

### Poetry by Sitor Situmorang

*From Bunga di atas batu (si anak hilang)*  
Penerbit pt gramedia, Jakarta, 1989

Translations from *To love, to wander:*  
*The Poetry of Sitor Situmorang*  
The Lontar Foundation, Jakarta, 1996

### Pulau di atas pulau

*Untuk Tilhang dan Nahum*

Antara dulu dan sekarang  
terbentang peta perjalanan,  
Pengalaman melimpah-ruah  
dan pegunungan tinggi kesendirian

Antara Selat Malaka dan samudra Indonesia,  
terbentang pulau Sumatra.  
Bukit Barisan dari ujung ke ujungnya,  
Di atasnya danau, di atasnya pulau  
Samosir kesayangan.

Tersebut enam benua,  
kujalani tujuh samudra.  
Mana paling indah?

Jawab telah lama  
tanpa perlu bertanya:  
Negeri terindah,  
ialah setiamu

Pangkal tolak kembara  
di dasar samudra rindu.

### Island on an Island

*for Tilhang and Nahum*

Between then and now  
this journey's map unfolds  
Experiences abound  
Tall mountains stand alone

Between the Strait of Malacca and Indonesia's ocean  
stretches the island of Sumatra,  
with the Barisan Range straddling it from end to end,  
and on it a lake, and on the lake an island:  
my beloved Samosir

Six continents,  
the seven seas I've traveled  
Which is the most beautiful?

The answer has long been known  
with no need to ask:  
The most beautiful country  
is your loyalty

Where my journey once started  
in the depths of the sea of longing.

### In-communicado

(Sandera)

Sel hitam pekat.  
Perkuncian berderak  
dari sela pintu-cahaya listrik  
menusuk mata.  
(di mesjid terdekat  
azan magrib  
baru lewat)

Informan sipil melongok,  
lalu menggoreskan korek,  
memeriksa  
apakah tahanannya ada  
(di luar bekecamuk perang saudara)

Ia menyalakan lilin  
sisa semalam,  
lalu tiba-tiba bertanya  
"Kamu, ya, Sitorsitumorang?"

Aku memandang lilin  
mambiasakan mata pada cahaya  
dan nama itu mengiang  
seperti nama satunya

di taman Firdaus  
ketika Tuhan mencari  
dan memanggil-manggil: Adam! Adam!

Di luar perang saudara  
Sejarah menghitung korban  
dan impian.  
Antara informan dan saya  
hanya cahaya lilin  
dan jurang menganga  
antara Tuhan  
dan manusia pertama.

### Incommunicado

(Hostage)

The cell is solid black,  
the locking-up proceeds  
from cracks in the door electric lights  
pierce the eyes.  
(at the nearest mosque  
the call to evening prayer  
has just finished)

A civilian informant looks around  
then strikes a match,  
checking to see  
that his prisoner is still there  
(while outside civil war rages)

he lights a candle,  
a stub from last night,  
then suddenly asks:  
"So you're Sitorsitumorang?"

I stare at the candle  
let my eyes grow accustomed to the light  
and the buzz of that name

like the name of that one  
in Eden  
When God was looking,  
and calling out: Adam! Adam!

Outside is civil war  
History counts victims and dreams.  
Between the informant and myself  
is but the candle light  
and a yawning gap  
between God  
and the first man.

### Poetry by Mohamad Haji Salleh

*From Beyond the Archipelago*  
Ohio University Center for  
International Studies, Athens, 1995

### kembara jauh

jikalau kau mau kembara jauh  
kau harus pergi sendiri

semua jalannya pendek  
dan berakhir di lemah riuh

kampung dijerit masalah  
atau dililit alat

jikalau kau mau mendaki gunung  
ikut jalan hati, di belakang kota hutan

yang terlindung dari mata pertama  
atau mimpi biasa yang kabur.

tiada kampung pada cita  
tiada kawan pada gagasan.

sepi itu syarat cita  
mimpi itu rancangan kenyataan

### travelling far

if you want to travel far  
you must go alone

all roads are short  
that end in the noisy valley  
the villages are hounded by quarrels  
or overgrown with rituals

if you want to scale mountains  
you must follow the soul, bypassing cities and forests

hidden from the first eyes  
or ordinary vague dreams.

there is no village to will  
no company to ideas.

desolation is the prerequisite of ambition  
dreams are programmers of reality.

### wayang i

di selembur daun kulit  
terkampung isi cakerawala,  
diatur seperti semula,  
bentuk, warna, jenis  
dinaungi pinggirnya.

pada daun  
ada gunung.  
pada gunung ada beringin  
pada beringin ada hutan  
pada hutan berkicau burung.

di hati hutan mengaum pertapaan  
senyap dan jelas suara tafakur  
di pinggir hutan riuh istana  
di sekeliling istana gerak mencurahkan warna.

pada daun bersembunyi lambang  
pada lambang terkias andaian.  
lorong menuju ilmu,  
ilmu membentang ujian.

pada hutan menimbun daun  
pada daun tumbuh cakerawala  
pada cakerawala ada hutan  
pada hutan ada daun.

### shadow play i

on a leather leaf  
a whole world is gathered,  
arranged in its original state,  
forms, colours, types  
all sheltered by their borders.

in the leaf  
there's a mountain  
on the mountain there's a beringin  
in the beringin there's a forest  
in the forest birds chirp.

in the heart of the forest roar silences  
quiet and clear is the voice of meditation  
on the edge of the forest in the din of the palace  
around the palace movements pour their colours

in the leaf are hidden symbols  
in the symbols is analogy's shade.  
all lanes lead to knowledge,  
knowledge spreads its roots.

in the forest leaves are heaped high  
in the leaves a universe grows  
in the universe there's a forest  
in the forest is the leaf

*Mohamad Haji Salleh was Artist in Residence at IIAS in 2005*

Sitor Situmorang and Mohamad Haji Salleh read their poetry at the IIAS *Windows on the Malay World Seminar* on 20 and 21 October 2005. The seminar was organised by Prof. Md. Salleh Yaapar, European Chair of Malay Studies.