, Timothy and Catherine originated from Karaikal, French Territories, India. Her father came to Borneo in 1917 at the age of 19 to work. Family was carted between India and Malaysia as father was finding his footing in Malaysia
- Born in Kelantan in 1927 as Eugenie
 Hermoine Lariche, one of 4 children, Eugenie
 was raised in various estate plantations in
 Malaysia during her growing up years...Taku
 Estate Kelantan, Melville Estate Labis Johor,
 Budu Estate Kuala Lipis, Cheviet Estate Labu
 Negri Sembilan.



In 1940's and WW2

 Her father was a strict disciplinarian. She schooled in French and Portugese convents, run by nuns.

At 14, Eugenie was a victim of child labour in WW2
when the Japanese occupied Malaya – she nursed over
Japanese soldiers in hospital. Her father worked in the hospital kitchen, mother in
the operation theatre

 The family had to stop school; food was scarce, had to do gardening to feed themselves

 Her mother Catherine was severely injured - gored by a cow and was rushed to GH Seremban where the intestines were removed, cleaned, put back and stitched. She recovered slowly.

Eugenie's father was sent to the death railway - was
instructed by the Japanese to recruit most of the men from the Estate to work on
death railway at the Siam border (Kanchanaburi).





At the death railway

After 1 year, many started falling ill due to poor facilities and hygiene, malnutrition, and succumbed to their illnesses. Her father was no exception...

He had high fever and was delirious. Sent back to Malaya by train. Sustained further injuries on train journey. His head wound became septic. Due to effects of malnutrition, large pustular boils broke out over his whole body. He was sick for many months and was diagnosed with acute lung infection.

In Assunta Hospital, he succumbed to his injuries on 17 Nov 1966.

After WW2, a new life

- Eugenie returned to <u>Cheviet</u> Estate Negeri Sembilan at the age of 18 went on to finish school at the Portuguese Convent Malacca.
- Then in 1946, she joined GH Kuantan as student nurse, and then to GH Kuala <u>Lipis</u>
- At the age of 24, she married (on 12 Feb 1951 in Bentong) a boy from Sri Lanka who was adopted by his aunty who was a whole-sale dealer in Kuala Lipis Pahang
- Eugenie had 8 children with <u>Nagendram</u> during 1951 through 1968





Becoming a single mother

As fate would have it, at the tender age of 41, Eugenie became a single mother of 8 children between the ages of 1 and 18 when her husband suddenly passed away in 1969 at the age of 47.

"I should be the one in there"

We still remember how she called out to Nagendram in his coffin "how dare you leave me to look after our 8 children, I should be the one in there!!!"



The career woman

 Served in Pahang state as Nursing Sister with Maternal and Child Health Center, covering Temerloh and Mentakab. In her job, she was responsible for covering all maternal and childcare clinics in the area including the smaller villages.

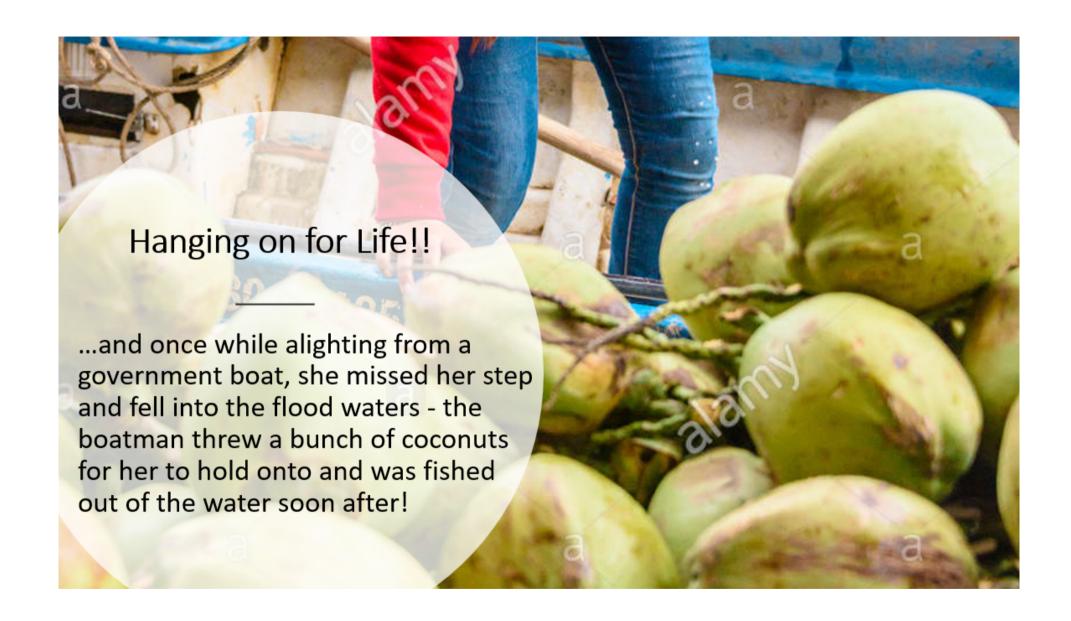
 She went on to become a senior nursing officer in the state or State Health Matron, while being transferred regularly from state to state





Flooding in Pahang

Pahang was notoriously popular for its devastating floods – ever year, Eugenie would lead efforts of the public health department combined with the police, military and public works to facilitate flood crisis operations and provide for flood-stricken population in towns and the riverine of Pahang River.



Matron Eugenie

Between 1973 and 1982, she served in Negeri Sembilan, Perak and Melaka as State Health Matron until she took optional retirement at 53 years old. After 35 years of service to the nation, she retired as State Health Matron of Malacca in 1982.



Post-retirement at 50's

- She continued to keep herself busy, was quite entrepreneurial as she dived into a few businesses, amongst others an old-folks' home and even a couples' match-making agency!!!
- And through all this, she continued to look after her 8 children, cooking and helping with the grandchildren. Always happy to sacrifice her comforts and joys for her children and grandchildren.



World Traveler

She began to travel the world, visiting her many relatives and friends around the globe from New Zealand to New York, to the rugged mountains in Jammu-Kashmir. She reconnected with our relatives across the globe, especially those in India and France.



And the angels came

- But life has a way of giving and taking. Without warning, her oldest son, Raymond, suddenly passed away in 2002 due to a ruptured brain aneurysm.
- Eugenie was resilient even in the face of her 6th. child Nolan's struggle with substance abuse. In 20 odd years, she did not bat an eyelid in her help and support of Nolan, not once. In 2010, Nolan succumbed to substance abuse.
- And as fate would have it, her youngest and 8th. child Arnold's life was cut short from a road accident in December 2016. It was difficult to cope with death, especially when your children depart before you, but Eugenie always put up a strong front for the sake for her grandchildren who tragically lost their fathers.



Raymond



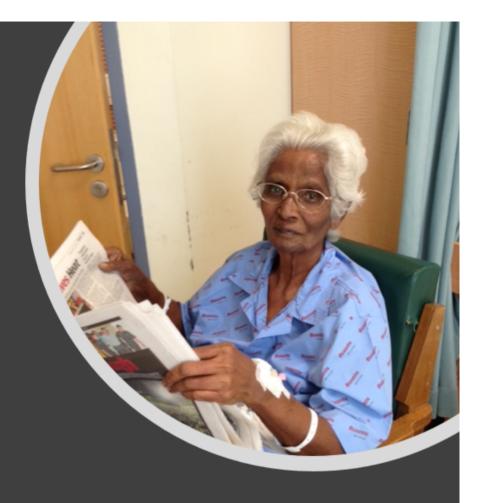
Nolan



Arnold

Life & death in 2013

In May 2013 at the age of 86, Eugenie suffered a massive heart attack and was not expected to pull through. Most of her vital organs were failing but she rebounded much to the surprise of her doctors – her cardiologist said it best when he told her after the ordeal "Aunty, you are a lucky girl!"





An inspiration, a role-model, a pillar of strength, and our anchor in life.

Eugenie in nut-shell...

Category: Photo Story 2nd Place By Annie Ooi

My Missing Mother



My late mother spending many relaxing hours amidst the verdant greens of the Taiping Lake Gardens

I have many things in life. Like this mobile phone. Here I am, typing in these words with the index finger of my right hand. What I don't have is a mother. At the age of nearly 69, you might say, what are the odds that you would still have a mother? But what about the odds at the age of 20?

That was when my mother, one Seow Siew Lian, departed forever. My time with her was short, all of 20 years. But she lives on, in the memories of her seven children.

We live in different times. My aging years are now, hers were in the late 60s, and early 70s. My furthest destination is to the other side of the world; hers was to Singapore. And she was *kamquan* (satisfied) with this. Such were the limitations of her time and circumstances.

Was she happy? Was she sad? I don't know, fate has denied me the answers.

I can only record the few memories I have of her. One particularly stood out. When I was about seven, she made me wear pants for Chinese New Year, when I wanted to wear a

dress. I cried. Loudly, and memorably, as I still remember this clash 60 years later.

I try to recreate the dishes of my childhood, raking the brains of my elder sisters. My favourite dish from mum was a mix of meat patties, fried potatoes, onion rings, and green peas in a brown sauce; a sort of pork chop.

We also had steamboat meals, now more popularly known as hot-pot. This cooking method consisted of a metal contraption with a funnel in the centre to hold the burning charcoal. Food was cooked in a "moat" encircling this funnel.

Mum also baked cakes, which were baked in a round portable oven.

My next memory was when my father passed away when I was 14 and he was 49. She was 42. I heard her speaking on the telephone, the black one with a dial in front. The year was 1968. "Ah Hoe boh lioa". Ooi Swee Hoe was my father's name. "Ah Hoe is no more". The new widow was probably passing the sad news to her brother, my Tua Ku (the eldest uncle on the maternal side).

Then, in her twilight years, although she was only in her late 40s, it was evenings with her children at the Taiping Lake Gardens. We sauntered about, crossed the zig-zag bridge, sat on the stone seats looking out on the tranquil lakes, admired the fountains. Years of peace and calm, before the inevitable end.

My final memory is of her death. In those final days, her blood pressure was building up, but we never knew. I myself was diagnosed during my early 40s. Born too early for this life-extending diagnosis, she suffered a fatal stroke when she was 47.

Just before that, I remember sitting next to her, going over her spelling lessons. She studied only up to Standard 3; sadly, her uncles stopped her schooling. "No need to study English; what if she marries ang mor" (literally 'red hair', denoting a Caucasian), was apparently their thinking.

My short time with her, all of 20 years, ended on the day I found her semi-conscious in her master bedroom. That night, I sat with her at the hospital. Next day, the end came when she shivered in the throes of death.

The days of the funeral followed. The custom was if a person passed away outside her house, her body could not be placed inside the house. She was laid on what looked like a four-poster bed; on a wooden platform with beige sheets hanging like curtains from rails at the top. This was placed on the front terrace outside the house.

Being in the open, in full view of passers-by, I remember a cruel taunt from a passing cyclist, a youngish voice from a man "mati kah" (die ah).

One of my sisters came back from her place of work outstation, and fell to the ground on seeing this, wailing "mum"!

On her final journey, we, now orphans, sat in the hearse with the coffin. Crossing a bridge to the cemetery, we were told to shout "kwey keow" (cross the bridge). The bridge of no return?

I am only relating events. Who was Seow Siew Lian? What went through her mind every day? More, I cannot say. As the sixth child of seven children, I definitely wasn't her close confidente.

But I thank her for doing for me what needs to be done when you have children. Provide them with schooling, give food, shelter, love. I never felt rich, neither did I feel poor.

My mother, Seow Siew Lian, has been no more for a long time. In that time, I myself have become a grandmother. But she did live. She existed. From 1926 to 1973.

This is in loving memory of her.

Category: Photo Story

3rd Place

By Tan Ling Suan

A Chance with Chopsticks



Ben creased his brows as he peered at the card propped against a bowl. He reached for a bottle, then another, and poured out a spoonful from each of them. From where I was standing in the kitchen, I could see the light sauce and oyster sauce labels. A pot of something was boiling frantically and he as frantically dumped the sauces into it. Ah, I could smell the chicken stew with mushroom smelling good!

He noticed my presence and briefly say, "Stick around but get the floor sticky!" and "Don't get toasted near my toaster!"

It amused me to catch him throwing away a packet and then retrieving it from the bin to read the instructions again. I put my face near his wine bottle and said very softly, "Don't use too much wine – leave some for me!"

For one whole month he had been daily 'experimenting' with some popular Chinese dishes. There were times he whooped with glee and invited me to have a taste of it before our meal time. There were times when the dish failed and he would say, "That was fun! Let's eat out tonight!"

Ah, what an adventure ... meeting him, liking him too much, and then have my old-fashioned parents saying to me, "An Englishman! Why can't you wait? Be patient and you will find one of our kind!"

Yes, I remember that every date I had with a Chinaman was considered a potential husband. Now they hoped that my relationship with the present guy would soon peter

out, like my earlier dates. I did not try to convince them that I wasn't changing partners any more.

But Ben was not giving up on them. So every time we had a Chinese meal before us, he would coolly eat with chopsticks, even when it was rice on the plate. I would just quietly continue eating with my fork and spoon.

Yes, he surprised me no end in this mission of "How the East can be won". He managed so well that he could pick up a little nut with his chopsticks! You should have seen how he beamed at each successful attempt.

And so the day came when he invited my parents to a meal at his apartment. He was ready to show off his talents. He was all out to charm all the prejudice out of that 'stubborn' old couple!

When my parents arrived, they could smell something in the air. They looked at the table and their eyes widened. There on the table was an inviting plate of sweet and sour pork. The mixed vegetables looked utterly fresh and welcoming. A deep bowl glistened with chicken and mushrooms waiting to be touched.

When they were seated, I started scooping rice in Chinese bowls for everyone. Ben excused himself to get the soup for all. He was soon back with individual bowls of steaming herbal soup from a prepacked mixture we had savoured once before. As I anxiously spooned it into my mouth, I nearly blurted out, "Wow!" (The taste was just right!)

I looked sideways and saw how deftly he ate with his chopsticks. I also saw my parents' eyes turning in his direction ever so often. He never dropped any little piece.

I watched my parents. My mother's face softened as she smiled while eating. My father slurped his soup and later asked if he could have seconds. Of course, I had to proudly point out that all the cooking was done by Ben. They already knew how lazy I used to be at clearing up dishes at the sink, and had never tried cooking anything too. ... except cooking rice – which I was forced to do while my other sisters were busy producing desserts that they loved.

Before they left, they heaped praises on his cooking. My mother stole a glance at me, smilingly giving a slight nod.

Yes, that was how Ben won them over. Never underestimate the magic of food cooked with love! But hey, I won more. We got married the next year and he has been cooking awesome Chinese meals for me at home.

Category: Short Story

Category: Short Story

1st Place

By June Wan Oi Chun

Nightfall

The sea stretches into the horizon, its clean line interrupted by intermittent blue cardboard shapes etching in Butterworth's shoreline. This far side of the sea is calm, any turbulence out there imperceptible to the eye.

On the near side where Penang Island rises out of its waters, waves gather strength midsea, rush towards shore and spill it their load over rock and sand beach. There is a flurry of splashing and sputtering, quite a theatre really. Mirroring my feelings this early morning.

I sit on a stone bench staring into the distance, feeling very alone. Seeing the faces of people I wish were here. My husband Meng's. The children – Ai our girl, and the boys Keong and Kong. We used to be here together on the same seafront three decades ago, enjoying the wind and the sound of breaking waves, pointing out the tallest wave or the teeniest crab exposed by the receding waves.

Behind me, a narrow asphalt road separates the seafront from an expansive field of short-clipped grass, dotted all around with park trees. The Old Esplanade complex was the family's playground decades ago, when the children were young.

Meng and I were poor then, but we were mostly happy. There on nature's green carpet, we ate 'home-cooked,' brought along in tiffin carriers, because money was short. Afterwards the three children played at sprint-racing. As they whizzed down the imaginary track, wind-tossed and laughing, Meng would lean close to me, whispering conspiratively, "How fortunate we are Sweetheart, to have such lovely issues from our humble loins". We followed up the day's tenderness with libidinous battle in the night, within the privacy of our bedroom, after the exhausted children had fallen asleep.

A flash of the past zooms into view, caught in the drift of my thoughts. "This is too hard to revisit. The memory is bitter in its sweetness," I tell myself. "Better let it dissolve." And it does.

Only for a split second. Then it reappears, more insistent than before, more vivid. So real my arms reach out to embrace him. I inhale his scent. Feel the weight of his passion pinning me down. Take in his strong thrusts.

Passion and sorrow churn inside me in one roiling mess, like swathes of mist moving over

the hill top, but it's all a recall. An illusion.

*

"The longer the night, the more dreams come a-haunting" my mother used to sigh when recounting her own predicaments. It has become somewhat my narrative too in recent time. These days I chase after sleep as if suffused in it, the ghosts of the night may vanish, but mostly I drift quickly back into wakefulness. Between reality and dream, snippets of my life surface before me, floating and bobbing like a buoy out at sea. Tender or ripping, appearing and vanishing at will.

Recurrently Meng and I are running in the direction of air-raid shelters, on the island's south-bound road, towards rural Batu Maung. We meet for the first time, complete strangers to each other. "Come on now, we need to speed up," he says to me. "Here, take my hand, so we don't get separated."

There must have been hundreds of our compatriots swarming along the same roadway that afternoon. "Yes, yes, there will be more bombs," he says, and trails off. The footage dissolves into nothingness.

Extract from my wedding day drift unrestrained on to my dream stage, alternately flashing and dimming. We are sitting at the edge of the only piece of furniture we own, our marital bed. He whispers in my ear the words spoken by the master Lao Tzu, "Holding your hand, we grow old together."

"For real?" I ask him, my eyes sparkling with requited affection. "Even if wrinkles appear on my face, and the moon turns blue?"

"Yes, yes, and till our hairs turn white," he replies, stroking my flowing black tresses.

In dream or wakefulness there is a replay that makes me quake at its entrance – the loss of our first-born within weeks of her birth. I am wrapping my arms tightly around her, pitiable child drawing shallow last breaths. "Why, oh why do you come, knowing we have nothing good to offer you?" I wail in unrestrained lamentation.

"When the war is over, we will have others," he says to me, taking his turn holding the inert body. There is a proverb we both know that says 'A man sheds blood, not tears,' yet he lets loose a volley of howls emanating from his depths. We are two first-time parents sharing one brokenness.

Other children did come along, as he promised, three in total, bouncing zestfully out of my womb.

How I love recalling their entry, each one propelling lungfuls of healthy cries into the hospital air in announcement of the event. How elating is the feeling of bearing fruit that is the culmination of love.

Sometimes in dream state, I see Meng in the aftermath of the war – in the lean years, defeated, shuffling among the work sites in search of employment, while I snip sheets in a rubber factory till my hands blister and bleed. My heart breaks, a thousand times over. "Should not a love held together by mutual toil come through shining, victorious? Why clutch at nothingness, talking to no one but myself, when contentment could be ours, just a breath away?" I ask the night shadows.

There are other visions gripping me in the waking or asleep hours of night, that are perhaps better forgotten. I recall humiliation dressed in shabby clothes that hang limp on my thin frame, or trying to feed three growing children with just one Straits dollar a day.

Yet nothing cuts as deep as the unsympathetic attitude offered by his side of the family whenever we have run-ins following what I believe are his sporadic infidelities. These episodes too form constant themes running in or out of my nights.

"If he feeds you, comes home each night, pays the children's fees, settles the house rent, what is it to you if he indulges in the occasional fun," remonstrates his Sister Number One.

"You are overly controlling, are you not, my Sister-in-law?" exhorts Sister Number Two. "My brother is just a man of our traditions, allowing for multiple wives. We women therefore do well to suppress our cravings, for the greater family peace," she reasons.

I feel affronted, indignant, in sleep as in wakefulness. Meng and I were born and bred post the Qing era of China. Post the dictates of a patriarchal social order stacked against the female.

"This notion holds no logic," I declare, to their utter flummox. "I will not share my husband as if he were a bowl of rice or a cup of tea."

Afterwards he always tumbles back into our bed – repentant, amorous, grasping, tender. These vestiges I keep in my heart chest to revisit when sleep eludes me.

My night hours are thus spent. In sleep filled with dreams without resolution, or wakefulness packed with recriminations and what-ifs.

*

We did not live in edgy circumstances forever. The turning point came when musing over the war years, Meng reminisced about rearing chickens to tide over the food scarcity dogging us then. "Why don't I try my hand at it now that people have deeper pockets. Air Itam market is a tippy-toe away," he said to me one day. He sold at first just two hens, then ten, then he stopped counting. There was no looking back because the business took off like a kite on strong winds. Likewise our financial state. For the first time we were freed of the worries of living in want.

At about this juncture, red flags began popping up in our marital home. Meng and I no longer tumbled into bed, laughing and expectant. When I failed to respond to his amorous attempts, he reluctantly embraced the new reality.

"It's the old-age devil telling me 'stop.' You're okay with that?" I asked nervously.

"If you want it, okay," he replied. I shuddered at the terse tone.

"Come on dear, might as well face it. We've got to call it a day at some point," I said, having visited the doctor about failing to provide for his carnal needs, and my own progressive loss of interest. A chill set in between us. I could not tell if it was resentment or frustration. Our interchange took a dive.

"Alright, I'll go for a spin then," he would gruffly grunt, whenever I sat for long evenings watching TV, anxious to shorten bedroom time. He would reappear hours later, 'disarranged.' There were days too he splashed on some perfume, explaining "there's nothing to it, I fell for the sales pitch of the fragrance promoter" – till one day I found a Durex rubber, wrapped and lying in his drawer.

I raised hell. "Son of a bitch." I shrieked. "Mother f- - -ing bastard. So which whore are you screwing now? Expletives rebounded in the battleground between us.

"Don't be vulgar," he bellowed.

"Says a brothel-creeper?" I shrieked back at him. Other obscenities followed, leaving me in a state of disbelief at the barbarity I could ramp up. We had never before trod this low.

Many other clues of his illicit activities surfaced, each episode coursing like toxin in my blood. I was pissed. Frustrated. Vengeful. Should he not be growing old too? Why cheat now? We were so close to the finish line. Icons of a love and life succeeding against the odds.

Then the inevitable blew up in our faces. On an afternoon at the Kuan Yin Temple for the first day of the lunar month pieties, I felt an unease, and quickly headed home instead of browsing the shops as was my usual agenda. I felt the Deity whisper an omen of doom in my ear.

Heart palpitating, I entered my home, stormed into the master bedroom, and there he was, in dalliance with a woman, not a stitch on her, stretched full on our marital bed. The shock struck me like a bolt of lightning.

He would bring a loose woman there into our sacred space? On the same sheets we had exchanged love not too long ago – his torso pinning me down – he and I tussling in happy combat.

I felt a knife rip my heart. I fled into the street, beginning the months of settling into a new life – of loneliness, loss, betrayal – away from the home we had built together.

In the days following the eruption, he contacted me and pleaded for my understanding. He pledged renewed love, promised loyalty – all of which I found hollow like echo bouncing around the insides of a big conch shell. "Come home, don't throw away what we have built together," he sobbed. "It's only sex. You are my woman, always have been," he entreated.

Here was the sinner pleading not remorse but my acceptance of his transgression. How does a man even think of copulation outside marriage as 'only sex' – not catalyst ripping the sacred bond between him and his woman?

*

Last evening, all three children returned from Kuala Lumpur for the all-important Chinese New Year reunion dinner. They expected it to be a far cry from the jolly gatherings of the past. They had in fact congregated for the specific reason to resolve matters of a grave nature, the dissolution of their parents' marriage at this late juncture of their lives.

Meng was not even there when Ai drove me 'home,' my first visit since storming out. Dinner quickly over, the conversation turned to concerns about our split up. Ai struck the first note, "So Ma, now you're on your own, sure you're okay?"

"Surely okay, dear. I fell a couple of times in the night going to the bathroom, but it's a small matter."

"But why Ma, after all these years?" asked Keong.

"I think it's best this way. We quarrel non-stop, all day, every day – screaming and shrieking at each other. All over his worthless scrubber women," I replied quietly. One does feel some embarrassment discussing intimacy issues with the children. I offered no details, and they did not ask, equally awkward.

Keong broached the issue of their father's circumstances. "Apparently he took a sharp corner – I think his judgement is going. He crashed, and the hospital says, his injuries are

serious."

Kong took up the story, "Procedures will continue into the New Year, then we'll know exactly what we're up against. "You don't worry Ma, we'll keep an eye on his condition, extend our stay if necessary."

"Papa's not doing well at all, Ma," Ai said. "When we were in the ward earlier, he was strapped up and sedated." She continued, "Drifts between coma and waking, murmuring a monologue that doesn't make any sense. Tell me Ma, why does he keep droning on about the war and the Japanese, 'They are coming... planes... bombs... quick, run or it's going to be too late... Japanese soldiers... come quick, this way... mumble, mumble mumble'"

How can I forget the day the first bombs dropped on Penang and he held my hand along the south island road urging me to run alongside him? It was the fateful day beginning a journey for us that would weld us together forever.

*

A car drives into marked parking behind me, interrupting my thoughts. Ai alights, and gingerly picks her way to where I am sitting. Softly, cautiously she says, "Come Ma, to the hospital, shall we? Papa is badly – he asks for you." She takes my arm in both her hands, carefully, lovingly guiding me away from the bench.

The wind flutters around us but only I hear its lament, "Holding your hand, we grow old together."

"Is he sinner or lover?" I ask silently. The wind gives no answer – just keeps refraining the old master's line, "Holding your hand, we grow old together."

I quicken my steps, anxious to reach him.

Category: Short Story

2nd Place

By Chelvan a/l Kuppusamy

My Childhood Memoir "An Estate Boy"

Born in an estate in 1950, I had very cherished childhood memories, which still lingers fresh in my mind. I share my childhood stories with my grandchildren as bedtime stories. My parents were very caring, my siblings, elder brother, elder sister and my younger sister were all very loving.

The estate I lived in was behind a small town in Negeri Sembilan. There were only two rows of single storey shops, some of them were wooden buildings. People's basic needs items were available in the town. I still recollect the few provision shops, a tailor shop, two coffee shops, a small market, two barber shops, photo shop, pawn shop, post office and police station. The town was surrounded by many estates. Usually during worker's pay day, the town would be quite busy with people buying their essential sundry goods. Buses and cars were very scarce during that time, people mostly travelled by bicycles or walked quite a distance.

Those were the days, when agriculture, particularly rubber, was the backbone of Malaya. These plantations or estates as they were called, belonged to British companies, managed by mostly British planters. Estate workers were mostly South Indians, some of them came here leaving their families back in their native land. Recruitment of workers from South India were carried out by the estate owners using the "kangani" system. These kanganis also known as mandors were sent to India by ship to bring back workers to work as labourers in the estates in Malaya. Some with educational background were assigned to supervisory posts with better living conditions. I still remember the elders saying these kanganis will hire workers, telling them their job is to chase away the flies swarming the sugar.

Estate land was very hilly, with bumpy roads, planted with vast acres of rubber trees. The estate organization consisted of an estate manager, assistant manager, field conductors, office clerks, hospital assistant, rubber tappers and general workers. Rubber tappers would be assigned a certain area and have to tap about 500 trees daily, collect the latex, carry them with pails using a stick called *kandar* and send them to the nearest latex weighing station. Sometimes, the tappers will do double tapping, meaning they will tap 2x500 trees to recover for their absenteeism on rainy days. They will tie a lamp on their forehead to work in the dark, sometimes as early as 4am. Rubber tapping is a skillful task, ensuring the tree bark is not wounded for fear of being penalised by the estate management. General workers will remove unwanted weeds and also spray chemicals, to eradicate the thick growth. Transport for the workers will be provided one-way using estate tractors or lorries.

They will return home by walking for miles in the scorching sun or sometimes rain.

Estate life was simple but happy with friendly and helpful people around. Workers pay was little but enough to feed the family and educate the children. We mostly ate vegetarian meals; non-vegetarian meals were only cooked once a week, during weekends. People also planted vegetables in the backyard of the house, with whatever space available. The workers and their children were mostly healthy due to their lifestyle. Only malaria and tuberculosis were the major illnesses affecting their health due to environmental and poor living conditions. The estate management took great care in the public health.

We lived in a small one-bedroom wooden house provided by the estate. There was a long bench in the hall, we slept peacefully at night sharing one blanket. There was no fan but it was very cold during the night. Electricity and water supplied by the estate for limited hours. The power generator would be shut-off at 10pm night and resumed at 5.30am in the morning. At 5.30am, the estate bell would ring to wake up the workers and prepare themselves to get ready to go for work. At 6am, workers were to assemble in the estate office compound for their roll call or muster.

The estate provided facilities such as a Tamil primary school, creche, clinic, sports field and temple. Children under seven years old will be allowed to stay in the creche under the care of the child minder (ayamah). The children were to remain there until the return of their parents from work, free milk would be provided. The estate hospital assistant was in charge of the clinic, treating the estate workers and their dependents who were sick.

The annual temple festival was celebrated grandly, with a chariot procession. The children took the opportunity to meet their friends and play in the temple compound. The prayers were a two-day affair, vegetarian meals served in the temple. Entertainment was scarce, no televisions, except many government-owned radios. The radio news was very popular among the people, some anxious to know the world news, especially for those workers who left their families back in their native land. Movies were screened in the open area once or twice a month depending on the funds available from the workers contribution. We, as kids, were excited with the arrival of the movie van. But sometimes our excitement was dimmed by rain, with the movie postponed to another date. Television gained entry many years later, there was only one Chinese family who owned a television set. We gathered outside their house, to watch some of our favourite cowboy movies, like "High Chaparral", "Have Gun Will Travel". The galloping of horses and the sound of gun shooting had us spellbound.

Behind the estate was a dredge, mining tin ore. We kids would enjoy watching the dredge and its earth laden buckets rotating noisily. The earth dug will go through a process to separate the tin ore. After many years of mining, the pools became disused, with fishes and lotus flowers growing abundantly. People did not catch the fish here for fear of the depth and the danger involved due to the muddy swamps.

We kids mostly spend our time outdoors, playing hide and seek, climbing trees, swimming in the river. I also caught small fishes from the stream and put them in large bottles, which looked like an aquarium. Some of my friends like to catch small harmless spiders and put them in match boxes. Rain or shine, we spent our time outdoors. When it is time to go home, we will slowly tip toe into the house, but somehow rather will be caught by my parents, there goes a session of beating.

I still remember injuring my foot while running bare foot playing. While still bleeding, I limped to the house, hoping to get some sympathy from my parents. They took good care, once the wound was dressed, I was beaten, out of concern for me, so I would not repeat this in future. Another incident happened in town, I was walking, carrying a bottle to buy cooking oil. I fell down on a slippery floor, the bottle broke and cut my left thumb. I went to the estate clinic, the hospital assistant stitched my wound.

It still shivers down my spine, of one incident at the age of seven, which could have been a tragedy to me. There was a river behind the town, after a heavy downpour, my friend and I went for a swim in the river. Upon arrival, out of excitement, I immediately jumped into the river, little realizing the depth and the danger. I was struggling for help in the water and almost got drowned. By GOD's grace, I managed to get hold of the tree root on the river bank and climbed up. I am still clueless about my friend's disappearance, did he run away out of fear or did he go to seek help?

My father worked as a gardener in the estate manager's bungalow. His job was to keep clean and tidy the large compound. Some days, I used to send food for my father. One day, after sending the food, I was coming back, stopped by to pick mangosteens from the tree in the bungalow compound. When I turned back, I was startled to see the burly British estate manager Mr Mcintosh, standing with his hands on his hips. I slowly and humbly disappeared from the scene.

The happiest time of the year was celebrating Deepavali. The festival of light signifies victory over evil and cruelty. People will start preparations two weeks ahead. The grinding of flour and pounding of rice can be heard in all houses. Variety of traditional delicacies will be prepared but not allowed to taste them until after morning prayers on Deepavali day. This was also part of the celebration ritual, to offer to GOD before consuming. Goats to be slaughtered will be brought in early and tied behind the house, fed with jackfruit tree leaves. The goats will be bleating, little knowing of their fate in the next few days.

On Deepavali day, we were awakened around 5am for an oil bath in the chilled cold water. We wore our new clothes which had been blessed on the prayer altar. There was a sumptuous breakfast, usually *idli*, *thosai* and spring hopper, with chicken and mutton curry. After breakfast, it was time to tour the estate, visiting friends and relatives.

The main attraction for Deepavali was playing with fireworks and firecrackers. With continuous meals and spending time with friends, we would be tired by the end of the day, nevertheless, the memories remain evergreen for a long time. Normally, as students, we would have only one day of school leave. Due to the year-end period, there was an examination the next day after Deepavali. The workers were given four days unpaid leave to celebrate.

I was enrolled in an English medium school, about eight miles away from home, in a kampung area. I was the 3rd batch in the school in 1957, my enrolment number was 147. There were only six class-rooms in one single building. We travelled to school by bus with other adult passengers taking the same route. We did not have tap water in the school, I remember crossing the main road to drink water from the well. Our teachers were very strict, dedicated in their teaching to ensure all students excel in their studies and also well disciplined. I passed my standard six examination in 1962 and gained entry to form one. Until 1965, our school was only Lower Secondary school, until Form Three. In 1965, I passed my Lower Certificate of Education examination, and moved on to Form Four. My batch of classmates and I felt proud for being the first graduates of Form Four in the school in 1966. I take pride in viewing my Overseas School Certificate and Malaysian Certificate of Education certificates, issued by the University of Cambridge, duly signed by the Vice Chancellor.

I remember my Form Five English teacher making it compulsory for us to buy a copy of the Reader's Digest monthly. His favourite column was "My most unforgettable character" depicting successful stories of individuals. The book cost RM1.40 per copy. I really thank my parents for providing education, though life for them was not a bed of roses. Many kids of my age dropped out as early as Standard Six to help their parents with the work, many followed their parents' footsteps to work in the estate. My parents ambition was to get me to become a doctor, but financial constraint and their family commitment dashed that hope.

Half way through my Standard One year, smoke was detected in the school store room, we were evacuated safely from the building. While the repair works were carried out, we were temporarily housed in a Malay medium school about a mile from my school. We studied here in the afternoon session for about three months. We went to school very early and wandered around the kampung. The kampung people were very friendly and would invite us to eat fruits, whatever was bearing during the season.

During my Standard Six year, after the examination was over, I was playing football with my friends. I fell down and dislocated my left wrist. My teacher drove me to the estate, picked up my father and sent me to the General Hospital in Seremban, which was twenty miles from my school. I was admitted and surgery was done to correct the dislocation. "Plaster of Paris" (POP) was applied from my wrist to the upper arm. The cast remained on my hand for six weeks.

During school holidays, my siblings and I visited our grandparents, who lived about two miles away. My uncle transported us on his bicycle. My younger sister and I would sit on the front iron bar, while my elder brother and elder sister would sit on the cycle carrier behind. My grandparents would be eagerly waiting for us, my grandmother would cook delicious food and take good care of us during our stay. I also have the experience of riding bullock carts owned by my grandfather.

When I was about seven years old, Malaya got its independence from the British regime. I was too small to understand the reason for the jubilant celebration, only remember people shouting 'Merdeka, Merdeka, Merdeka" and us kids could only echo the elders. It was a few years later that I understood the whole episode and its true meaning.

When I was about fourteen years old, my parents relocated to another estate about two miles away. It was a roadside estate with similar facilities. Here, I had the opportunity to mix around with the Chinese community, who also worked in the estate. I played basketball for the youth team, and also picked up their language a little bit. I also played football for the estate team.

Later in life, I worked as an estate Hospital Assistant for 22 years, before exploring into the oil and gas industry in Terengganu, for another 22 years until my retirement. Life has always been blissful to me, married, with two children, a girl and boy. They are also married, have their own children. Now, at the age of 72 years, I enjoy my life happily with my family members and three grandchildren. To keep myself healthy, I go brisk walking daily and sometimes cycling. Reading books, listening to music and watching good family value movies are my hobbies. I also still keep contact with some of my classmates who studied with me from standard one to form five. Once in a while, I still visit the places I lived during my childhood days and refresh my memories of those good olden days.

Mahatma Gandhi's quote:

"A man is but a product of his thoughts,

What he thinks he become"



The river behind the town, where my friends and I go for swim



This is the exact location of our house, once upon a time $\,$

Category: Short Story 3rd Place By Richard Joseph

The Wood Called a Guitar

Hi, I am a guitar player, and the world is my oyster.
Yes, you read that right.
I have graced quite a few stages here and there performing, met a few bigwigs, and dined with some top musicians too, all thanks to my guitar.
This narrative is all about me and my guitar.
It's quite personal, so people, expect lots of I, me, and my yah.....

I am 78 years old. Quite ok la, both physically and mentally. Still have lots of hair on my head of which my contemporaries are envious.

However, that's not to say there are no aches and pains and some internal thingys doing the cha cha cha.

But over and above all, God loves me and I am so grateful for all that I am. Still being able to go for my walks, do a bit of gardening, eat chocolates and of course, play my guitar.

Please bear with some of my ramblings before I cut to The Chase. There are also a few technical terms and some names of singers but It's all so relative to my story.

I did pretty ok in school although I think I could have done much better if not for the grand entrance of the guitar. In hindsight, I am so grateful for this piece of wood bound together with metal and plastic. The guitar has kept me forging ahead.

After I excelled in Form 3, my classmates and I formed a band in Form 4.

And I was elected by the rest of the guys to play the lead guitar.

I was elated since it's a lofty position in a band. And

I wanted so much to be like Hank B. Marvin, the lead guitarist in the British instrumental band, The Shadows. I could play the guitar fairly well already but to imitate or emulate Hank, was a different ball game.

So it was practice and practice with my guitar. This was done in the wee hours of the night after both my dad and sister had gone to bed. Sitting outside the main door of the house on the steps, together with the slippers and shoes.

As expected, homework and school studies took a back seat. Grudgingly I

plodded through my final year in school and achieved pretty ok results to secure a job in Telecoms Malaysia.

Yes, I was a government servant. This was my father's dream for his son. His sage advice was "Government servants have a pension and free medical care for life". Now at this ripe age, I am so glad I took your advice dad. But he failed to tell me that being a government servant also meant lots of tea breaks. Early morning break, mid-morning break, and of course, the 3 pm break. Besides lunch break. But who was I to complain? "Fall in boy".

Incidentally, all these things were happening in Ipoh. I was born in Selangor so how come Ipoh? That my friends, is another I, me, and my story. For another time. Yes! But through all these moments, the guitar never left my side. In fact, with my father's consent, I bought a brand new electric guitar with my first pay!! How lucky can one get? Gleaming red, sort of like one of Elvis Presley's Cadillac.

I formed a band "The Phantoms" and people seemed to like our performances. We had regular gigs like weddings and birthday parties. And at times was the resident band for school talent times.

Then came the British Invasion around 1965.

Musical flavors changed and we had no choice but

to follow the trend and morph into a poor imitation of The Beatles.

It became all "She Loves You, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah", "I Saw Her

Standing There" etc. with long hair, skinny pants, and boots with buckles.

The Beatles were a band with vocals so.... "good golly, miss molly" we too

had to change from being an instrumental band to a vocal band.

This meant not only practice for me but for the band too.

We all had to learn to sing while playing our instruments.

There were no music studios available for us to practice back then.

So my band buddies will cycle to my house with guitars strung on

their backs/shoulders to hone our skills.

Being in sleepy Ipoh town, we managed with whatever instruments we had in developing this fad with full enthusiasm.

Then to my utter dismay, the Government transferred me to Dungun, Trengganu in 1968. A very quiet fishing village. If you thought Ipoh was sleepy, Dungun was tediously boring! Literally a one-horse town.

My wife and I have revisited Dungun a few times since but the places and people that are etched in my mind are not there anymore.

Even the chapel that we got married in is no more, It was burned down. Sad.

{Incidentally, this month April 2022, is our 50 years wedding anniversary}.

To quote Bob Dylan "The Times, They Are A-Changing". Yes indeed.

Anway, Dungun is a small town with lovely kind people, cheap food, fresh air, and clean beaches.

Hardly any cars. People mostly cycled or had these little Honda motorbikes.,

During the months of May to August, huge turtles will come up laboriously onto the Rantau Abang beach to lay their eggs at night. And we would go and camp out on the beaches with

little wood fires to watch the turtles. All huddled together for warmth.

With black coffee in Thermos flasks to keep out the chill.

Dungun only had one cinema then and it screened mainly Malay movies.

TV shows were all in black and white. And being bachelors, we couldn't afford a TV.

Only a radio. Our poor man's joy.

A very different lifestyle indeed on the East Coast.

And the music? What music?

Zero. Zilch.

How la? My entire musical world was split Into smithereens.

But thankfully I had my acoustic guitar and I turned to folk music playing and singing Bob Dylan, Gorden Lightfoot, etc. The only venue that I had to perform at was my little front porch verandah. Singing mournful songs of woe every day after work. But hey, it was not all doom and gloom though.

A family from Kuala Lumpur moved into the house next to our all bachelors house.

And there she was..my darling...18 years old. So young and fresh like the morning dew over the South China Sea.

In the evenings, she will stand on her porch listening to my singing.

Yes, I wooed her with my songs and we got married in Dungun.

I spoke to my boss and he was so kind as to grant me a transfer back to the West Coast.

And I got myself back to the exciting world of Jimi

Hendrix, flower power, peace, love, afro hairstyle, and bell bottoms.

Kuala Lumpur, I am here!! This was in 1972.

Wow. What an amazing musical world it was back then.

Hotel lounges, discos, night clubs, strip clubs. All employing live bands.

I got myself back into a band, but after 4 years of folk acoustic guitar

in Dungun, I had to sort of relearn the guitar.

Not the acoustic guitar mind you, but this time the electric guitar.

With effect pedals placed beside your feet to get the rock sounds of Santana,

Deep Purple, The Eagles, etc., etc.

Back to the woodshed, it was for me.

Since I was a lively newly married lad of 28 years then, learning was not an issue. But the method of learning was laborious. This was the era of the cassette tape and cassette player.

So to learn a guitar solo...e.g. Black Magic Woman, you have to play and rewind the tape several times to pick out the exact notes. While rewinding or forwarding, the tape sometimes would get stuck in the player, and either you buy a new tape, or rewind it with a pencil. These days we have the internet and YouTube to learn but not back then. I was over the moon after learning a complete solo.

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Working daytime in Telecoms and performing nightly with a six months contract under your belt was, believe you me, an asleep-depraved nightmare. I was literally turning into one of the walking dead, with only about 4 hours of sleep every night. All the other guys in the band were full-time musicians except me. And tiredness was my shadow buddy.

And in between, we somehow managed to back American singers like Johnny Tillotson, and Brian Hyland. And also being the local opening act for The Commodores and Lobo. Together with working with a multitude of local singers like Khatijah Ibrahim, N.D.Lala, Noreen Noor, Sheila Majid, D.J.Dave, etc. I craved sleep. And how! But the guitar playing was improving albeit slowly due to physical tiredness. Here and there, I collected a few guitars and amplifiers.

Around the turn of 1983 with advancing age, I quit accepting nightly contracts. I only played weekends or was a stand-in guitarist when required. This was a challenge. You quickly have to learn their songs in a day or so, or play impromptu unrehearsed on stage due to very short notice. This means guitar skills have to be fine-tuned And you needed a very wide knowledge of songs in your arsenal.

In 1994, at the age of 50, I just couldn't take the morning and evening traffic jams. And the mundane daily office work didn't help either. and lo and behold, I quit Telekom Malaysia without, of course losing my pension. (Thanks Dad). I turned to the world of music to be a full-time guitar teacher in a reputable company teaching ukelele, bass guitar, classical guitar, pop guitar, and rock guitar. And as a music teacher, you have to have the knowledge of teaching students the proper method with musical notes and thus, there was a bit of homework. But the upside was, unlike a 9-5 job, you can sort of select your teaching days and the timing too. No more In the daily rat race. And no traffic jams. You only work about 5 hours depending on the number of students. And quite close to my house too. Ahhhhh, bliss.

Then on my 70th birthday, I turned to become a country and western guitarist/singer. Oh my.

Another new turn. You see, to a layman, a guitarist is a guitarist. But it's the finer points that count. Country guitar is a clean sound with some compression and right-hand techniques. No huge amplifiers or distortion. It's a whole new ball game. It took me 3 long years to be a good country player cum singer. I was happy. And contented.

The guitar has had me playing on a borrowed guitar while on holiday in New Zealand. in my friend's band in Auckland for about 2 weeks.

And this very same wood has also graciously allowed me to jam with a Canadian reggae band aboard the cruise liner "The Caribbean Of The Seas ". This time around I had my guitar

with me since It was a 5 nights cruise holiday. I asked them if I could be a guest guitarist. They agreed and I played with these guys every night just improvising.

What a thrill that was.

Then in late 2019, the dreaded Corvid 19 waltzed into Malaysia.

By March 2020, all musical avenues, meaning pubs, nightclubs, and hotel lounges were closing or shutting down. Including music schools.

And there I was. No music at all. Quite similar to Dungun 50 years ago. And I have a number of guitars lying around the house. So it was like "All dressed up with no place to go". And stuck within the confines of my home with only my loving wife.

It was then that I decided that I wanted to learn to play the styles of Chet Atkins and Merle Trevis on acoustic guitar. These are 2 very famous American musicians now deceased.

A full circle again for me and an enormous challenge. And lots of free time.

This style of guitar playing involves the technique of alternating the right-hand thumb between two or three bass strings while the fingers pluck the thinner strings playing the melody of a tune. It's gibberish I know to a person who knows not the guitar. But it's a marvel of a technique. Really astonishing when played by people like Tommy Emmanuel.

This is THE CHASE folks, that I mentioned earlier.

My fingers are quite badly affected by osteoarthritis now. It's quite a chore opening a Coke bottle or twisting a doorknob to enter a room but no pains or problems playing the guitar. God has so generously given me this gift to continue with my passion. And I must not let Him down. No way Josie. Never mind if it's another trudge up the mountain.

So here at the twilight age of 76, I threw myself into a completely new dawn.

I had tried learning this style on and off before but failed miserably each time.

But not this time kiddo.

With practice sessions of maybe an hour or so daily, I am indeed proud to say I can actually play this style of solo guitar now (self pat pat).

It's not been easy with aging hands and gnarled fingers but hey, I made it! And I am beaming from ear to ear.

With the current gradual reopening of the music scene from 1st April 2022, I am now seriously contemplating getting back onto the stage as a solo performer. Not so much for the money but more for myself as a guitarist/singer. I still have friends in the music industry who may give this old geezer a platform hopefully. But listen, Jasmina. Grant me a gift for this story and I can perform for you guys

FOC. Right?

But all jokes aside, I am so so blessed. I see my friends younger than me sick and frail. Some have faded away and some are fading slowly. These are people with whom I have worked. We traveled together in the same car to Penang, Ipoh, Melaka, Port Dickson, etc for shows. It's quite painful and sad.

I am not rich. I don't have a fleet of cars nor a bunch of houses. I am not an academic with a string of titles behind my name. I am just a plain simple senior guitar player. A journeyman perhaps? And I am so grateful for all the treasures that I possess.

My health, my passion, my wife, and the ability to still learn. A genuflect to the Man above in the sky. And of course, all my various pieces of "'wood"

Category: Poem

Category: Poem 1st Place

Name of author: Tan Ling Suan

I am Woman

For centuries, and even now, The old-fashioned will say Women should silently serve The family each day. But I have a mind, I have a heart, I'm given a voice – What shall I impart?

I do not expect greatness
Out of all the sharing;
I may not live to see
The results of all the caring.
I do what needs to be done,
No asking 'Should I still?' –
Accepting that I have a role
Somewhere to fulfil.

I'm one with all the women
Who treat the community
As part of our life,
As one family;
There's a togetherness,
An invisible bond
Of commitment and comfort
And something far beyond.

I'm just a tiny stitch
In the great pattern of life,
But I fulfil the design
As mother, sister, wife;
And so, with love and peace,
I'll weave stories and poetry
To be repeated in other lives
As part of unwritten history.

Category: Poem 2nd Place By Raymund N.C. Jagan

A Change in Later Life

In my 60s, and still going strong
Made a change hoping nothing would go wrong
Learning of animal cruelty, animal oppression
I decided to embrace the life of a vegan

The thought I reflected on Which kept coming round 'Should my existence be hovering, On the back of another's suffering'

The slaughter of animals seemed in vain I began to contemplate their pain If not wanting the killing to prolong Is veganism where I belong?

Denying animals moral consideration Felt like a form of discrimination Killing another 'species' Could this be a moral disease?

Seeing animals as either food or pet We eat one, the other we pat Seeing a dying chicken, a dying cat But could only save one, how would I act?

There are places they eat dogs and cats
Which pains us who think them pets
But let our thoughts a minute quicken
What's the difference between cat and chicken?

Due to culture, due to convenience Less aware and with little lenience We eat the flesh and secretions of animals Compulsions present like life-long manacles Factory farms caging poultry and mammals Millions confined like creature criminals Swine, poultry and cattle raised solely For taste buds to say 'the meat tastes lovely'

The food industry converts animal bodies Into cheap food for modern societies Meat in a van, meat in a can From boxes and shelves, straight to a pan

To avoid doing the killing ourselves
To avoid the blood, the noise, the smells
The slaughter happens far from dwellings and mansions
And even further from our thoughts and conscience

Dairy cows are artificially inseminated To induce milk much awaited Their babies wrenched away at birth An experience like hell on earth

Male calves are killed for veal
Widely considered a high-end meal
Females raised till their 'teens'
To replace their mums as milk machines

In a few years udders exhausted Mothers to the slaughter house escorted In a state of utmost grief Killed, processed into cuts of beef

But animals are sentient beings Having thoughts, emotions, and feelings We see this in which we declare a pet But not in those our appetite whet

Facing death whether pig or sheep Will run, scream, resist or weep A sign of life's longing for itself For no being willingly gives up its self

But humans in a natural state Empathise, love, care and relate With all beings regardless whether They walk, fly, crawl or slither

Thus, most cringe and look-away At the sight of a life taken-away So, we outsource the killing To abattoirs since we're unwilling

Changing from 'lovely the meat I ate'
To being animal compassionate
Needed understanding and information
And lots of heartfelt inspiration

Rejecting meat curry
Which I used to eat in a hurry
For family to understand was difficult
They still look upon befuddled

Chicken, prawn, crab and fish, Which I used to crave and wish Do not appeal anymore So now I easily ignore

Foods I eat now Since I took this vow Veggies, fruit, lentils, beans Grains, nuts, seeds and greens

Eating only a plant cuisine
Some wonder if I lack protein
But look at the elephant, strong and big
Eats only grass, leaf and twig

Rejecting human exceptionalism
I now see all through an empathy prism
To have compassion for all in need
For human, or animal of any breed

But all said all done
My views are personal ones
To myself are they directed
As my inner voice and I stay connected

I can only be the change I want to see

And not compel others to agree
But with optimism and hope I foresee
The day will come when all beings are set free.

Category: Poem 3rd Place By Siti Hajar Abdullah

I Am Just a Teacher

I am the thinker, the thinking, the thought.

I am the seeker, the seeking, the sought.

I am the magic, the miracle, the impossible.

I am the yardstick, the paragon, the approachable.

I am the resource, the encyclopaedia, the centre.

I am the technology, the bridge, the ambassador.

I am the engineer, the architecture, the choreographer.

I am the planner, the controller, the manager.

I am shifter, the reporter, the programmer.

I am the polisher, the discoverer, the developer.

I am the guidance, the interpreter, the navigator.

I am the preacher, the motivator, the prompter.

I am the drive, the driving, the driver.

I am the friend, the parent, the soother.

I am the script writer, the storyteller, the organizer.

I am the brain, the processor, the saviour.

I am the lake, the basin, the reservoir.

I am the news, the message, the messenger.

I am the listener, the consoler, the comforter.

I am the play-maker, the pace-maker, the provider.

I am the social worker, the babysitter, the caretaker.

I am the nurse, the surgeon, the doctor.

I am the imbue, the trigger, the nurturer.

I am the step, the ladder, the escalator.

I am the demonstrator, the protector, the pacifier.

I am the orator, the advisor, the empower.

I am the medicine, the cure, the laughter.

I am the vocabulary, the vocal, the voice.

I am the vision, the mission, the choice.

I am the police, the investigator, the administrator.

I am the question, the solution, the answer.

I am the idea, the knowledge, the skills,

I am the platform, the pitch, the field.

I am the symbol, the sign, the light.

I am the strength, the power, the might.

I am the eyes, the seeing, the sight.

I am the mark, the level, the height.

I am the rule, the morale, the norm.

I am the canopy, the shelter, the home.

I am the route, the journey, the destiny.

I am the factory, the machinery, the refinery.

I am the etiquette, the pedagogy, the doctrine.

I am the beginning, the middle, the end.

I am the pulse, the breath, the heartbeat.

I am the trainer, the coach, the athlete.

I am the symphony, the melody, the music.

I am the rhyme, the rhythm, the rhythmic.

I am the dewdrop, the sunshine, the storm.

I am the phenomenon, the base, the form.

I am the desert, the ocean, the sky.

I am the media, the mediaeval, the why.

I am the yesterday, the present, the future.

Yet, very often;

I am the victim, the abused, the accused,

The sufferer, the belittled, the misconstrued.

I have to bear the delude, the malian, the defiance,

Shoulder the drubbing, the injustice, the insolent,

Hear to the denounce, the heinous, the pandemonium.

I have to meet the boisterous, the contort, the petulant,

Swallow the criticism, the chagrin, the agony,

Face the confrontation, the flounce, the unworthy,

Bow to the arrogant, the selfish, the cantankerous,

Accept the absurd, the condemn, the pompous,

Tame the sceptic, the shrewd, the aggressor,

Endure the threat, the pain, the temper,

Tolerate the insult, the disgrace, the truculent.

That is why I have to be valiant to explain, to touch, to calm.

You see;

I am not complaining, just sharing.

I am not asking for sympathy, but empathy.

I am not blaming, just confiding.

I am not aiming for an accolade,

but a word of thanks I would appreciate,

I don't need a bed of roses or bouquet of flowers,

Neither I need words of praises nor heaps of honours.

What I need is just an inch of sincerity, a pinch of dignity, a vivid of modesty, a faint cry of immunity, a glimpse of trust and surety, a minute of ease and peace, and a dint of respect in society because I am just a teacher.

Kategori: Cerpen

Kategori: Cerpen Tempat Pertama Oleh Rohaini Mohd Yusof

Bicara Bertele-Tele Seorang Warga Emas

60 tahun itu sudah lebih setengah abad. Memang sudah tua tetapi bagi mereka yang mengetahui, sesaorang yang berusia 67 tahun seperti saya belum lagi dikira lanjut usia. Adakah saya dalam penafian? Oh, tidak. Bagi mereka yang mengetahui seperti saya, sesaorang yang berusia 60 tahun itu tergulung dalam kategori "youngest – old" yang merangkumi mereka yang berusia 65 – 74 tahun. Saya secara relatif, masih muda berbanding dengan mereka dalam kategori "middle-old" atau "oldest - old". Siapa peduli? Saya peduli.

Middle-old: 75 – 84 tahun, oldest – old: 85 tahun ke atas

Rakan sebaya saling menasihati. Kita kena jaga kesihatan, bila sudah sakit, pencen beribu pun, tak ada gunanya. Ambil makanan tambahan terutamanya Vitamin C, nasihat mereka. Semasa saya di Mekah, saya bawa bekalan Vitamin C – 500mg. Apabila saya jatuh demam di sana, doktor Tabung Haji yang merawat saya memohon maaf kerana kehabisan Vitamin C dan menasihatkan saya supaya membelinya di farmasi.

"Saya ada bawa bekalan Vitamin C "

"Berapa mg?"

"500 mg".

"Laa.. nasib baik tak bagi kepada puan kami punya. Kami punya hanya 30 mg sahaja."

Pada hari itu, saya mula yakin Vitamin C- 500mg dengan izinNya dapat melindungi kesihatan saya. Ini berlaku pada tahun 2018. Namun pada tahun 2020, rakan sebaya menasihatkan saya supaya pastikan tidak lupa mengambil Vitamin-C setiap hari, sekurang-kurangnya 1000mg. Ya, 1000mg barulah kuat hendak melawan coronavirus. Almaklumlah, kita ini golongan rentan. Rentan?

Orang yang rentan ... orang yang rapuh dan tidak dapat melakukan perbuatan

Sinonim rentan: sensitif, lemah, rapuh, tidak berdaya, tidak selamat

Peduli atau tidak, yang pasti ialah, saya dalam kategori orang yang rentan dan mendapat

perhatian istimewa daripada Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia.

Se-awal usia 40an, saya sudah berminat mendengar petua bagaimana kita boleh kekal sihat dan cerdas pada usia tua. Tun Mahathir kata, berhenti makan sebelum kenyang. Mencabar juga apabila varuvel kambing di hadapan mata. Pak Ungku pula kata, makan kurma empat biji sehari dan juga bawang mentah. Unik sekali kombinasi ini, ataupun dimakan pada waktu berbeza? Selepas makan bawang, kenalah cuci mulut betul-betul bersih. Jika tidak, nafas akan berbau "worse than a dinasaur", bak tempelak Marlon Brando terhadap Sophia Loren yang makanan hariannya ialah makanan Itali berasaskan kuasa bawang.

Saya memilih petua Tan Sri Rafidah yang lebih senang dan menyeronokkan iaitu bermain sudoku. Untuk kesihatan fizikal, sekali sekala jalan kaki sekeliling padang di belakang rumah. Berjalan di dalam kompleks membeli belah pun selalunya melebihi seribu langkah yang bersamaan dengan 0.8 km. Menjelang Hari Raya, langkah meningkat hingga 3,000-4,000 semasa membeli belah. Kajian menyatakan wanita dalam kumpulan "youngest – old" memerlukan lebih kurang 4,000 langkah sehari untuk meningkatkan tahap kesihatan dan panjang umur. Orang yang malas bersenam seperti saya tidak memerlukan pedometer. Setakat seribu langkah dalam sehari, boleh sahaja hitung sendiri. Saya ada oximeter. Malah saya suka menjadikan oximeter sebagai buah tangan kepada warga emas.

Pedometer: alat yang berfungsi untuk mengukur banyak langkah yang dilakukan oleh seseorang ketika berjalan atau berlari.

Oximeter (pulse oximeter): alat pengukur kadar oksigen dalam darah

Walaupun tidak mencecah 3,000 langkah sehari, setakat ini, saya okay. Pemeriksaan kesihatan tahunan bulan Mac lepas mengesahkan saya okay, Alhamdulillah. Namun saya tahu, saya perlu bersenam secara konsisten. Sewaktu muda, saya seronok ke gym. Berpakaian sukan yang trendy, menari sambil bersenam aerobic. Sewaktu senaman Zumba berleluasa, saya sudah dalam lingkungan 50 tahun, tidak ada pakaian sukan yang boleh menyembunyikan berat badan saya. Pada masa itu, saya fikir walau dalam bentuk apapun pergerakan senaman berasaskan tarian Latin itu, ia tidak akan menampilkan sosok badan saya yang baik atau sedehana baik. Lagipun, saya akan kelihatan janggal di kalangan orang muda, begitulah persepsi saya. Mungkin persepsi saya dipengaruhi oleh sikap ageism?

Ageism: diskriminasi terhadap orang yang berumur

Saya dengar selepas Zumba timbul Bokwa yang bercirikan tarian Afrika Selatan. Seharusnya saya tidak peduli perkembangan senaman generasi muda tetapi perkembangan senaman warga emas tidak menarik langsung. Selepas Poco-Poco yang mesra warga emas, timbul senaman warga emas atau "senamas". Ia sebenarnya senaman duduk. Senaman duduk-duduk? Adakah tidak ageism dalam industri kecergasan (fitness industry) ? Saya dapati contoh paling teratas mengenai ageism dalam industri kecergasan ialah senaman duduk.

Antara contoh-contoh ageism dalam industri kecergasan:

- menawarkan hanya "super-simple chair classes" kerana mengandaikan warga emas tidak bertenaga untuk melakukan lebih dari itu;
- tidak mensasarkan warga emas dalam pemasaran kerana mengandaikan mereka tidak mampu membayar yuran program, tidak berminat untuk menjaga kecerdasan dan terlalu bebal hingga boleh memusnahkan suasana positif
- mengandaikan warga emas terperangkap dalam kapsul masa dalam apresiasi musik

Sudah lama saya tidak bermain sudoku. Saya berhenti apabila akhbar yang saya langgani tidak lagi menyiarkannya. Baru-baru ini, saya mula bermain Wordle, permainan web meneka kata. Wordle sesuai dengan warga emas yang ramai menghadapi masalah insomnia. Permainan harian Wordle akan dapat diakses tepat jam 12.00 malam. Saya tidak ada masalah tidur. Terfikir juga, adakah saya kini kerap tidur lewat atau kadang-kadang terbangun pada lewat malam disebabkan teruja dengan Wordle? Saya yakin tidak, walaupun ramai rakan merungkai jawapan Wordle pada jam 2.00 pagi atau 3.00 pagi.

Insomnia: biasa di kalangan warga emas. Kekerapan insomnia adalah 40-50% daripada warga emas berumur 60 ke atas dan lebih pada golongan wanita berbanding lelaki.

Satu perkara positif apabila hidup bersendirian ialah mereka perlu tahu serba -serbi supaya tidak perlu bergantung kepada orang lain. Banyak benda mereka boleh buat secara bersendirian. Saya menghadapi masalah kebergantungan, khususnya dalam urusan perbankan dan lain-lain transaksi atas talian, kerana sentiasa mencari jalan pintas. Saya minta salah seorang anak melakukan segalanya. Akhirnya, semua kata laluan dan butiran akaun-akaun dalam simpanannya. Saya tidak merasa curiga walau secubitpun; bukankah kasihnya ibu membawa ke syurga?

"Tetapi bagaimana pula kasihnya anak?", tanya beberapa rakan.

"Lihat sahaja kes bekas Pak Menteri dan bekas Setiausaha Agung Parti".

Oh, manakan boleh saya melihat kes keduanya. Mereka jutawan. Saya fikir tidak payah kita pertikai kasih ibu dan kasih anak. Isu yang sebenar ialah adakah warga emas mendapat perlindungan undang-undang secukupnya. Saya menunggu dengan penuh

harapan akan pembentangan Rang Undang-Undang Warga Emas pada tahun ini. Semoga kebajikan warga emas lebih terbela.

Berita Harian, 6 Oktober 2021: Draf Rang Undang-Undang Warga Emas itu kini sedang disusun, yang bertujuan melindungi hak dan kebajikan warga emas termasuk penyediaan hak, penjagaan, perlindungan, pemerkasaan dan sokongan yang merangkumi keluarga dan komuniti.

Kebergantungan saya tidak setakat itu sahaja. Bila hendak makan di sesetengah restoran, jeling-jeling dulu atas mejanya. Jika ada kertas dan pensil, maknanya menunya berkoda, tetapi itu tidak menjadi hal. Jika buku menunya lebih dari satu, mungkin dua atau tiga, itu mengundang kerumitan. Pastinya tempahan makanan di situ melibatkan pelbagai pilihan dan opsyen-opsyen kombinasi yang mengelirukan. Kalau tidak ada kertas dan pensel ataupun menu tetapi hanya dipamerkan QR Code, itu masalah besar. Saya buat masa ini hanya tahu imbas MySejahtera sahaja. Itupun kadang kala tertekan simbol kamera. Anakanak tidak berminat mengajar saya kerana tidak menguntungkan mereka bilamana saya berupaya makan seorang atau dengan suami sahaja. Bolehkah menempah makanan menjadi lebih rumit daripada ini?

Tema Sambutan Hari Telekomunikasi dan Masyarakat Berinformasi Sedunia 2022:

"Digital technologies for Older Persons and Healthy Ageing".

Baru-baru ini, saya dan seorang lagi mewakili Badan Bukan Kerajaan (NGO) saya bermesyuarat dengan pihak pentadbiran sebuah universiti. Tujuan mesyuarat ialah untuk menjalin koloborasi dalam satu projek amal yang melibatkan warga emas. Dalam ucapan mukadimahnya, pegawai universiti tersebut menyatakan bahawa usaha koloborasi ini "sesungguhnya menepati SDG". Beliau berhenti di situ, tidak dihuraikan apa maksud "SDG" itu. Untung badan, saya tahu apa itu "SDG" sebab sempat mendapat pendedahan mengenainya sebelum bersara, tetapi saya tahu ahli EXCO yang bersama saya tidak pernah mendengarnya. Beliau berusia 69 tahun dan semasa muda pernah bekerja sebagai seorang tukang masak. Beliau pasti tahu "MSG", tapi "SDG" apa pula?

Saya mengacah pegawai berkenaan.

"SDG nombor berapa? " Tiada jawapan.

"SDG nombor berapa?" Ulang saya.

"Oh, nombornya tak pasti. Nanti saya semak"

MSG: monosodium glutamate, iaitu sejenis bahan utama yang digunakan dalam cecair atau serbuk perasa makanan seperti Ajinomoto.

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) atau Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan yang ditetapkan oleh Perhimpunan Agung Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu pada tahun 2015.

Setiap pagi apabila bangun dari tidur, saya bersyukur kerana dikurniakan kesihatan bagi menjalani kehidupan sehari lagi. Perkara-perkara baik jangan lagi ditangguh-tangguh. Saya beramal jariah setakat terdaya. Dalam waktu yang sama, ada satu hobi yang bermula pada waktu muda, tidak dapat dihentikan walaupun ia memerlukan kudrat, khususnya lutut yang kuat. Ya, mengembara. Saya termimpi-mimpi menyusur Lebuh Raya Karakoram - salah satu lebuh raya yang tertinggi di dunia; dengarnya antara yang berbahaya menghubungi Pakistan dan China. Dalam mimpi yang sama, saya singgah di Fairy Meadows yang memerlukan pendakian dengan kenderaan pacuan empat (4) roda, kuda dan kaki berjam-jam lamanya.

Saya fikir pengembaraan ini tidak tergulung di dalam "Perkara-perkara baik jangan lagi ditangguh-tangguh". Saya tegar ingin melakukannya kerana kedua lutut masih boleh "pakai". Harap-harap pengembaraan tersebut tidak menyebabkan keduanya menjadi lebih parah pada kadar yang lebih cepat.

Purata Jangka Hayat Penduduk Malaysia: Lelaki - 73.2 tahun; Perempuan - 78.3 tahun

Osteoarthritis (OA) Lutut: Keradangan yang berlaku pada sendi lutut. Ia berlaku kerana lapisan tulang rawan (cartilage) menipis secara beransur-ansur, boleh disamakan sebagai proses "wear and tear".

Baru-baru ini, saya mendaftar diri saya sebagai "subjek" untuk suatu penyelidikan yang ada kaitan dengan kajian mengenai penyakit Alzheimer di kalangan warga emas yang sihat dan yang berpenyakit. Saya perlu menjalani beberapa ujian diagnostik, antaranya ialah imbasan Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) yang mengambil masa 30 minit. Saya anggap diri saya bukan claustrophobic kerana pernah melakukan imbasan MRI sebelum ini tanpa masalah kecuali pada lebih kurang lima (5) minit yang terakhir apabila saya tidak semena-mena membuka mata. Saya tiba-tiba terasa rimas tetapi masih boleh mengawal perasaan. Saya telah melakukan kesilapan besar, mujurlah pada waktu itu proses imbasan sudah hampir selesai. Kali ini saya bertekad tidak akan membuka mata saya sehingga selesai proses imbasan.

Rupa-rupanya, mesin MRI kini sudah canggih. Ia tidak sesempit seperti yang pernah saya alami dahulu. Di atas kepala saya ada dua cermin yang saling berpantulan, membolehkan saya melihat penyelidik-penyelidik bekerja. Namun, pengalaman rimas selama lima (5) minit itu masih menghantui saya. Jadi, selepas beberapa minit mencelik mata, saya pejam. Terasa masa berlalu agak lama. Saya pun berzikir di dalam hati untuk menghabiskan masa.

Tiba-tiba saya dengar ketukan dari luar kapsul bertanyakan sama ada saya menghadapi apa-apa masalah kerana mereka mendapati saya menelan air liur terlalu kerap.

"Saya okay saja ..."

"Kalau begitu, tolong jangan menelan air liur terlalu kerap. Nanti mempengaruhi cerapan".

Aduh. Bagaimana ini berlaku? Mungkin tanpa saya sedari, saya menggerakkan lidah semasa berzikir. Nasib baik mereka tidak menambah durasi imbasan.

Saya masih menunggu keputusan ujian ini.

Alzheimer – kehilangan fungsi otak secara perlahan-pelahan memusnahkan ingatan, daya berfikir dan keupayaan untuk menjalankan tugasan mudah. Kebanyakan penghidap penyakit ini terdiri daripada warga emas berusia 65 tahun ke atas dan risiko untuk mendapat penyakit ini meningkat mengikut usia

Claustrophobic - ketakutan apabila berada di tempat yang tertutup

Saya tinggal di Kuala Lumpur. Saya biasa menerima jemputan ke majlis-majlis rasmi dalam kapasiti saya menerajui sebuah NGO. Biasa tetapi tidaklah kerap. Saya akan memandu sendiri ke destinasi majlis. Atas urusan NGO saya, paling jauh pemanduan saya setakat ini ialah ke Kuantan.

Kerap pihak penganjur atau pun penyambut/pengantar yang ditugaskan menjaga saya terkejut bila mereka mendapat tahu bahawa saya pandu sendiri walaupun tempat majlis tersebut diadakan hanyalah di Petaling Jaya atau Putrajaya sahaja. Mungkin "terkejut" bukan perkataan yang tepat. Terpegun? Terkesima? Apa-apalah, tetapi yang nyata mereka kelihatan tidak percaya warga emas ini memandu sendiri.

Pada mulanya saya pula terkejut dan hairan melihat reaksi mereka. Sejak tahun 80an, hampir setiap bulan saya memandu ke Ipoh, kampung halaman saya. Alah bisa tegal biasa. Tiada siapa yang terkejut di sana, malah saudara-mara dan sahabat handai sentiasa menunggu ketibaan saya.

Lesen Memandu saya luput pada tahun 2024.

Hadkan Pengeluaran Lesen Memandu Kepada Warga Emas (METROTV) – disiarkan pada 24 September 2021. Intipatinya ialah:

• tidak sesuai warga emas berusia 70 tahun ke atas diberi kelulusan pembaharuan lesen

memandu selama 5 tahun sekali gus

- warga emas mempunyai masalah kesihatan seperti Alzheimer atau penglihatan
- warga emas menjalani ujian kesihatan sebelum dibenarkan memandu

"Kalau mengikut statistik kemalangan jalan raya, lebih ramai pemandu muda terlibat dalam kemalangan jalan raya daripada pemandu yang berumur".

Bekas Menteri Pengangkutan, Anthony Loke Siew Fook, Utusan Malaysia, 25 September 2021

Akta Pengangkutan Jalan 1987, Seksyen 30: Penyerahan lesen memandu boleh dibuat secara sukarela atas faktor kesihatan yang boleh membahayakan pengguna jalan raya lain.

Sejak saya sakit lutut, saya menggunakan tongkat. Tongkat pertama saya beli di sebuah farmasi di Dengkil. Tongkat yang diperbuat dari aloi aluminium bewarna tembaga tersebut sangat popular hingga ke hari ini. Kemudian, saya menggantikannya dengan tongkat yang lebih tirus, bercorak bunga. Saya beli tongkat tersebut semasa saya berlibur di Tokyo lebih kurang 7 tahun yang lalu. Tongkat ini mengimbangi badan saya semasa berjalan, terutamanya atas permukaan tidak rata, atau apabila mendaki atau menuruni tangga. Tongkat ini boleh melindungi saya daripada terjatuh.

Minggu lepas, saya baru sedar bahawa saya telah kehilangan tongkat tersebut. Puas mencarinya. Agak payah hendak mengagak bila dan di mana kali akhir tongkat itu bersama saya. Ahli keluarga turut membantu, cuba mengimbaukan saat dan ketika pergerakan saya bermula tanpa tongkat dalam beberapa hari yang lepas. Kalau dulu, boleh juga merujuk kepada rekod pergerakan dalam aplikasi MySejahtera.

Kemudian saya dapat bil kredit bulanan. Bil tersebut menghuraikan perbelanjaan saya di tempat-tempat tertentu. Saya hanya membuat satu panggilan sahaja iaitu di sebuah café di Taman Melawati. Sah, tongkat saya ada di sana.

"Auntie, hari tu kita cuba kejar auntie, nak pulangkan tongkat tu. Tapi auntie jalan cepat sangat. Tau-tau hilang".

Seolah-olah ada yang tidak kena pada naratif ini. Saya yang bertongkat, lupa tongkat. Saya yang sakit lutut, tanpa tongkat berjalan cepat? Tetapi itulah yang berlaku.

Hampir 15% warga emas mengalami jatuh dalam tempoh dua belas bulan. Mereka yang lebih berusia berkemungkinan mempunyai dua kali ganda berisiko untuk jatuh. Hampir 30% warga emas yang jatuh melaporkan dua atau lebih jatuh. Manakala kecederaan teruk seperti patah tulang atau kecederaan otak berlaku hampir 20% di kalangan mereka

yang telah jatuh.

National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS), 2018 oleh Institut Kesihatan Umum, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia.

Faedah mengguna tongkat:

- mengimbang tubuh badan dengan lebih baik
- mengurangkan sakit-sakit sendi, belakang dan pinggul
- menambah stamina
- mengurangkan beban berat badan ditanggung pada lutut
- dapat bergerak dengan lebih baik dan stabil
- dapat berdiri lebih lama tanpa cepat rasa letih
- mencegah dari jatuh

Musim durian sudah tiba. Saya tidak lagi memakannya sehingga puas dalam satu masa. Saya fikir kalau saya makan dua ulas sahaja, tidak mungkin menjejas kesihatan saya.

Suatu hari semasa berjalan di Sri Rampai, saya singgah di sebuah warong cendol yang terkenal. Di situ terpampang menu cendol durian. Harganya RM14. Saya pun minta satu mangkuk. Wau, sungguh sedap dan duriannya lemak berkrim. Pulutpun ada.

Bila sampai di rumah, tiba-tiba saya pening. Siling berpusing-pusing, dinding pun semacam hendak runtuh. Saya baring di katil, cuba menahan pening sehingga tertidur. Bila terjaga, keadaan balik seperti biasa. Saya tidak tahu puncanya. Namun, saya mengesyaki gabungan durian dan pulut itu. Keduanya makanan "berangin".

Antara bahaya durian:

- menambah kegemukan kerana kandungan kalori yang tinggi
- meningkatkan risiko kencing manis kerana kandungan gula yang tinggi
- mengakibatkan kerja hati lebih berat
- menimbulkan gangguan pencernaan, mual dan kembung
- meningkatkan risiko gout, kolestrol dan gangguan ginjal kerana kandungan lemak dan purin yang tinggi

Sekian, bertele-tele bicara saya.

Kategori: Cerpen Tempat Kedua Oleh Aminah Mokhtar

Dari Lantai Hospital Ke Dewan Istana

Akhirnya saya sampai di sini. Di podium yang tidak pernah terfikir yang saya akan sampai di platform setinggi ini. Perjalanan ini amat panjang dan penuh duga. Saya melihat sekeliling. Saya ternampak dia.

Dia, seorang anak kecil tujuh tahun, kecewa hatinya tidak dapat membaca surat khabar dan majalah Bambino berharga 60 sen. Di atas pangkin di bawah pohon ketapang, dia duduk membawa majalah warta kerajaan negeri Johor bertulisan jawi yang dihantar secara percuma oleh kerajaan negeri Johor kepada ayahnya, peneroka felda dan bekas pejuang kemerdekaan bersama Tuanku Abdul Rahman. Paling disukainya membaca khutbah jumaat dan kisah-kisah nabi. Dibacanya berulang kali, kerana itu sahaja bacaan yang dia ada.

Setiap kali hatinya terasa kecewa kerana tidak mampu membeli naskah surat khabar berharga 20 sen, dipujuk hatinya berulang-ulang kali, tidak mengapalah, nanti besar, aku tulis buku aku sendiri.

Saya tidak dapat melupakan wajah anak kecil itu mengambil ranting dan dia melukis di atas pasir di bawah rumah. Dia teringin sangat untuk membeli buku lukisan dan sekotak warna berharga seringgit lebih. Seringgit lebih boleh membeli makanan untuk sekeluarga. Dia pujuknya hatinya lagi, tak apalah, nanti dah kerja, aku beli kertas dan berkotak-kotak warna.

Demikanlah anak kecil yang suka membaca dan suka menulis itu membesar dengan memujuk hati, satu hari nanti dia akan menulis buku sendiri. Masuk ke tingkatan satu, dia sangat suka mengarang cerita. Karangannya sering mendapat markah tinggi dan dibaca di hadapan kelas. Dia mula menulis tentang kehidupannya, tentang emak dam abah yang selalu bertengkar, tentang emak yang selalu berleter dan yang paling dia terkesan, emaknya yang pilih kasih begitu menyayangi tiga orang abang-abang dan seorang adik lelakinya. Anak perempuan selalu dimarahai dan serba tidak kena.

Anak kecil itu membesar dengan duka menjadi remaja. Masih suka menulis tentang sekitaran yang tidak adil. Dia gigih menulis cerpen berjudul, anak-anak emak. Siap cerpen itu dibacanya di hadapan emak. Emaknya mendegar pun tidak, tetapi dia puas hati kerana niatnya mahu menegur sikap emak, dapat disampaikan melalui cerpen.

Anak kecil dan remaja itulah saya.

Yang melangkah ke tingakatn emat aliran sains, dengan perasaan mahu berkarya semakin berkobar-kobar. Saya tulis berpuluh-puluh puisi tulisan tangan dan dibaca berulang kali seorang diri di bawah pokok. Cerpen pertama saya tersiar di majalah sekolah tentang risau dan tertekan mahu menduduki Sijil pelajaran Malaysia, kerana yuran perperiksaan enam puluh ringgit yang masih belum dikirimkan ayah lagi. Segala tekanan saya tulis dan tulis menjadi sebuah novel tulisan tangan, berjudul Anak Dagang Kelana.

Selepas Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia saya sangat berharap terpilih ke maktab perguruan menjadi guru kerana minat saya yang begitu mendalam dalam bidang penulisan. Setahu saya, hanya profesion perguruan yang punyai persatuan penulis dan saya ada ruang untuk berkarya.

Saya gagal ke maktab perguruan. Hati saya luluh.

Gagal ke maktab perguruan bermakan peluang saya menjadi penulis sangat nipis. Saya terbaca satu iklan kecil di surat khabar, saya potong dan hantar surat permohonan. Saya tidak mengharapkan akan berjaya, tetapi sekurang-kurangnya saya sudah berusaha. Saya tetap berharap, akan ada peluang saya masuk ke maktab perguruan.

Hanya mengikut apa yang Tuhan takdirkan, saya dipanggil temuduga di Hospital Universiti. Dengan langkah berat saya iktuti proses temuduga, dan alangkah terkejutnya apabila saya berjaya ikuti tiga tahun berkursus di Sekolah Kejururawatan sebagai jururawat pelatih.

Tiga tahun di sekolah kejurawatan, saya semakin tertekan. Assigment demi assigment dan tekanan demi tekanan saya terpaksa menulis dan menulis sebagai escapism untuk bebas dari tekanan. Saya mula terfikir bahawa apabila saya menulis, mengarang dan berkarya dalam genre cerpen, novel dan puisi, semua tugasan itu sebenarnya saya terima dari Tuhan untuk membangunkan kemanusian dan merawat penyakit rohani diri sendiri dan penyakit yang ada dalam komuniti saya.

Assigment yang saya wajib laksanakan saya buat sungguh-sungguh dengan hati fikiran, akal minda, jiwa nurani, fizikal dan mental paling baik, paling sempurna walaupun tidak pernah sempurna.

Menjadi jururawat saya diamanahkan untuk merawat multi penyakit yang ditanggung oleh pesakit-pesakit. Pesakit-pesakit yang datang membawa multi persoalan, konflik dan isu dengan rupa fizikal dan supiritual yang berbeza. Multi rationya, multi penyakitnya dan multi kaedah perawatannya.

Kepelbagaian inilah, membuka seluas-luas pintu dalam proses pengkaryaan saya.

Sumbangannya amat besar dan bermakna.

Bercita-cita mahukan perguruan menjadi profesion terbaik dalam hidup dan meneruskan kelangsungan berkarya, kerana dalam fikiran saya, antara penulisan dan perguruan ada ikatan yang kukuh, saling memberi impak. Namun, sangkaan saya, jauh tersasar, apabila ALLAH letakkan seluruh kehidupan saya di lantai hospital bukan di bilik-bilik darjah persekolahan. Begitu, ALLAH mengatur persekolahan sastera saya di hospital.

Bermula dari kuliah anatomi dan fisiologi sel-sel, tisu-tisu, organ-organ dan semua sistem dalam tubuh badan manusia, saya dinampakkan ALLAH, kesemuanya terkait dengan kehidupan luar dari jasad badani. Saya diperlihatkan kehidupan politik, ekonomi dan sosial masyarakat dan negara.

Di setiap gambar organ dalam badan manusia, di bawahnya bukan nota pelajaran yang sepatutnya disalin dari projektor tutor dan pensyarah, tetapi jadilah bait-bait puisi yang terkait tentang kritikan masyarakat yang rasanya bagai terpikul di bahu saya.

Saya takut melihat mayat, kerana ada gangguan sprititual yang menganggu emosi sejak kecil. Banyangkan saban hari saya menghadapi kematian, kadangkala terpaksa mengurusi jenazah atau mayat seorang diri dalam kepungan langsing yang ditarik untuk memberi privisi kepada si mati tanpa mengira waktu. Dari detik dua belas tengah malam sehingga ke siang hari, dasyatnya gangguan emosi yang saya tanggung. Semakin diganggu, semakin terdera, semakin lancarlah idea yang mengalir dalam hati dan fikiran saya.

Fikiran dan perasaan itulah modal utama untuk saya menulis. Semakin diganggu, semakin terdera, semakin memikir, semakin lancarlah ayat demi ayat, cerita demi cerita yang lahir di hujung jari-jari saya.

Berbekalkan cinta yang besar kepada agama, bangsa dan negara setiap yang saya pandang, dengar dan rasa, ianya akan kembali kepada cinta itu. Misalnya ketika berada di kuliah anatomi dan fisiologi jantung, normal dan abnormalnya, pandangan mata saya akan merangsang hati untuk turut memandang. Maka, jadilah anatomi dan fisiologi jantung dalam jasad manusia akan diimbas menjadi fungsi dan anatomi jantung dalam agama, dalam negara bangsa.

Jantung agama, saya melihat dan merasakan denyutan iman, insan dan ikhsan. Dalam bangsa saya diperlihatkan peranan jati diri bangsa, perjuangan, memertabatkan bahasa, mengkaji penyakit-penyakit rohaniah yang menghancurkan bangsa dan apabila melihat negara, saya terasa betapa pentingnya jabatan perdana menteri dalam mentadbirkan negara.

Itu baru di bilik kuliah jantung. Bayangkan berapa banyak organ yang saya wajib mempelajari, menghafal dan menghadamkan dalam fikiran untuk menjawab soalan

perperiksaan, bentuk fizikalnya, antominya dan fisiologynya, dan setap organ itu hati dan fikiran saya akan automatik mengaitkan dengan agama, bangsa dan negara.

Begitu saya diperlihatkan elemen-elemen yang menyumbang kepada pembangunan ide, cerita dan perkembangannya sehingga menjadi naskah karya.

Seusai jalani hidup sebagai pelajar kejururawatan yang begitu mendera emosi dan mental, saya diberi tanggungjawab menjadi jururawat terlatih. Peranan lebih besar dan tanggungjawab lebih mencabar. Setiap hari saya dipertemukan berpuluh, malah beratus pesakit dan waris pesakit. Setiap orang antara mereka membawa persoalan hidup, konflik kehidupan dan membawa pelbagai watak dan perwatakan.

SubhanALLAH, tidak terucap saya, betapa cantiknya ALLAH susunkan dunia penulisan, pengkaryaan saya. Semua yang saya lihat, yang saya dengar, yang saya dekati menjadi bahan yang menakjubkan untuk saya menulis.

Sekitar tahun 80an, maka bersemangat luar biasalah saya menulis puisi dan cerpen. Menulis sebab suka, tidak pernah belajar apatah lagi hadiri bengkel penulisan, tidak pernah berguru dan tidak berapa tahupun nama penulis-penulis di tanah air. Saya hanya menulis kerana mahu bercerita tentang apa yang saya lihat, apa yang saya dengar, apa yang saya rasa, hidup di lantai hospital.

Sungguh mudah urusan menghantar cerpen dan puisi di akhbar Mingguan Perdana, Bacaria dan akhbar Watan terbitan Karangkraf. Arwah adik bekerja di situ, menjadi perantara menghantar cerpen-cerpen. Dia beritahu saya, bahawa ramai pembaca suka membaca cerpen saya, kerana bahasanya mudah, indah dan pendek-pendek. Editor akhbar watan, menyarankan saya sertai sayembara. Sayembara cerpen Esso GAPENA, sayembara pertama yang saya sertai. Mujahiddin, saya bawa kisah di lantai hospital di wad Obstatrik dan Gyanecoloy ke kem pelarian di Palestin. Saya rakamkan kisah pedih pelarian-pelarian Plalestin, akibat peperangan dan saya menjadi watak utama, aku yang menjadi jururawat di sana.

Saya alami kejutan budaya kerana tidak menyangka cerpen berjudul Mujahiddin itu menang. Berhari-hari saya kurungkan diri dalam bilik asrama, menangis, solat hajat, membaca quran, berdoa tidak putus, semoga ALLAH ambil perasaan yang tidak berjejak di bumi nyata apabila menghadiri sidang akbar, menerima ucapan tahniah yang bertalutalu.

Kemenangan adalah tidak tolak saya dikenali. Menjadi insan yang dikenali, adalah jalan pemudah untuk saya terus menulis. Majalah Nona menyedikan ruang saya menulis cerita bersiri tentang kehidupun jururawat dan kapsule kesihatan tentang penjagaan bayi dan kanak-kanak.

Begitulah cerpen-cerpen saya bermula mencari tempat, mendapat tempat dan melangsungkan hayat perjuangannya sehingga dari satu, berterusanlah sehingga melebehi seratus cerpen. Tiga kumpulan cerpen; Penawar, Di Ufuk Timur dan Pelamin Embun terhasil setakad ini. Cerpen Walinong Sari diterjemahkan ke bahasa Inggris dan venuzula dalam antologi bersama Cerpen Malaysia-Venuzula.

Tidak puas menulis cerpen, kerana apa yang mahu saya sampaikan rasanya masih tidak kesampaian, saya menulis novel. Dairi Seorang Jururawat novel pertama yang diterbitkan oleh Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Sungguh luar biasa keterujaannya. Menulis hanya mengangkat kehidupan di lantai hospital, diberi pengiktira fan apabila dianugerahkan Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim.

Saya mencabar diri, menguji di mana platform saya berada dalam penulisan novel, saya mantapkan mental fizikal menyertaai sayembara penulisan novel, walaupun jauh di situ hati, saya takut dan tidak berkeyakinan. Demi kelangsungan hayat penghasilan novel, saya kentalkan semangat.

Berkat tahan uji, kental semangat akhirnya tersenarailah, novel-novel saya yang berjaya meraih pengiktirafan. Novel Sejarah Johor – Tanah Penuh Embun, Hadiah Sako – Iman Markisa dan Ratap Rabitah, Sayembara Novel 50 tahun merdeka, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka – Merdekakan Cinta, Novel abad 21 Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Dominasi Tebrau. Sayembara Novel Citra Malaysia - Qayuum. Novel Remaja Kumpulan Utusan – Genatik Kamilah dan Sayembara Novel Remaja Berita Harian, New Straits Times – Rel. Hadiah Sastera Darul Takzim, Dairi seorang Jururawat, Aku Bukan Komprador, Ruyung Emas. Sayembara Novel KWBC dan PENA – Jamung Jamung. Penghargaan yang saya terima ini memberi impak besar menyumbang energi motivasi untuk terus berkarya.

Ketika mendengar drama radio rancangan Bila Kelopak Berkembang ke udara, saya rasa, saya boleh menulis skrip drama radio. Berbekalkan ilmu yang kosong, saya mencuba menulis, mencari lima watak untuk diceritakan. Lahirlah drama radio saya yang pertama pada khamis malam jumaat jam sembilan malam. Tersiarnya drama radio itu beralihlah minat menulis cerpen ke penulisan skrip drama radio. Enawati Malujang penerbit yang sangat saya sanjung, datang ke hospital berjumpa saya, membawa skrip untuk dimurnikan, katanya ceritanya bagus, hanya dialognya panjang. ALLAHUKABAR, begitu ALLAH menghantar insan-insan yang tinggi budinya untuk membantu saya agar terus berkarya.

Dari satu skrip lahirlah sehingga lebih 350 skrip drama radio saya memenuhi slot-slot, drama bersiri, Setitik Peluh Segunung Intan, saya menulisnya 3 kali seminggu selama melebehi 5 tahun. Panggung Drama, Drama Khas Hari Raya Idil Fitri, Hari Raya Idil Adha, Awal Muharam, Mulidul Rasul, Hari Warga Tua antara slot-slot saya diminta oleh penerbit untuk menyumbangkan karya. Terima kasih tidak terhingga saya kepada Datin Hajah Norlela Samad, Puan Marhama Tejo, Puan Maizatulakmam Yahaya dan Allahyarhama Puan Zuraidah Mohd Moh, yang sentiasa berikan saya ruang dan peluang untuk berkarya.

Tidak diduga antara antara skrip drama yang tersiar itu diberi pengiktirafan hadiah sastera darul takzim antaranya, Sungai, Tetamu Tetamu Allah, Merah Ramadhan Di Baitulmaqdis, Lembayung kasih Walfaizin, Bercahaya Bukan Bulan, Bukan Milik Kejora dan Perempuan Nan Menangis. Sementara Zulaika Fitri, Merah Ramadhan Di Baitulmaqdis dan Merdekakan Cinta Kita Cik Embun, skrip drama radio terbaik Hadiah Sri Angkasa

Kerana sedar diri, tidak begitu menjadi dalam penghasilan puisi, saya berkerja keras untuk menghasilkannya. Masih mengambil bekalan dari lantai hospital, percubaan genre ini, juga membuahkan hasil apabila turut tersenarai dalam penerimaan hadiah sastera. Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim 11, Sesakali Pesakitku dan Yang Bernama hati, turut memyumbang dalam buku KOMSAS, Hadiah Sastera Kumpulan Utusan, Jangan Sampai Kita Hilang Kota. Tiga kumpulan puisi; Semoga Cepat Sembuh, Berikan Aku cantiknya Hati dan Layar Badai Angin Laut.

Sayembara penulisan bagaikan pengecaj yang membekalkan kembali sumber tenaga yang hampir mencecah ke tahap bawah sifar. Tarikh tutup setiap sayembara berikan saya kuasa fikir yang padu untuk menyusun jadual menyiapkan naskah. Penyusunan jadual kerja ini berikan cinta dengan nafas baru yang kembali dan lebih bertenaga.

Menumpukan perhatian kepada penulisan skrip drama radio, penulisan cerpen, puisi dan novel saya bagai terabai. Siti Rohaya Attan, editor tersohor Utusan Melayu, hubungi saya untuk kembali menulis cerpen. Hampir setiap tiga bulan cerpen-cerpen saya tersiar di Mingguan Malaysia. Sungguh saya tidak menyangka apabila cerpen-cerpen yang tersiar itu diberi pengiktirafan, Hadiah sastera Utusan, antaranya: Gerhana Manusia, Tiang Sri Rumah Tuan, Ya ALLAH Dia Menangis, Erti Cinta Dr Mariana, Ahmad Muhamad, Sayalah Wallinogsari, Pesta Tali Tali Musim Gugur. Gerhana Manusia dan Petani Tua Dari Karbala saya menerima hadiah sastera Peradana Malaysia dan Keberangkatan Ke Bintang saya meneria hadiah Formula Malaysia. Akar Cinta, Istana Cinta Ayah dan Ventilator

Menulis multigenre bekalkan oksijan yang tidak pernah putus untuk mengembangkan paruparu penulisan saya. Setiap genre ada keunikan, keindahan dan kekuatan yang tersendiri. Setiap genre bagaikan aur dan tebing yang saling berpaut mengukuhkan tebing, untuk karya-karya hidup subur di bumi sastera.

Berkarya di lantai hospital, saya bagaikan seorang musafir di gurun Sahara. Di sini tidak ada percakapan-percakapan sastera. Sastera amat sepi di sini. Apabila saya bercakap tentangnya, saya seperti tidak siuman, kerana tidak ada siapa yang mahu mendengar dan berlawan cakap tentangnya. Namun saya nikmati indahnya menjadi musafir, mata pandang dan mata hati yang sentiasa berfungsi ke tahap paling baik. Doa yang mustajab. Perjalanan minda, emosi, akal dan rohani sentiasa berjiwa mahu tahu, mahu meneroka, mahu merasai fitrah manusia, fitrah alam dan fitrah segala makhluk ciptaan Tuhan.

Musafir membaca dengan akal, membaca dengan setiap pencaindera yang dipinjamkan

Tuhan untuk kelangsungan hidup. Membaca dengan pandangan mata setiap apa yang terlihat, dilihat. Membaca dengan telinga, setiap apa yang terdengar didengar, membaca dengan rasa, setiap apa yang tersentuh disentuh. Kesemuanya disiapkan Tuhan untuk saya memusafiri kehidupan di lantai hospital, memberi saya tanggungjawab menjadi penulis.

Pemusafiran memberikan impak yang cukup besar dalam kerja-kerja penulisan dan kepengarangan saya. Dari lantai hospital inilah, saya mulakan perjalanan di litar penulisan, terus berlari, jatuh dan berlari lagi sehingga sampai ke podium ini, menerima kalungan Sastrawan Johor ke 12 pada 21 ogos 2021 dan anugerah yang tidak pernah saya duga, Sea Write Award untuk tahun 2020. Maha Pengasihnya ALLAH kepada hamba-Nya yang dipersiapkan begitu teliti segala perancangan dan susunan seorang jururawat di Permusafiran sastera ini.

Dari atas podium ini saya melihat di layar skrin pencapaian saya dalam dunia sastera berkembang di layar. Ditunjukan semua anugerah yang saya menangi. Menghasilkan 20 novel, Tanah Penuh Embun. Dairi Seorang Jururawat. Iman Markisa..Semakin Dekat. Dominasi Tebrau. Kuusir Lara Ini. Seteguh Fikrah Saleha. Merdekah Cinta. Aku Bukan Komprador. Doa Insan Berkasih. Ratap Rabitah. Bidadari. Nyala. Qayuum. Genatik Kamilah, Rel. Ruyung Emas. Jamung Jamung dan Forensik.

Menghasilkan 150 cerpen, 3 kumpulan Cerpen Penawar. Pelamin Embun dan Di Ufuk Fajar. Ratusan Sajak. 3 kumpulan sajak, Semoga Cepet Sembuh. Berikan Aku cantiknya Hati dan Layar Badai Angin Laut. Menghasilkan 350 skrip drama radio dan 1 skrip drama TV, Kalam Cinta Rabiah.

ANUGERAH SASTERA

1 Sayembara Cerpen Esso Gapena 1988

Mujahiddin - Kedua

2 Hadiah Cerpen Perpaduan 1995 Semarak - Saguhati

3 Hadiah Sastera Utusan Publik Bank 1998

Puisi Eceran. Sesekali Pesakitku.

4 Hadiah Sastera Utusan Publik Bank 1999

Cerpen Eceran. Gerhana Manusia.

- Hadiah Utama

5 Sri Angkasa 1999 Zulaikia Fitri. Drama Radio Terbaik

6 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim ii. 1999

Puisi Eceran; Sesekali Pesakitku.

7 Hadiah sastera Darul Taazim ii 1999 Novel Dewasa; Dairi Seorang Jururawat.

8 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim ii 1999 Drama Radio; Sungai

9 Anugerah Kreatif Pusat Perubatan Universiti Malaya Hari Jururawat Sedunia 1999

10 Anugerah Formula Malaysia 2000 Cerpen ; Keberangkatan Ke Bintang. Ke 2.

11 Hadiah Sastera Kumpulan Utusan 2000

Cerpen Remaja; Tiang Sri Rumah Tuan

12 Hadiah Sastera Perdana Malaysia. 1988/1999

Cerpen; Gerhana Manusia

13 Hadiah Sastera Kumpulan Utusan 2001

Cerpen; Ya Allah Dia Menangis

14 Hadiah Sastera Kumpulan Utusan 2001

Puisi; Jangan Sampai Kita Hilang Kota.

15 Sri Angkasa 2001 Skrip Drama Radio Terbaik; Merah Ramadhan Di Baitulmagdis.

16 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim iii 2001

Puisi Eceran; Yang Bernama Hati

17 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim iii 2001

Drama Radio; Tetamu Allah

18 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim iii 2001

Cerpen Eceran; Tiang Sri Rumah Tuan

19 Hadiah Sako 2001 Novel; Iman Markisa ;Ketiga.

20 Hadiah Sastera Utusan-Exxon 2002 Cerpen Remaja; Erti Cinta Dr Mariana

21 Hadiah Sastera Utusan-Exxon 2002 Cerpen Remaja; Ahmad Muhammad

22 Hadiah Sastera Utusan-Exxon 2002 Puisi ; Kolek Bonda

23 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim iv 2002

Novel Dewasa; Iman Markisa

24 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim iv 2002

Drama Radio; Merah Ramadhan Di BaitulMagdis

25 Novel Alaf Baru 2002 Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka Dominasi Tebrau; Tempat Pertama.

26 Hadiah Sastera Perdana Malaysia 2000/2001

Cerpen; Petani Tua Dari Karbala.

27 Hadiah Sastera Berunsur Islam 2004

Cerpen; Akar Cinta

28 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim v 2005

Cerpen Eceran; Petani Tua Dari Karbala

29 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim v. 2005

Drama Radio; Lembayung Kasih Walfaizin

30 Hadiah Sastera

Novel Sejarah Dan Tradisi Johor 2005 Tanah Penuh Embun. Hadiah Penghargaan.

31 Sri Angkasa 2006 Skrip Drama Terbaik; Merdekahkan Cinta Kita Cik Embun

32 Sayembara Sempena 50 tahun merdeka

Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka. 2008

Novel; Merdekahkan Cinta. Hadiah Penghargaan.

33 Sayembara Sempena 50 tahun merdeka

Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka 2008 Cerpen; Istana Cinta Ayah. Tempat ke dua.

34 Hadiah Sastera Utusan Exxon 2009 Cerpen; Sayalah Walinong Sari.

35 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim vi 2009

Drama TV; Kalam Cinta Rabiah

36 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim vi 2009

Cerpen Eceran; Sayalah Walinong Sari.

37 Hadiah Sastra Darul Taazim vii 2011

Cerpen Eceran; Pesta Tarik Tali Musim Gugur

38 Hadiah Sastra Darul Taazim viii 2011

Novel Dewasa; Aku Bukan Komprador

39 Hadiah Sastra Darul Taazim viii

Drama Radio; Bukan Milik Kejora

40 Hadiah Sastra Utusan Exxon 2011 Cerpen; Pesta Tarik Tali Musim Gugur

41 Bintang Kurniaan

Menerima Pingat Pangkuan Negara [P.P.N] Darjah Kebesaran Yang Mulia Pangkuan Negara.

Dikurniakan oleh Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Di Pertuan Agong XIII Al-Mathiqu Billah Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin Ibni Al-Marhum Al-Muktati Billah Shah. Pada 4 Haribulan Jun 2011.

Di Istana Negara Kuala Lumpur.

42 Hadiah Novel Sako 3. 2011 Novel; Ratap Rabitah. Hadiah Penghargaan.

43 Hadiah Sayembara Novel Citra Malaysia 2012

Novel; Qayuum

44 Hadiah Sastera Darul Taazim ix 2013

Novel; Ratap Rabita

45 Hadiah Sastera Darul Tazzim ix

2013

Drama Radio; Serambi Murabbi.

- 46 Hadiah Sastera Johor 2016 Skrip Drama Radio. Bercahaya Bukan Bulan
- 47 Sayembara Cerpen Anti Rasuah 2016 Ventilator
- 48 Hadiah Kumpulan Utusan 2017 Novel Remaja; Genatik Kamilah. Hadiah Penghargaan.

- 49 Sayembara Novel Remaja dan Kanak-Kanak Berita Harian 2018 Novel Remaja; REL. Tempat Pertama.
- 50 Hadiah Sastera Johor ke 11. 2018 Skrip Drama Radio; Qayuum
- 51 Hadiah Sastera Johor ke 11. 2018 Novel Remaja; Genatik Kamilah
- 52 Hadiah Sastera Johor 2021 Novel Remaja; RUYUNG EMAS.
- 53 Hadiah Sastera Johor 2021 Kumpulan Puisi Remaja. BERIKAN

AKU CANTIKNYA HATI.

54 Hadiah sastera Johor 2021 Skrip Drama Radio. PEREMPUAN NAN MENANGIS

55 Hadiah Sastera Johor 2021 SASTRAWAN JOHOR KE 12

56 Pemenang SEA WRITE AWARD 2020.
THE S.E.A. Write Award, or Southeast Asian Writers Award

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It is not the years in your life that count, it is the life in our years.

