



SASTRAWAN INDONESIA
INDONESIAN WRITER



PENERIMA HADIAH SASTRA ASIA TENGGARA 2004

AWARDEE OF THE SEA WRITE AWARD 2004



SASTRAWAN INDONESIA
INDONESIA WRITER

Gus tf Sakai

PENERIMA HADIAH SASTRA ASIA TENGGARA 2004
Awardee of The SEA Write Award 2004

PUSAT BAHASA
DEPARTEMEN PENDIDIKAN NASIONAL
JAKARTA
2004

*THE LANGUAGE CENTER
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION*

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PUSAT BAHASA
DEPARTEMEN PENDIDIKAN NASIONAL
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DEPARTEMEN PENDIDIKAN NASIONAL
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Buku ini disusun dan disunting oleh Abdul Rozak Zaidan,
Siti Zahra Yundiafi, dan Jonner Sianipar dalam rangka
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KATA PENGANTAR KEPALA PUSAT BAHASA

Sejak tahun 1978 hadiah sastra The SEA Write Awards diberikan kepada sastrawan berprestasi di Asia Tenggara. Dalam hubungan itu, Pusat Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, melalui Proyek Pembinaan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah, Jakarta, setiap tahun membentuk Panitia Pemilihan Sastrawan Indonesia. Tugasnya memilih dan menentukan tiga orang sastrawan terbaik untuk tahun yang bersangkutan. Salah seorang dari mereka ditunjuk menjadi wakil pengarang Indonesia untuk menerima The SEA Write Awards dari pihak Kerajaan Thailand.

Tahun 2004 ini, Indonesia telah menetapkan sastrawan Gus tf Sakai untuk menerima hadiah itu. Dalam rangka penyerahan itu, Pusat Bahasa menyusun buku *Sastrawan Indonesia: Penerima Hadiah Sastra Asia Tenggara 2004* untuk keperluan Upacara Penyerahan Hadiah The SEA Write Awards di Bangkok, Thailand.

Kepada semua pihak yang telah mengupayakan penerbitan buku kecil ini, saya sampaikan penghargaan dan terima kasih yang tulus.

Jakarta, September 2004

Dr. Dendy Sugono

PREFACE
THE HEAD OF THE LANGUAGE CENTER

Since 1978 The SEA Write Awards has been given to prolific writers in the South East Asian countries. In relation to this, The Language Center, Ministry of National Education, through the Central Project for Cultivation and Development of National and Regional Languages and Literature Every year sets up a committee for selection of Indonesian literary writers. The task of the committee is to select three best literary writers for the corresponding year. One of them is pointed to represent Indonesian writers to receive the SEA Write Awards from the Kingdom of Thailand.

For the year of 2004 Indonesia has chosen Gus tf Sakai as the recipient of the award. In this connection, The Language Center has published the booklet Sastrawan Indonesia: Penerima Hadiah Sastra Asia Tenggara 2004 (Indonesian Writer: Awardee of the SEA Write Awards 2004) for the presentation of the award in Bangkok, Thailand.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to those who enabled this booklet to be published.

Jakarta, September 2004

Dr. Dendy Sugono

KATA SAMBUTAN
PENERIMAAN *SEA WRITE AWARD* 2004
Acceptance Speech SEA Write Award 2004

Paduka Yang Mulia
Putra Mahkota Kerajaan Thailand
Pangeran Maha Vajiralongkorn,

Yang terhormat para menteri,
para duta besar,
Panitia Anugerah *SEA Write Awards*,
Bapak-bapak dan Ibu-ibu sekalian,

Ketika menerima kabar bahwa saya memperoleh penghargaan *SEA Write Award*, saya tertegun, tidak percaya, bukan hanya karena kemudaan usia, melainkan juga karena sebenarnya saya tidak terlalu yakin pada pilihan tentang apa yang telah saya tulis. Pada zaman ketika segala hal datang dengan deras, jangan-jangan sebenarnya saya tidak mampu untuk memilih sehingga saya menulis sesuatu yang berkenaan dengan kehidupan saya dengan cara yang mungkin pula mentah.

Ketika tidak mampu untuk memilih dan hanya menulis sesuatu yang berkenaan dengan kehidupan sendiri, tidakkah sebenarnya si penulis telah melakukan sesuatu yang sia-sia? Dirinya mungkin memang unik, mungkin memang berbeda, tetapi keunikan dan keberbedaannya hanyalah nol, tak lebih hanya nonsen, jika ia tidak berada di tengah yang lain. Begitulah saya, seorang penulis yang berasal dari suatu negara yang masyarakatnya sangat beragam, pada zaman ketika segala hal dari segala belahan dunia (tidak lagi hanya dari masyarakat bersangkutan) datang bertubi-tubi dan deras. Walau gugup, saya berusaha mencoba dan mencoba melintasi perbedaan itu.

Arti penting sastra, saya kira, memang adalah "melintas". Ia bisa mempertemukan manusia yang berlainan suku, agama, ras, dan

sebagainya karena kemampuan sastra dalam melintas. Begitu pula ia mempertemukan beragam bidang, seperti sains, psikologi, atau filsafat karena kemampuannya dalam melintas. Hanya dengan kemampuannya melintasilah sastra mampu menciptakan sebuah dunia ketika kita, setiap kali membacanya, semakin dalam dan semakin dalam terengkuh, meragukan, lalu mempertanyakan kembali keberadaan kita-manusia.

Karena untuk arti penting sastra itulah, saya harap, kita ada di sini. Bagi saya, arti penting penghargaan ini, jelas, telah kembali mendorong keyakinan saya. Walau gugup, penghargaan ini saya terima.

Terima kasih.

Gus tf Sakai

Payakumbuh, Juni 2004

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF SEA WRITE AWARD 2004

*Your Royal Highness
Crown Prince of Thailand
Maha Vajiralongkorn,*

*Honorable Ministers,
Your Excelencies Ambassador,
The Committee of SEA Write Awards,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Having get the news that I received the SEA Write Award, I feel shy, unbelievable, not only younhood, but I'm not sure very much the choice to what I have written. In era where all come fast, perhaps I actually haven't been able to choose, except that I wrote all things which relates to my real life might be by the raw method .

Unable to choose, then write anything relates to personal everyday life, isn't really the writer doing anything meaninglessly? He may be a unique, may be different, but the unique and difference are zero, not more than nonsense, if they're not among others. That is me, a writer who comes from a country which is multi ethnics, in era where everything in all over the world (not only from the community itself) comes in crowdly and quickly, even I'm nervous, I would struggle try and try, cross the difference.

I think the important meaning of literature is "crossing". It can join the human being from different ethnics, religions, races, and other differences because of the capability of literature to cross. It can also join in harmony various sections, such as science, psychology, or philosophy because of its capability to cross. Only by the ability to cross, literature can make a world for us, every time we read it, deeper and deeper we are grasped: being confused, then question again our existense – human being.

BIOGRAFI RINGKAS

Gus tf Sakai atau Gus tf (nama aslinya Gustafrizal) lahir 13 Agustus 1965 di Payakumbuh, Sumatera Barat, dari ayah Bustamam dan ibu Ranjuna. Ia menikah tahun 1990 dengan Zurniati, lulusan Fakultas Pertanian Universitas Andalas, Padang. Dari perkawinannya, Gus tf Sakai memperoleh tiga orang anak: Abyad Barokah Bodi (lk), Khanza Jamalina Bodi (pr), dan Kuntum Faiha Bodi (pr).

Pendidikan dasar sampai menengah dia tamatkan di Payakumbuh, kemudian melanjutkan ke Fakultas Peternakan Universitas Andalas, Padang, dan lulus 1994. Proses kreatifnya berkembang sejak kanak-kanak, seiring dengan kegemaran berolahraga (di antaranya sepak bola dan bela diri), yang dimulai dari menggambar, lalu menulis puisi dan esai di buku harian. Karyanya yang pertama kali dipublikasikan adalah cerita pendek yang memenangi Hadiah I suatu sayembara ketika dia duduk di bangku kelas 6 SD tahun 1979. Sejak itu, dengan beberapa nama samaran, puisi-puisi dan cerpen-cerpennya mulai muncul di majalah *Hai* (Jakarta) dan ruang kebudayaan harian *Singgalang* (Padang). Nama Gus tf (untuk puisi) dan Gus tf Sakai (untuk prosa) digunakannya secara konsisten setelah pindah ke Padang tahun 1985, saat ia memutuskan hidup dari menulis.

Tahun 1996 dia kembali ke kampungnya, Payakumbuh. Walau menetap di kota kecil yang dikepung oleh tiga gunung, kemajuan teknologi membuatnya bisa melintas (fisik dan non fisik) ke mana-mana. Dari kampungnya itulah dia kini terus menulis puisi, cerpen, novel, dan esai yang kemudian diterbitkan oleh Balai Pustaka, Gramedia, Grasindo, dan Penerbit Buku *Kompas*, atau oleh beberapa media massa, seperti harian *Kompas*, *Koran Tempo*, *Media Indonesia*, *Republika*, *Suara Pembaruan*, serta berbagai majalah dan jurnal sastra terbitan Jakarta. Di samping itu, dia juga mencipta puisi lalu memilih-milihnya untuk dikirimkan ke *Jurnal Puisi*, sebuah jurnal triwulanan yang memuat segala hal berkaitan dengan

puisi. Dia bergabung dengan *Jurnal Puisi* sejak tahun 2002 setelah diajak oleh Sapardi Djoko Damono.

Hadiah

Buku

1. Hadiah Pertama Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Kotamadya Payakumbuh untuk cerpen "Usaha Kesehatan di Sekolahku", 1979.
2. Hadiah Kedua Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Remaja Majalah *Anita* untuk cerpen "Kisah Pinokio dan Cinderella", 1985.
3. Hadiah Pertama Sayembara Mengarang Novelet Majalah *Kartini* untuk novelet "Ngidam", 1986.
4. Hadiah Ketiga Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Majalah *Kartini* untuk cerpen "Nenek", 1986.
5. Hadiah Harapan Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Majalah *Tiara* untuk cerpen "Tiga Pucuk Surat buat Muhammad", 1987.
6. Hadiah Ketiga Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Majalah *Estafet* untuk cerpen "Gun", 1988.
7. Hadiah Kedua Sayembara Mengarang Novel Majalah *Kartini* untuk novel "Boram Berlatar Suram", 1988.
8. Hadiah Kedua Sayembara Mengarang Novelet Remaja Majalah *Anita* untuk novelet "Dutch Doll", 1989.
9. Hadiah Pertama Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Direktorat Kesenian Ditjen Kebudayaan Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia untuk puisi "Didaktisisme Catur Lima Episode", 1989.
10. Hadiah Harapan Pertama Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Direktorat Kesenian Ditjen Kebudayaan Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia untuk puisi "Menunggu", 1989.
11. Hadiah Sepuluh Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali untuk puisi "Tentang Tuan Rumah dan Tamu yang Dibunuhnya", 1990.
12. Hadiah Sepuluh Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Iqranidya Club Cilacap untuk puisi "Bola Salju", 1990.

13. Hadiah Nomine Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Harian *Suara Merdeka* untuk cerpen "Urban", 1991.
14. Hadiah Pertama Sayembara Mengarang Novelet Majalah *Gadis* untuk novelet "Ben", 1991.
15. Hadiah Harapan Pertama Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Harian *Bali Post* untuk cerpen "Sebuah Lembah Setelah Lebah Pindah", 1991.
16. Hadiah Ketiga Sayembara Mengarang Novelet Majalah *Kartini* untuk novelet "Lembah Berkabut", 1991.
17. Hadiah Sepuluh Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali untuk puisi "Aforisme Anggur", 1992.
18. Hadiah Sepuluh Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali untuk puisi "Perkawinan Mawar", 1992.
19. Hadiah Ketiga Sayembara Penulisan Esai Budaya Panitia Pekan Budaya Minangkabau untuk esai "Asketik, Holistik, Paradigma *Modernity*", 1993.
20. Hadiah Sepuluh Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali untuk puisi "Tak Pernah Kubutuh Sebuah Telepon", 1993.
21. Hadiah Sepuluh Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Buletin Sastra Budaya *Kreatif*, Batu, untuk puisi "Daun yang Baik", 1994.
22. Hadiah Sepuluh Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Yayasan Taraju Sumatera Barat untuk puisi "Seseorang dalam Lorong Bernama Zaman", 1994.
23. Hadiah Harapan Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Remaja Majalah *Matra* untuk cerpen "Tak Ada Topeng dalam Diary", 1996.
24. Hadiah Kedua Sayembara Penulisan Esai Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan dan

- Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia untuk esai “Bentuk Budaya dalam Masyarakat Multietnik”, 1996.
25. Hadiah Harapan Sayembara Mengarang Cerber Majalah *Femina* untuk novel *Jilid Laki-laki untuk Ibu*, 1998.
 26. Hadiah Nomine Cerpen Terbaik di Koran-koran Indonesia 1998 Dewan Kesenian Jakarta untuk cerpen “Lukisan Tua, Kota Lama, Lirih Tangis Setiap Senja”, 1999.
 27. Hadiah Nomine Cerpen Terbaik di Koran-koran Indonesia 1998 Dewan Kesenian Jakarta untuk cerpen “Sungguh Hidup Begitu Indah”, 1999.
 28. Hadiah Cerpen Pilihan Harian *Kompas* untuk cerpen “Ulat dalam Sepatu”, 1999.
 29. Hadiah Sembilan Terbaik Sayembara Penulisan Puisi Perdamaian Panitia Lomba Cipta Puisi Perdamaian *Art and Peace* untuk puisi “Peristiwa Menanam”, 1999.
 30. Hadiah Kedua Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Pusat Kajian Humaniora Universitas Negeri Padang dan Program Bahasa Indonesia Universitas Deakin, Melbourne, Australia untuk cerpen “Kupu-kupu”, 1999.
 31. Hadiah Cerpen Pilihan Harian *Kompas* untuk cerpen “Laba-laba”, 2000.
 32. Hadiah Sepuluh Unggulan Sayembara Mengarang Cerpen Pusat Kajian Humaniora Universitas Negeri Padang dan Program Bahasa Indonesia Universitas Deakin, Melbourne, Australia untuk cerpen “Karena Kita tak Bersuku”, 2000.
 33. Hadiah Cerpen Pilihan Harian *Kompas* untuk cerpen “Upit”, 2001.
 34. Hadiah Harapan Sayembara Mengarang Novel Remaja Penerbit Mizan untuk novel *Garis Lurus, Putus*, 2002.
 35. Hadiah Cerpen Pilihan Harian *Kompas* untuk cerpen “Gambar Bertulisan Kereta Lebaran”, 2002.

36. Hadiah Harapan Pertama Sayembara Mengarang Novel
Dewan Kesenian Jakarta untuk novel *Ular Keempat*, 2003.

Penghargaan

1. Penghargaan Sastra Lontar dari Yayasan Lontar untuk kumpulan cerpen *Kemilau Cahaya dan Perempuan Buta*, 2001.
2. Anugerah Sastra dari Fakultas Sastra Universitas Andalas, 2002.
3. Penghargaan Penulisan Karya Sastra dari Pusat Bahasa untuk kumpulan cerpen *Kemilau Cahaya dan Perempuan Buta*, 2002.
4. SIH Award dari *Jurnal Puisi* untuk puisi "Susi, 2000 M", 2002.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Gus tf Sakai or Gus tf (real name: Gustafrizal) was born on August 13th, 1965 in Payakumbuh, as son of Bustaman – Ranjuna. In 1990, he married Zurniati, who gave him three children: Abyad Barokah Bodi (son), Khanza Jamalina Bodi (daughter), and Kuntum Faiha Bodi (daughter).

He finished his elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school in Payakumbuh, then he continued to study at the Faculty of Husbandary, Andalas University, Padang, and graduated in 1994.

His creative process had begun in his early childhood. In the sixth grade of his elementary school, he won the first prize of prose writing competition. Since then he published his poetry and short stories in mass media. The name of Gus tf Sakai was used consistently after his moving to Padang in 1985 when he committed to earn his living by writing.

In 1996, he came back to his hometown, Payakumbuh, and continued writing which works were published by book publisher and mass media. Since 2002 he was invited by outstanding critic and poet Sapardi Djoko Damono to join Puisi, a three monthly journal of poetry, as an editor.

Books

A. Collected Poems

1. *Flesh Cage*, 1997
2. "*Flesh, Roots*" (in process)

B. Collected Short Stories

1. *Dripped Kingdom*, 1996
2. *The Radiance of Light and the Blind Woman*, 1999
3. *The Spider*, 2003

C. Novels

1. *Broken Side Rectangle* (teenager novel), 1990
2. *Off Leg Triangle* (teenager novel), 1991
3. *Ben* (teenager novel), 1992
4. *Tambo (An Encounter)*, 2000
5. *Three Loves, Mother*, 2002
6. "*The Fourth Snake*" (in process)

Prizes

1. *The First Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Ministry of Education and Culture of Payakumbuh Regency for short story "Health Activities in My School", 1979.*
2. *The Second Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Anita magazine for short story "Pinokio and Cinderella Story", 1985.*
3. *The First Prize of Novelet Writing Competition from Kartini magazine for novelet "Ngidam", 1986.*
4. *The Third Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Kartini magazine for short story "Grand Mother", 1986.*
5. *Expectation Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Tiara magazine for short story "Three Letters for Muhammad", 1987.*
6. *The Third Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Estafet magazine for short story "Gun", 1988.*
7. *The Second Prize of Novel Writing Competition from Kartini magazine for novel "Cleanless Backgrounded of Gloomy", 1988.*
8. *The Second Prize from Novelet Writing Competition from Anita magazine for novelet "Dutch Doll", 1989.*
9. *The First Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Indonesian Art Directorate, Ministry of Education and Culture for poem "Chess Didactisism Five Episodes", 1989.*
10. *The First Expectation Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Indonesian Art Directorate, Ministry of Education and Culture for poem "Waiting", 1989.*
11. *The Best Ten Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali (Bali's Coffee Drinking Club) for poem "About Host and Guest Who Killed", 1990.*
12. *The First Expectation Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Klub Iqranidya Cilacap (Iqranidya Club Cilacap) for poem "Snow Ball", 1990.*

13. *Nominated Competition Prize of Short Story Writing from Suara Merdeka daily for short story "Urbanisation", 1991.*
14. *The First Prize of Novelet Writing Competition from Gadis magazine for novelet "Ben", 1991.*
15. *The First Expectation Prize of Short Story Writing Competition in Bali Post daily for short story "A Valley After Bees Moving", 1991.*
16. *The Third Prize of Novelet Writing Competition from Kartini magazine for novelet "Foggy Valley", 1991.*
17. *The Best Ten Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali for poem "Champagne Aforism", 1992.*
18. *The Best Ten Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali for poem "The Marriage of The Rose", 1992.*
19. *The Third Prize of Culture Writing Competition from Minangkabau Fair Committee for essay "Ascetic, Hollistic, Paradigm Modernity", 1993.*
20. *The Best Ten Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Sanggar Minum Kopi Bali for poem "I Never Need a Telephone", 1993.*
21. *The Best Ten Prize of Poem Writing Competition from Litarary Culture Bulletin Kreatif, Batu, for poem "A Good Leaf", 1994.*
22. *The Best Ten Prize of Poem Writing Competition from West Sumatera Taraju Foundation for poem "Someone in Tunnel Whose Name is Era", 1994.*
23. *Expectation Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Matra magazine for short story "Mask Has Never Been in Diary", 1996.*
24. *The Second Prize of Essay Writing Competition from The Center of Language Cultivition and Development, Ministry of Education and Culture for essay "Culture Existence in Multiethnic Communities", 1996.*

25. *Expectatoion Prize of Serial Story Writing Competition from Femina magazine for novel "Men Binder for Mother", 1998.*
26. *Nominated Competition Prize of 1998 Indonesian Newspapers Best Short Story from Jakarta Art Council for short story "An Old Painting, The Old City, Soft Low Crying in the Twilight", 1999.*
27. *Nominated Competition Prize of 1998 Indonesian Newspapers Best Short Story from Jakarta Art Council for short story "Life is So Beautiful", 1999.*
28. *Special Short Story Prize from Kompas daily for short story "Shoes and Maggots", 1999.*
29. *The Best Nine Prize of Peace Poem Writing Competition from Peace Poetry Creativity Competition Art and Peace for poem "Planting Moment", 1999.*
30. *The Second Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Humaniora Research Centre Padang State University and Deakin University Indonesian Programme, Melbourne, Australia, for short story "Butterfly", 1999.*
31. *Special Short Story Prize from Kompas daily for short story "The Spider", 2000.*
32. *The Second Prize of Short Story Writing Competition from Humaniora Research Centre Padang State University and Deakin University Indonesian Programme, Melbourne, Australia, for short story "We are Not in Tribe", 2000.*
33. *Special Short Story Prize from Kompas daily for short story "Upit", 2001.*
34. *Expectation Prize of Novel Writing Competition from Mizan Publisher for novel "Straight Line, Chopped Off", 2002.*
35. *Special Short Story Prize from Kompas daily for short story "Painting which has Letter 'Feast day Train'", 2002.*

36. *The First Expectation Prize of Novel Writing Competition from Jakarta Art Council for novel "The Fourth Snake", 2003.*

Awards

1. *Lontar Literary Award from Lontar Foundation for collected short stories "The Radiance of Light and The Blind Woman", 2001.*
2. *Literary Gracity from Letter Faculty of Andalas University, 2002.*
3. *Literature Writing Award from The Language Center, Ministry of National Education for collected short story "The Radiance of Light and The Blind Woman", 2002.*
4. *SIH Award from Jurnal Puisi for poem "Susi, 2000 M", 2002.*

CERITA PENDEK
SHORT STORIES

Sumber

References

Gus tf Sakai. *Kemilau Cahaya dan Perempuan Buta*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1999:

1. "Boneka", 65--70.
2. "Ulat dalam Sepatu", 98--106.

Gus tf Sakai. *The Radiance of Light and The Blind Women*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1999.

1. *The Doll*, 65--70.
2. *Shoes and Maggots*, 98--106.

Boneka

Sembilan belas tahun lalu, seorang gadis lahir dari perut boneka. Merah, montok, dan meluncur ke luar tanpa *oaa*. Dari bibirnya yang mungil, konon, kata beberapa suster, hanya terloncat *eee* pendek tanpa getar apa-apa. Suara itu, konon pula, terdengar bagai berasal dari roh lain yang bukan dirinya.

Ia pun tumbuh, dan besar, semata hanya bersama ibunya. Mereka saling berhubungan, berkomunikasi, seperti halnya juga dua boneka. Sehari-hari, bahasa mereka hanya gerakan tubuh atau air muka. Dan kalaupun ada yang bicara, itu tak lebih dari sekadar gumaman untuk diri sendiri semacam "Hmm," "Ah," "Eh," atau decapan lain yang maksudnya tak begitu beda.

Minggu, bulan, tahun, berlalu dalam beku. Pada hari-hari tertentu, sekali atau dua kali dalam sebulan, ayahnya muncul; dengan keakraban yang asing. Maka hari-hari itu akan menjelma jadi hari yang bising. Jadwal-jadwal, privat-privat, semua dicek oleh ayahnya tak ubahnya seperti seorang akuntan. Terakhir sekali, sebelum kembali pergi, si ayah akan menyodorkan kotak atau bungkusan. Isinya, seperti yang ia duga: selalu boneka. Dan seperti biasa, ayahnya akan bercerita sesuai dengan boneka yang saat itu ia terima.

"Ini boneka *katchina*. Terbuat dari akar kayu. Boneka ini telah berumur ratusan tahun, peninggalan Indian Hopi. Ada *katchina* yang menggambarkan Dewa Matahari, ada pula yang menggambarkan Dewa Gerimis. *Katchina* yang ini, menggambarkan Dewa Angin Hangat."

"Ini boneka *Grande* dan *Petite Pandore*. Boneka ini, konon, adalah boneka pandora paling kuno dan tidak berasal dari Perancis. Sebelum datang ke Paris pada awal abad 17, ia pernah dimiliki oleh"

Si gadis tenggelam dalam boneka. Minggu, bulan, tahun, waktunya tak disentuh oleh yang lain kecuali boneka. Mulanya ia sangat muak, sangat benci. Tapi pada suatu malam entah kapan, sebuah boneka bergerak, keluar dari almari dan melangkah ke arahnya yang tengah berbaring, telungkup-telentang telentang-telungkup sangat susah memicingkan mata. Boneka itu, *Black Mammy*.

Black Mammy menyentuh pipinya, mengelusnya, jemari mungil itu merambat naik mengusap rambutnya. Ia tertegun. Terpesona. Begitu sejuk. Begitu lena.

Ia raih tubuh kecil *Black Mammy* dan menaikkan boneka itu ke perutnya. Mereka saling elus, saling usap, dan entah bagaimana awalnya begitu saja si gadis telah berada di dunia lain yang sangat beda. Begitu indah. Begitu ... lengah.

Tempat itu seperti taman, dan mereka dikelilingi oleh bunga. Taman itu sangat luas, dan bagai terapung di angkasa. Awan-gemawan, bunga aneka warna, sembul-menyembul sulam-menyulam di depan mata. Takjub, si gadis mengembangkan tangan, menggapai-raup udara wangi. Di sebelahnya, *Black Mammy* tersenyum, menatap dengan mata belingnya yang gemerlap bagai mutiara.

"Apakah ini nyata?"

"Sangat nyata. Sentuhlah, dan rasakan segarnya." *Black Mammy* memetik setangkai bunga dan menjulurkan kepadanya.

"Aneh. Indah. Apakah ... ini masih bagian dari dunia?"

"Tentu saja bagian dari dunia. Seperti aku. Seperti engkau juga bagian dari dunia."

"Indah. Sangat indah." Tak bosan ia mengulang. Diraihnya *Black Mammy* dan dinaikkannya ke gendongan. Ditatapnya si boneka dengan sorot riang yang haru. Sorot mata lain pertama dalam hidupnya. Dan itu pulalah pengalaman pertama. Pengalaman yang pada hari-hari berikutnya tak hanya ia alami dengan *Black Mammy*. Tapi juga dengan *Ushabti*, *Charlotte*, *Kewpie*, *Pennywood*, *Teddy*, *Mickey* dan lain-lain termasuk boneka yang kehadirannya paling

kemudian seperti *Tweety* dan *Winnie*. Ia dibawa ke pantai, sungai-sungai, tasik aneka warna seperti pelangi atau entah apa, yang cahayanya bergemilang lembut, halus (ataukah sayup?), yang tak terceritakan bagaimana indahnya.

Barulah si gadis tahu bahwa kehidupan bukan, dan tidak hanya seluas yang terbentang, antara ia dan ibunya. Dunia ini sangat luas, sangat indah dan beragam, seperti yang diperlihatkan oleh para boneka. Dan tiba-tiba, tiba-tiba saja, ia merasa benci kepada ibunya.

Tak jarang, dengan diam-diam, ia perhatikan si ibu. Saat membakar roti, saat mengupas apel. Raut yang kaku. Mimik yang kosong. Bibir ... hidung ... mata. Ibunya memang boneka tapi kenapa tidak benar-benar boneka? Kalau saja ibunya seperti salah satu bonekanya. Kalau saja. Tapi, konon, bukankah si ayah yang membuat ibunya seperti ini?

Tiba-tiba ia juga merasa benci kepada ayahnya. Sangat benci.

Minggu, bulan, tahun, si gadis hidup dalam rasa indah akan tetapi benci. Namun rupanya kehidupan seperti itu tak lama. Suatu hari, ayah-ibunya lenyap. Mobil mereka diseruduk oleh truk di jalan layang, dan melayang ke jalan layang lain 60 meter di bawahnya. *Broaarr!* Itulah ... kali pertama ia melihat ayah dan ibunya pergi berdua. Sekaligus kali terakhir.

Ia tak begitu tahu, dan sebenarnya memang tak pernah peduli, kenapa ayah dan ibunya bisa pergi bersama. Entah akan ke mana, dan entah dengan tujuan apa. Yang membuat si gadis segera terkejut, adalah kenyataan bahwa ia mewarisi tiga perusahaan besar aksesori dan sandang.

Akan tetapi, sejak bayi, ia memang tak pernah terkejut lama. Bagai ada sosok lain dalam dirinya, tak cukup setahun ia telah menjelma jadi seorang wanita yang dari mejanya (pada salah satu ruangan di kantor sendiri berlantai sembilan) tak putus mengalir ide cemerlang tentang kinerja dan pengembangan. Kata orang, konon,

sangat menakjubkan. Tapi, yang lebih menakjubkan adalah kenyataan akan suasana kantor yang segera berubah.

Mulanya, perubahan itu, hanya terjadi dalam ruangan si gadis dan diketahui hanya oleh para direksi dan beberapa manajer. Awalnya pun para direksi dan manajer tidak merasa heran karena wajar seorang gadis sangat senang pada boneka. Tapi, ketika si gadis mulai menyuruh untuk juga memajang bonekanya hampir di seluruh ruangan dan sudut kantor, keheranan itu serta-merta segera menerpa karyawan. Ada apa? Kenapa kantor mereka jadi dipenuhi oleh boneka?

Begitulah berbagai pertanyaan, kemudian, jadi bagian keseharian para karyawan. Dan setiap hari pula para karyawan melihat pemimpin mereka, seorang wanita, seorang gadis yang masih begitu muda, turun dari mobil naik ke tangga masuk ke kantor selalu berhenti di setiap boneka dan kelihatan seperti menyapa. Bayangkan. Sejak dari lobi sampai ke ruangnya sendiri di lantai delapan.

Semakin hari, perasaan heran semakin mengepung suasana dan udara kantor. Tak ada yang berani untuk coba bertanya kepada si gadis, juga tak berani mempercakapkan. Bahkan juga tidak walau dengan diam-diam.

Berminggu-minggu, berbulan-bulan, kantor itu terus dipenuhi boneka. Setiap hari, ada saja. Kalau tak langsung dibawa oleh si gadis, tentu akan muncul dalam bentuk paket pos, dipesan, lalu dikirim ke kantor itu dari suatu tempat entah di mana. Berbulan-bulan, bertahun-tahun, akhirnya hal itu menjadi peristiwa atau pemandangan biasa.

Begitulah kantor itu jadi berubah. Dan kini, bila ada seseorang datang dan kemudian masuk ke kantor itu (biasanya relasi baru), ia akan terkejut melihat pemandangan di dalam. Para karyawan, walau mengenakan seragam, sangat sulit dibedakan dari boneka. Bukan hanya karena boneka sangat banyak, tapi juga karena ada di

antara boneka yang dapat bergerak dan mereka berjalan kian kemari seperti tengah bekerja atau malah ada pula yang tampak bagai ingin melayani.

Begitulah relasi baru itu kemudian akan bertemu dengan pimpinan perusahaan. Ia segera pula bakal terkejut – bahkan akan sangat terkejut. Memang ia berhadapan dengan seorang wanita seperti yang selama ini ia dengar. Tapi yang sangat tak ia sangka adalah bahwa si wanita, di tengah asyik dan enaknyanya bicara, tiba-tiba bisa berubah jadi boneka. Boneka beruang. Ada yang mengatakan boneka itu tampak seperti *Teddy*. Akan tetapi konon, berpuluh-puluh tahun kemudian, orang lebih banyak menyebut boneka itu tampak seperti *Winnie*.

Bagi Anda, *Teddy* atau *Winnie* tentu tak penting. Namun, kalau Anda sempat menginap di hotel berbintang tempat di mana dulu berdiri kantor itu, tengah malam, saya yakin Anda bakal mendengar erang beruang. Seperti tertindih. Seperti terjepit

Payakumbuh, 18 Mei 1999

The Doll

Nineteen years ago, a girl was born from the belly of a doll. Red and plump, she slid out without so much as a "Waah." Only a short, nearly inaudible "eee" escaped from her sweet, tiny lips, according to some of the nurses. The voice, they said, sounded like it came from a spirit not her own.

She grew and matured, with only her mother as friend. They related to one another and communicated just as two dolls would. Their every day language consisted of simple body movements and facial expressions. And even if one of them did speak, it was no more than a murmur – "hmm, ah, eh," or some other sound whose meaning wasn't much different.

Weeks, months, years, passed unchanging. On certain days, once or twice a month, her father would appear, with his unfamiliar intimacy. Then the day would become pandemonium. Schedules, lessons, – all would be checked by her father, no different than if he were an accountant. At the very last, before he left, he would present her with a box or package. Its contents, as she expected, was always a doll. And as usual, her father would tell a story about the doll she had just received.

"This is a kachina doll made from the root of a tree. It's hundreds of years old, an artifact left behind by the Hopi Indians. There's a kachina that symbolizes the Sun God, and one that represents the Rain God. This kachina symbolizes the God of the Warm Wind."

"These are Grande and Petite Pandora dolls. These dolls, they say, are the very oldest Pandora dolls but they don't come from France. Before they were taken to Paris at the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were owned by"

The girl was immersed in dolls. For weeks, months and years, her time was untouched by anything, except dolls. In the beginning, she disliked them, loathed them in fact. But one night, no one knew exactly when, one of the dolls emerged from the cupboard and walked toward where she was lying, tossing and turning and having a very hard time closing her eyes. The doll was Black Mammy.

Black Mammy touched her cheek, caressed it slowly, her tiny fingers gradually moved upwards and stroked her hair. The girl was astonished. Enchanted. The sensation was so comforting, so relaxing.

She picked up the tiny figure of Black Mammy and set it on her stomach. They hugged and caressed each other and, who knows how it happened, suddenly the girl found herself in another, very different world. So beautiful. So carefree.

The place was like a garden, and they were surrounded by flowers. The garden was vast and seemed to somehow be floating in space. Fluffy, white clouds, flowers of all colors billowed and blossomed, layer upon layer, before her eyes.

Astonished, the girl opened her arms and reached out to scoop up the fragrant air. Beside her, Black Mammy smiled, watching her with porcelain eyes that gleamed like pearls.

"Is this real?"

"It's very real. Touch it, feel how fresh it is." Black Mammy picked a flower and held it out to her.

"It's strange, but so beautiful. Is this part of the earth?"

"Of course it's part of the earth. Just as I am. Just as you are also part of the earth."

"It's beautiful, so beautiful," she said over and over again. She took hold of Black Mammy and, cradling her in her arms, she gazed at the doll with an expression – for the first time in her life – of tender joy. This experience was new for her, one that in the following days she would have not only with Black Mammy but also with Ushabti, Charlotte, Kewpie, Pennywood, Teddy, Mickey and the other dolls, including the most recent to come along, like Tweety and Winnie. She was carried to the ocean's shore, to rivers, and lakes of many colors,

resembling rainbows and shimmering with a delicate light, of indescribable beauty.

Now the girl understood that life was not just that which extended between her and her mother. The world was vast, precious, and various, as the dolls had shown her. And suddenly, quite suddenly, she hated her mother.

Once in a while, she secretly watched her mother – while she was making toast or peeling an apple, for example – and noticed her stiffened figure and blank expression of her lips, her nose, and her eyes. Her own mother was a doll, but why wasn't she a real doll? If only her mother could be like one of her dolls, she thought. Oh, if only. But wasn't it her father who had made her mother like this? At least that's what she heard. And suddenly, she hated her father either, hated him very much.

Weeks, months, and years passed and the girl lived with feelings both of beauty and hatred. That didn't last long, as it turned out. One day, her mother and father vanished. Their car was hit by a truck on a highway overpass, became airborne and soared down to another overpass sixty meters below. That was the first and the last time she had seen her father and mother went out together.

She didn't really know, nor did she ever care actually, why her father and mother left together. No one knew where they were going, or why. The girl was immediately shocked, though, by the fact that she had inherited three large clothing and accessories company.

Ever since she had been a baby, she had never stayed shocked for too long. As if there were another person inside her, in less than a year she had turned herself into a woman from whose desk (in an office of her own nine-story building) continuously streamed brilliant ideas about business synergy and development. Everyone remarked on the astounding transformation. However, the more astounding was the change that soon took place in the office atmosphere.

In the beginning, the change was evident only in the girl's office, and it was only the company's directors and a number of company managers who knew about it. At first they weren't surprised, after all it was normal for girls to be fond of dolls, but when their boss began instructing them to display her dolls in nearly every room and corner of the office, the other workers were struck with amazement. What was happening? Why was their office filled with dolls?

Such questions eventually became a normal part of the workers' days. Every day they saw their boss – a woman (a girl), who was still so young – exited her car, climbed the stairs to the office, and stopped along the way to greet each doll she passed. Just imagine: all the way from the lobby to her office on the eight floor.

As the days passed, the sense of amazement enshrouded the office. No one dared try and ask the girl, nor was anyone brave enough to talk about it. Not even in secret.

Weeks, months later the office was still filled with dolls. Every day, there they were. If they weren't brought in directly by the girl, they arrived in packages by post, ordered and sent from somewhere. Months, years passed and eventually this became an every day occurrence.

That is how the office came to change. Now, when people come to the office – new customers, generally – they are almost always shocked by the sight: the office workers, even though they wear uniforms, are difficult to distinguish from the dolls. Not just because there are so many dolls, but because some of the dolls can move and walk back and forth, like they're working. Some even look like they are waiting to help customers.

When a new customer meets with the head of the company, he's sure to be startled, possible even frightened. Being face-to-face with this woman he has heard so much about is one thing, but entirely unexpected is when, in the middle of a pleasant conversation, the woman suddenly changes into a doll, a bear doll. Some say the doll

resembled a Teddy Bear but decades later, people now say that it looks more like Winnie the Pooh.

For you, of course, whether the doll is Teddy or Winnie isn't important but if you chance to stay in the nice hotel where that office used to stand, in the middle of the night I am quite sure you will hear the sound of a bear, moaning, like it's pinned under something. Trapped

Translated by Linda Owens

Ulat dalam Sepatu

Pertama melihatnya, saya merasa heran. Sepasang sepatu, butut, tergeletak di suatu sudut, di sebuah ruangan, di Kantor Gubernur. Otak saya segera bertanya-tanya, sepatu siapakah? Saya akan melangkah mendekati sepatu itu ingin lebih tahu, tapi urung. Orang-orang tampak tidak peduli dan saya takut kalau tindakan saya dipandang aneh, saya pun kembali berdiri seperti tadi.

Saya rapikan baju dan mengalihkan pandang. Dua pintu dari lorong ini, seorang perempuan tampak sangat sibuk. Tak henti-henti membalik map atau entah buku lebar apa. Tak henti-henti menulis atau mengangkat telepon dari mejanya. Adakah telepon yang masuk, dan harus diangkat, tanpa berdering? Perempuan itulah sebetulnya pusat perhatian saya. Menunggu isyarat tangan atau semacam panggilan: Tanda saya telah dibolehkan untuk menghadap.

Saya buka kacamata, mengucek kelopak mata yang terasa capek. Adakah perempuan itu benar-benar telah menyampaikan surat saya kepada atasannya? Tidakkah ia hanya pura-pura saja, kemudian membiarkan saya menunggu, agar ia merasa penting? Atau, surat itu mungkin telah diserahkannya. Atasannyalah yang belum ada waktu. Demikian sibukkah pejabat yang harus saya temui? Begitu banyakkah pekerjaannya sehingga masih harus menunggu? Sudah lima hari. Kalau benar pejabat itu begitu sibuknya, sungguh kasihan.

Seraya berdesah, saya keluarkan lap tangan dari saku celana. Saya bersihkan kacamata dengan rasa bersalah. Belakangan, entah kenapa, saya sering curiga. Berburuk sangka terhadap banyak kondisi yang tak sesuai dengan keinginan saya. Saya kenakan kembali kacamata. Saya simpan lap tangan di saku, dan tatapan saya kembali tertuju ke sana. Ke sepatu itu.

Dari sini, dari lorong atau koridor tempat saya berdiri, sepatu itu tampak jelas sekali. Ia berada di sebuah sudut, tak jauh dari kaki lemari pada ruangan berikutnya di sebelah kiri. Saya tak bisa

menduga ruangan itu ruangan apa, karena yang tertangkap oleh mata saya hanya sudut-sudut meja dan lemari itu tadi.

Keinginan untuk melihatnya lebih dekat kembali muncul. Namun setelah saya pikirkan lagi, selain takut akan dipandang aneh, tindakan itu juga tak ada gunanya. Untuk apa? Dan lagi, bisa saja sepatu itu milik pembersih atau perawat ruangan yang kini sedang membersihkan lantai entah di ruang mana, dan nanti tentu akan diambilnya kembali. Tapi itulah, ternyata tidak. Besoknya sepatu itu tetap ada. Begitu pula besoknya. Dan besoknya juga.

Sebetulnya saya tak yakin apakah saya memang perlu melakukan ini: datang ke Kantor Gubernur. Semuanya bukan keinginan saya dan saya juga ragu apakah pameran itu ada gunanya. Tapi dasar nasib, Pak Pos muncul tepat saat beberapa orang tengah berada di kedai saya. Karena tak biasa menerima surat, saya terbungong-bungong. Dik Syafrul yang kemudian membuka surat itu lalu membacanya.

"Ini surat undangan!" Syafrul berkata kaget dan menatap ke saya. "Abang diundang ke Jakarta! Memamerkan ukiran Abang!"

Saya tercengang. "Saya?"

"Ya, Abang!" Syafrul membalikkan tubuh dan katanya kepada orang-orang, "Bang Khairul diundang ke Jakarta! Bang Khairul diundang ke Jakarta!"

Orang-orang pun berkerumun. Surat itu lantas jadi rebutan sementara saya masih terpana. Diundang ke Jakarta? Memamerkan ukiran saya? Tanpa sadar saya memutar leher dan mengedarkan pandang ke dalam kedai. Akar-akar kayu ini ... mustahil. Akar-akar kayu ini ... mereka sebut sebagai ukiran?

"Hebat kau, Rul!" kata Pak Makmun. "Orang Jakarta ternyata kenal sama kau!"

Bang Kadir menepuk-nepuk pundak saya. "Kau bakal kaya! Siapa sangka."

"Tak mungkin ...," saya bergumam, "surat itu pasti salah alamat."

"Salah alamat kata kau? Nih, lihat!" Pak Makmun menyambar surat itu dari tangan lain dan menyodorkannya ke muka saya. "Kaubaca. *Kepada Yth Sdr Khairul Safar, seniman ukir.*"

Memang tak salah alamat. Tapi ... dari mana mereka tahu alamat saya? Nama saya? Ke Jakarta. Aduh, berapakah ongkosnya? Sungguh mustahil. Dan lagi, seperti yang saya katakan, saya tak begitu yakin pameran itu ada gunanya. Bakal membuat saya kaya seperti kata Bang Kadir? Kaya. Apalah artinya kaya bagi orang yang tak memiliki siapa-siapa seperti saya.

Tapi itulah, tindakan saya mendingankan undangan itu justru membuat orang-orang, para tetangga saya, menjadi tak tenang. Mereka ribut mempercakapkan ketololan saya sampai-sampai Pak Hasril - wartawan koran terbitan lokal tetangga kami juga - menyempatkan diri datang ke kedai saya. Barulah saya ingat kalau Pak Hasril pernah menulis tentang kedai ukir saya (*kedai ukir!* saya merasa malu) di korannya. Dari tulisan itulah panitia pameran di Jakarta itu tahu tentang saya?

"Dik Khairul, yayasan seni yang mengundang Adik ini yayasan terkenal. Sebaiknya Adik datang," kata Pak Hasril ketika surat itu saya perlihatkan.

"Dengan apa saya berangkat? Saya tak punya uang."

"Surat ini ditembuskan ke Gubernur. Itu artinya orang di Jakarta mengharapkan Adik berangkat sepengetahuan Pemda. Kalau pihak Pemda atau Gubernur merestui, tentu pembiayaan keberangkatan akan mereka bantu."

"Jadi?"

"Adik harus ke sana. Ke Kantor Gubernur."

Saya ... ke Kantor Gubernur? Aduh, tak terbayangkan. Tapi *toh*, akhirnya, hal itu saya lakukan. Terutama setelah saya tak tahan didesak terus oleh tetangga, orang-orang yang sering dan senang duduk-duduk di kedai saya.

Di kantor gubernur, setelah ditanya ini-itu, setelah disuruh ke orang ini atau orang itu, akhirnya saya sampai ke meja ini: ke perempuan ini. Dan begitulah akhirnya saya menunggu. Untuk

mengusir jenuh, saya layangkan pandang ke mana-mana. Sampai kemudian sepatu itu tertangkap oleh mata saya.

Hari itu hari Senin. Saya kembali datang ke Kantor Gubernur, entah kali yang keberapa. Ada sedikit ketenangan, dan juga harapan, karena perempuan itu Sabtu kemarin menjanjikan bahwa hari ini kemungkinan besar saya akan bisa bertemu dengan atasannya.

Masih amat pagi, tapi perempuan itu telah berada di mejanya. Sungguh rajin, pikir saya. Bahkan sepagi ini tampak sangat sibuk. Akan saya ketuk pintu agar ia tahu. Tapi belum sempat hal itu saya lakukan, ia telah mengangkat wajah dan segera melihat saya. Saya tersenyum, mengangguk, mengucapkan selamat pagi tapi rupanya ia terburu-buru. Seraya melangkah ke ruangan atasannya, ia berkata, "Senin depan saja Bapak kemari. Pak Sek hari ini harus ke Jakarta dan seminggu lagi baru kembali."

Saya terpaku, beberapa saat. Ada rasa kecewa tapi segera merasa kasihan begitu sadar betapa sangat letihnya ia, sepagi ini, harus tergopoh-gopoh menyiapkan ini-itu untuk atasannya. Saya balikkan tubuh, melangkah, tapi tiba-tiba ingatan saya berkelebat ke sepatu itu. Saya palingkan wajah dan sepatu itu segera menyergap mata. Masih di sana ia. Tergeletak seperti kemarin-kemarin dan tak sedikit pun berubah.

Keinginan untuk lebih tahu akan sepatu itu, tiba-tiba saja, kembali melejit tak tertahan. Tak satu pun orang (o ya, bukankah setiap Senin pagi ada upacara?) dan kelengangan ini membuat saya mendadak jadi berani melangkahhkan kaki ke ruangan itu.

Selangkah dari kaki lemari saya berhenti. Saya bungkukkan tubuh menyentuh sepatu itu, dan terkejut. Betapa tidak? Sepatu itu tak bergerak saat saya angkat, seolah bagai tertanam ke karpet. Telah berapa lamakah sepatu ini tergeletak di sini? Sampai lengket! Dan ketika saya berhasil mengangkatnya, saya lebih terkejut lagi. Ada ... ada ulat di dalamnya, begitu banyak.

Serta-merta, karena perasaan jijik, sepatu itu terlepas dari tangan saya. Beberapa ekor ulat tercampak ke karpet, menggeliat lalu melata meninggalkan bekas lendir yang basah terjela-jela. Ulat apakah ini? Kelabu pendek bagai toge busuk yang bengkak. Hanya ulat dari daerah berair dan lembab yang tampak seperti ini.

Lama saya tertegun. Saat derap sepatu terdengar memenuhi lorong (upacara rupanya telah selesai), saya buru-buru berdiri. Saya menyisi ke dinding, memberi tempat bagi pegawai yang masuk. Saya tunggu kalau-kalau ada di antara mereka yang memperhatikannya. Tapi ternyata tak ada. Padahal sepatu itu kini tergeletak agak ke tengah dan ulat-ulatnya bahkan melata ke banyak arah.

Saya melangkah ke lorong dengan perasaan tak tentu. Sebelum berbelok turun ke lantai satu, walau ruangan itu tak lagi tampak, masih saya toleh-tolehkan kepala. Di dasar tangga, saya buka kacamata. Minus mata saya mungkin telah bertambah, dan saya mengucek-uceknya sebelum memastikan diri meninggalkan gedung.

Saya telah melupakan ulat-ulat itu ketika Senin besoknya kembali datang ke Kantor Gubernur. Ada rasa enggan dalam diri saya, entah kenapa, tapi *toh* saya harus menepati janji.

Saya telah berada di puncak tangga, di lantai dua itu, ketika merasakan sesuatu yang lain. Saya berhenti sejenak, mengamati sekitar dan menyadari perubahan. Dinding lorong rupanya telah berganti warna, dari putih menjadi kelabu. Mereka telah memperbaharui dan menukar catnya selama saya tak kemari?

Iseng, tanpa melihat, saya sentuh dinding terdekat. Tapi alangkah terkejutnya saya ketika yang teraba adalah sesuatu yang lembek dan basah. Refleks saya menarik tangan, menolehkan kepala dan ... astaga! Saya nyaris jatuh terguling ke bawah tangga *saking* kagetnya.

Dinding itu, warna kelabu itu, ternyata bukanlah cat. Tetapi ulat. Ulat-ulat itu, ulat dalam sepatu kemarin, merayap dan mendekam

memenuhi dinding. Benarkah ulat-ulat ini ulat kemarin? Kenapa jadi begitu banyak? Ribuan. Atau mungkin berjuta-juta.

“Ada apa, Pak?” Seorang pegawai yang kebetulan lewat tiba-tiba bertanya.

“Dinding ... ulat-ulat ... ulat di dinding,” saya berkata gugup sambil menunjuk-nunjuk. Pegawai itu, perempuan juga, menoleh ke dinding tapi kemudian menatap saya dengan sinis dan berlalu.

Kenapa? Apakah pegawai itu tak melihatnya? Saya semakin heran. Terbengong-bengong. Saya buka kacamata. Mengucek mata. Saya kembalikan kacamata ke tempatnya tapi ulat-ulat itu tetap jelas dan nyata. Mustahil. Mustahil kalau pegawai itu tak melihatnya.

Dengan tetap terbengong-bengong, saya sampai ke meja perempuan staf pejabat itu. Mungkin tak sepenuhnya saya mendengar ketika ia berkata, “Maaf Pak, Pak Sek sebentar lagi harus ke Denpasar dan kembali ke Jakarta. Kira-kira dua minggu atau sepuluh hari lagilah Bapak kemari.”

Seperti tak berkepentingan dengan jawaban itu, saya membalikkan tubuh. Sesampai di luar barulah saya ingat sesuatu dan buru-buru kembali. “Tapi Bu,” kata saya, “pameran itu dibuka sembilan hari lagi. Bila Bapak baru kembali dua minggu atau sepuluh hari lagi, maka”

“Bapak ini bagaimana?! Sudah saya katakan Pak Sek harus berangkat. Urusan penting!”

“Ya, ya” Saya tergegas dan merasa malu ketika menyadari bahwa urusan pejabat itu tentu memang lebih penting dari sekadar undangan pameran saya. Seperti tadi, saya balikkan tubuh. Di lorong, hamparan kelabu itu semakin menyebar, menjalar ke lantai satu. Sekejap saya layangkan pandang ke ruangan itu, ke sepatu itu, dan saya merasa mual-juga pusing-saat menyaksikan ratusan ulat menyembul-nyembul, berebutan keluar dari sepatu.

Bulan demi bulan lewat dan tahun berlalu. Saya senang batal ke pameran itu tapi para tetangga sering menggunjingkan saya. Banyak yang mengatakan saya bodoh, tapi tak sedikit pula yang mengatakan bahwa saya seorang yang tak mensyukuri nikmat.

Tak pernah lagi saya ke sana, ke Kantor Gubernur. Tapi bila kebetulan saya naik bus ke pusat kota membeli cat kayu atau kebutuhan lain semacamnya, saya tak bisa menahan diri untuk tidak melayangkan pandang ke gedung itu. Melalui jendela bus kota yang buram kacanya, kantor itu, hari demi hari, tampak semakin kelabu. Begitu kelabunya, sampai saya kadang tak bisa membedakan mana yang atap, mana yang dinding, mana jendela.

Kadang saya juga merasakan kalau orang-orang di bus juga memandang aneh ke gedung itu. Bila telah begitu, tanpa sadar, gumam saya terlompat, "Ulatnya. Ulatnya semakin banyak."

Mereka yang mendengar omongan saya segera memalingkan muka, menatap tajam ke saya. Gugup, saya buka kacamata. "Maaf, maaf," kata saya. Semakin hari, minus saya semakin bertambah. Mungkin saya harus segera menukar lensa. Tapi itulah, sampai kini biayanya selalu belum ada.

Payakumbuh, 11 Oktober 1997

Shoes and Maggots

The first time I saw them I was surprised: a pair of worn-out shoes, lying in the corner of a room in the Governor's Office. The question that immediately came to mind was whose shoes were they? Curious, I was going to take a closer look, but I changed my mind. People seemed to take no notice of them and I was afraid that it would look strange, so I just went back to standing where I had been before.

I straightened my shirt and looked away. Two doors down the corridor, there was a woman looking very busy – constantly opening some folder or book or other, writing something, or talking on the telephone. Could calls come in without the phone ringing? My attention was focused on her, waiting for some hand signal or some kind of summons, a sign that I was permitted to present myself before her.

I took off my glasses and rubbed my eyelids. They felt sore. Had she really given my letter to her boss? Maybe she had just pretended and was now making me wait in order to feel important. Or maybe her boss had received the letter, but hadn't had time to look at it yet. Was the official that I had to see really so busy? Did he have so much work to do that I still had to wait? It had already been five days. If he was truly that busy, then I felt sorry for him.

Sighing, I took a handkerchief out of my trouser pocket and began to clean my glasses. I felt guilty. I didn't know why, but lately I had been feeling suspicious, always thinking the worst of things, especially when they conflicted with what I wanted. I put my glasses back on, put my handkerchief back in my pocket, and looked over again at the shoes.

From the hall or corridor where I stood, the shoes were clearly visible. They were in a corner, not far from the base of a cupboard in the next room on the right. I couldn't guess what the room was,

because all I could see in it were the corners of a desk and that cupboard.

My desire for a closer look returned, but, after thinking about it again, I concluded that, apart from my fear of being thought strange, what was the point in doing it? The shoes probably belonged to a maintenance man who was cleaning floors in another room; surely he would come back to reclaim them.

As it turned out, this was not the case; the next day the shoes were still there. And it was the same the day after, and the day after that.

Actually I wasn't sure that I even needed to be there, in the Governor's Office. It hadn't been my idea to seek financial assistance from the Governor; in fact, I doubted whether the upcoming exhibition in Jakarta was even worth attending. But as fate would have it, a letter turned up right at the moment when a number of people were in my workshop. Because I rarely got any letters, I was somewhat surprised. My friend, Syafrul, opened the letter and read it.

"It's an invitation!" Syafrul announced. "You've been invited to Jakarta! To exhibit your woodcarvings!"

Now I was even more surprised. "What, me?" I asked.

"Yes, you!" Syaiful screamed while turning back to the other people in the shop. "Khairul has been invited to Jakarta!"

Everyone crowded around Syafrul trying to see the letter, while I sat motionless, as if stunned. Invited to Jakarta? To exhibit my woodcarvings? Unconsciously I turned my head and looked into the workshop. Those pieces of roots impossible, all those gnarled pieces of wood ..., they called them as carvings?

Mr. Makmun, one of the people there shook his head. "You're amazing, Rul! People in Jakarta have already heard about you!"

Kadir thumped my shoulder. "You're going to be rich! Who would've guessed?"

"It's not possible," I mumbled, "the letter must've been sent to the wrong address."

Mr. Makmun plucked the letter from someone else's hand and shoved it in my face. "Look! Read what it says: 'To Mr. Khairul Safar, woodcarving artist.'"

So it was the right address but how did they know it? How did they know my name? A trip to Jakarta ... How much would it cost? I couldn't imagine. What's more, as I already said, I wasn't convinced, even at the time, that the exhibition would be worth it. Would it make me rich, as Kadir suggested? But what did being rich mean to a person like me, a lonely man responsible for no one but myself?

My efforts to ignore the invitation only served to unsettle my neighbors, who kept going on and on about my stupidity until Mr. Hasril, a neighbor who worked as a reporter for the local paper, took the time to come to my workshop. It was only then that I remembered that he had once published an article in his paper about my "studio"—which is what he called it, making me feel greatly embarrassed. I wondered if the organizing committee in Jakarta had heard of me because of that article.

"Khairul, my lad, the art institute that has invited you is renowned. You should go," said Hasril when I showed him the letter.

"But how would I get there? I don't have any money."

"Look at the letter. A copy of it has been sent to the Governor, which means that the organizing committee in Jakarta expects that you'll go with the full knowledge and approval of the local government. If the Governor gives his approval, his office will naturally assist you with the travel expenses."

"So what do I do?"

"You have to go there, to the Governor's Office."

The Governor's Office? Me, go to the Governor's Office? That was unimaginable. Yet somehow, in the end, that's exactly what I did. What finally drove me to do it was the constant pressure of my neighbors, who seemed to spend most of their day hanging around my workshop.

At the Governor's Office, after being asked this and that, and after being sent to around see this person or that person, I had ended up beside the desk where I now stood, with that woman. To relieve my boredom, I had begun to study my surroundings. It was then that those shoes first caught my eye.

It was Monday. I was back in the Governor's Office for the umpteenth time. I was a bit calmer, and also more hopeful, because the previous Saturday the woman had promised that there was a good chance that I could see her boss today.

It was still very early, but she was already at her desk. Truly diligent. I thought. In fact, even though it was early she already seemed very busy. I was going to knock on the door so she'd know I was there, but before I had a chance, she looked up and saw me. I smiled, nodded, said good morning, but apparently she was in a hurry. As she walked to her boss' room she said, "Come back next Monday. The Secretary has to go to Jakarta today and won't be back for a week."

I was perplexed for a few moments and disappointed, but then, when I thought about how I would see the woman must be rushing around, preparing for her boss to leave at this early hour, I began to feel sorry for her.

I turned around to go and started to leave but then I thought of those shoes. Turning back, they immediately caught my eye. They were still there, in the same place and position they had been on my previous visit to the office.

My curiosity about the shoes suddenly, irresistibly, returned a hundred times stronger than before. No one was around (That's right - wasn't there some kind of government ceremony every Monday morning?) and because the office was deserted, I suddenly felt bold enough to walk into that room.

I walked towards the cupboard, stopping just one step away. I bent down to pick up the shoes but was taken aback suddenly. How could I

not be? The shoes didn't move when I tried to lift them up; it was as though they were planted in the carpet. How long had they been there to be able to become stuck to the floor? Finally, when I did manage to lift them, I was even more shocked. There were maggots in them, lots and lots of maggots.

Disgusted, I dropped the shoes from my hand. A few maggots fell out of the shoes and fell down unto the carpet, wriggling around, before slithering away and leaving behind a trail of glistening slim. Fat and grey like rotten, swollen bean sprouts, only maggots that grew in watery and humid places looked like this.

I remained fixed to the spot where I was standing for quite some time, but it was not until the corridor was echoed with the sound of footsteps. Apparently, the ceremony had finished that I hurriedly straightened up, moving closed to the wall to make way for the officials coming in. I waited to see if any of them would notice the shoes, but evidently no one did, even though they were now almost in the center of the room and maggots were actually crawling all over the place.

I felt weird as I walked down the corridor. At the stairway, before proceeding to the ground floor, I looked back even though I knew I wouldn't be able to see the room anymore. When reaching the bottom of the stairs, I took off my glasses. Maybe my eyes had grown weaker. I rubbed them before convincing myself to leave the building.

By the time I went back to the Governor's Office the following Monday, I'd almost forgotten about the maggots. By this point I felt reluctant to go. Nonetheless, I felt obliged to keep the appointment.

I was at the stop of the stairs on the second floor when I suddenly felt something was different. I stopped for a moment and looked around. It was when I realized what the difference was. The color of the corridor walls had been changed, from white to grey. Had they renovated and repainted since I was last here?

Just for the sake of it, without even looking at what I was doing, I put my hand on the nearest wall and was totally shocked to discover that the wall felt soft and mushy and wet. On reflex, I withdrew my hand, and turned to look at the wall. My God! I almost fell down the stairs because of my surprise. The grey color of the wall wasn't due to a new coat of paint; it was covered by maggots. Those maggots in those shoes had multiplied and now covered the walls. Could these really be the maggots that I'd seen before? How could there be so many of them? There were thousands, or maybe millions.

Suddenly, an office worker who happened to be going pass asked, "What's wrong, Sir?"

"The wall," I mumbled as I pointed, "there are maggots on the wall."

The office worker, a woman, turned to the wall but then gave me a derisive look and walked away.

What? Hadn't she seen them? I was even more confused. I took off my glasses and rubbed my eyes. I put my glasses back on but the maggots were still clearly there. They were real. I wasn't imagining them. It was impossible that the woman could not have seen them.

Still dazed, I went to the desk of the woman whom I had spoken with on previous meetings. I seemed to be in a daze when she said to me, "I'm sorry, Sir, but the secretary must leave for Denpasar now, after which he'll be going and then go back to Jakarta. He'll be back in ten days or so, maybe two weeks."

Having no more importance of the answer, I turned around to go outside before I remembered something and rushed back inside. "Madam," I said, "the exhibition opens in nine days. If he doesn't get back in week or ten days, then"

She immediately cut me off: "What are you going an about?! I already told you that the secretary has to go. He's on important business!"

"Yes, of course, but" I stammered, then felt ashamed when I realized that the business affairs of a government official were certainly more important than my insignificant exhibition invitation.

As before, I turned around to go. In the corridor, I notice that the covering of grey was growing, spreading, creeping down to the first floor. For a second I glanced into the room where the shoes had been and suddenly felt nauseous and faint when seeing that hundreds of maggots were pouring out of the shoes, climbing over each other to escape.

The months had gone by, then a year had passed. I was content not to have participated in the exhibition, but my neighbors talked about it frequently. Many of them said that I was an idiot, and there were also more than a few who said that I was ungrateful for the gift that God had given me.

I never went back to the Governor's Office, but if I happened to be on a bus going to the city to buy wood paint or something else I needed, I couldn't stop myself from looking at the building. Through the murky bus windows, day by day, the office seemed to be becoming greyer and greyer. It was so grey that I could not tell which the roof, the walls, and the windows were.

Sometimes I also felt that other people on the bus looked askance at the building as well. Then, I'd start muttering, "Maggots, more and more of them all the time," but those people on the bus who heard me would immediately give me a quizzical look.

Nervous, I'd take off my glasses. "Sorry," I'd say, My eyes are getting worse by the day. Maybe I need new lenses. But as things are, I never have the money.

Translated by Justine Fitzgerald

Luka Metamorfosa

kiranya begitu, kita belah diri untuk melahirkan
aku yang baru. "jadi serdadu!" katamu. berderap
suara sepatu, mengalir ke arahku

lalu sangkur, apa pun peluru, mengusung mimpi
purbamu. begitu belah, "jadi sembilu!" sayat aku
o iris aku, manusia dungu yang lebih mau
jadi batu

seperti dulu

Minas, 1982

Wound of Metamorphosis

*if so, let us split ourselves to give birth
to a new i. "be a soldier!" you say. trot
the sound of shoes, flowing toward me*

*then a bayonet, whatever the bullet, carrying
your ancient dream. upon splitting, "be a blade!" slash me
o slash me, the idiot who would rather be
a stone*

like was then

Minas 1982

Translated by Hasif Amini

Perkawinan Mawar

sebagai diri, kupu-kupu itu kubiarkan masuk
ke sebuah taman. sebagai mawar, aku sering bermimpi tentang
kupu-kupu—keluar dari kepompong dan punya kepak

sebagai kupu-kupu, apa yang kaubayangkan tentang kepak? tak ada.
kecuali bahwa kita akan bergerak
dari satu bunga ke lain bunga, dari satu madu
ke lain madu

sebagai madu, apa yang kaubayangkan tentang kupu-kupu?
ah, tidak. sebagai diri, pikiran itu terlalu jauh
untuk bisa kembali. hanya tentang kupu-kupu, dan mawar, dan duri
dan wangi?

— mencium setangkai mawar dari durinya, aku ditusuk birahi
menimang-nimang bunga, aku telah begitu alpa akan wangi

“mawar itu tumbuh di tamanku,” ujarmu. kau menyiramnya
tanpa bosan tanpa tahu apakah ia
tumbuh sebagai mawar tentang kupu-kupu atautakah
sebagai duri tentang birahi

sebagai diri: mawar layu karena ia wangi

Tembilahan, 1985—Singkarak, 1989

The Marriage of the Rose

*being the self, i let that butterfly in
to a garden. being a rose, i often dream
about a butterfly – coming out of chrysalis
and gets the flapping*

*being the butterfly, what do you fancy of a flapping?
nothing. except that we will move
from one flower to another, from one honey
to another*

*being honey, what do you conceive of a butterfly?
ugh, no. being the self, our thoughts are too far away
to be able to return. only of butterfly, and rose,
and thorn
and fragrance?*

*– sniffing a stem of rose from its thorn, i get pierced by desire
swinging a flower, i have become so negligent of fragrance*

*“the rose grows in my garden,” you say. you water it
without boredom without knowing whether it
grows as the rose about the butterfly or
as the thorn about the desire*

being the self: the rose withers because it has fragrance

Tembilahan, 1985–Singkarak, 1989

Translated by Hasif Amini

Pergeseran Dirinya dengan Hari

sebelum matahari, ia ketuk pintu dinihari
"selamat pagi," adakah denyut hidup cukup keras
hari ini? kukenang bayang-bayang kebaikan
di tiap tapal, padang jauh pengungsian

kau dengar, isak dan bisu tangis
lengking tanah dan gerimis

ia singkap setiap tenda, melihat kanak-kanak
dari masa depannya. o, adam! kukenang kelahiran
tanpa satu pun tempat. kota-kota menggigil, keruh
dan melesat. siapakah yang dapat
atau ingin kembali?

kaudengar, isak dan bisu tangis
lengking tanah dan gerimis

sebelum siang, ia bentang selimut malam hari
"selamat tidur," adakah kemarau mimpi cukup tandus

hari ini? betapa tenang. bertahun-tahun ia diam
untuk suatu ketika bangun, dengan darah,
daging, dan dendam

Jakarta, 1994

His Shift with The Day

*before the sun, he knocks at the door of dawn
"good morning." is the pulse of life strong enough
today? i recall the shadow of kindness
at each border, faraway field of exile*

*you hear, the sob and silence of weeping
the shrill of soil and drizzle*

*he opens up every tent, seeing the children
of his future. o, adam! i remember the birth
without any single place. the cities tremble, turbid
and hurtling forth. who can
or want to return?*

*you hear, the sob and silence of weeping
the shrill of soil and drizzle*

*before noon, he spreads the blanket of the night
"good night." is the drought of dreams quite severe
today? how calm. for years he remains silent
to awake someday, with blood,
flesh, and revenge*

Jakarta, 1994

Translated by Hasif Amini

Negeri Mengulang

(Lama sudah) aku pergi dengan orang-orang, yang berkendara dan hidup dalam besaran. Kami menunggangi meter, kilo, mil, batas laut, lepas pantai, kawasan terukur penuh bilangan. Dan bila kami terlewat atau menyeberang, kami disambut berondong tembakan. Seolah kami berada di daerah terlarang atau pada suatu tempat di medan perang.

Lama, lama sudah aku pergi dengan mereka. Dan setiap usai mengukur atau membilang, kami berkata, "Ulang lagi! Ulang!"

(Lama sudah) aku hidup dengan orang-orang, yang setiap usai membilang selalu mengulang. Mungkin kami bakal jadi orang yang amat teliti. Tapi tak pernah, karena sebenarnya kami senantiasa was-was selalu takut-takut. Kami takut pada tembakan, pada letusan; kami takut pada ancaman.

Lama, lama sudah kami mengulang. Dan setiap kali usai mengulang, terus saja kami berkata, "Ulang!" Tak henti

tak putus. Bertahun-tahun, berzaman-zaman. Hingga lenyap rasa takut sampai hilang cemas ancaman. Hingga tak terpikir apa pun kecuali mengulang. Sampai mengulang jadi biasa; jadi niscaya. Dan pagi bila bangun, selalu, akan kami temukan hari yang sama.

Kata kami, "Seperti kemarin, bukankah hari ini juga Selasa?"

Payakumbuh, 1998

Repeating Country

(Long enough) I have travelled with the people who ride on and live in measurements. We ride on metres, kilos, miles, sea shores, off shores, zones wrapped in numbers. And if we walk past or cross the borders, we are always greeted by volleys of blasts. As though we were in a forbidden field or somewhere in a battle.

Long, long enough have I travelled with them. And each time we finish counting and measuring, we would say, "Do it again! Again!"

(Long enough) I have lived with the people who repeat counting every time. Perhaps we will become the meticulous ones. And yet never, for we really always feel anxious and afraid. We are afraid of shots, of blasts; we are afraid of threats.

Long, long enough have we kept repeating. And each time we finish repeating, we keep on saying, "Repeat!" Endlessly

perpetually. For years, for ages. Until lost all fears and anguish. Until nothing is left in the mind but the act of repeating. Until repeating becomes commonplace, inevitable. And upon awakening in the morning, always, we will discover the same day.

We say, "Like yesterday, isn't today also Tuesday?"

Payakumbuh, 1998

Translated by Hasif Amīni

Serigala

katamu, bila malam, aku menggeram
dalam mimpimu. Sungguh aku tak tahu,
hewan apa yang tak pernah
tidur dalam diriku.

Katamu, kala tidur, aku melompat
dan melolong ke jendela. Sungguh aku
tak tahu, kecuali bahwa bulan
memang indah malam itu.

Payakumbuh, 1999

Wolf

*you say, when night falls, I growl
in your dreams. I really don't know,
what animals
lie unsleeping in me.*

*You say, when I sleep, I leap
and howl out the window. I really
don't know, except that the moon
was so beautiful that night.*

Payakumbuh, 1999

Translated by Hasif Amini

Daging Akar

akhirnya, siapa kausebut kini: Si serat dingin
ataukah daging yang terjanji? Seperti takdir, sosoknya
rebah membuntuti. Hanya pada waktu ketika bergerigi,
akan bisa kutangkap ia: Saat mengerut dalam diri.

akhirnya, siapa kautangkap kini: Si serabut mati
ataukah sel yang berjalin? Seperti lilin, nyalanya liris
terpantul cermin. Hanya di pedih akar ketika terpilin,
akan bisa kuraih ia: Jawaban lain untuk dunia lain.

Johor Bahru, 1999

Flesh Roots

*in the end, what will you name now: The cold fibre
or the promised flesh? Like destiny, the figure
lies in shadow. Only when time draws its jagged rims
can I finally grasp it: Shrinking deep within.*

*in the end, what will you grasp now: The dead fibre
or the tangled cell? Like a candle, its flame sways low
reflecting in the mirror. Only in the aching roots intertwined
can I finally reach it: Another key to another world.*

Johor Bahru, 1999

Translated by Hasif Amini

**Dewan Juri Pemilihan Sastrawan Indonesia Penerima Hadiah Sastra
Asia Tenggara 2004**

*Panel for the Selection of the Indonesian Awardee of The SEA Write
Awards 2004*

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Head of The Language Center, Ministry of National Education

Ketua/Chairman:

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