



POEMS

By: Adi Badiozaman Tuah

Biodata

ADI BADIOZAMAN TUAH is a notable Sarawak-born poet. Born in 1951, Adi has been actively penning since the 70's. His collection of poems was published in 1986 entitled *Lagu Malam*, followed by *Puisi Buat Mama* (1988) and *Penziarah Waktu* (2004). The year 2004 also saw the publishing of his book, *Dari Lagu Malam ke Puisi Buat Mama*. This placed Adi among poets who are active and very prolific. He has won the 1975 Literary Award, the 1995, 1997 and 1998 the Sarawak

State Government Literary Awards and the 2002/2003 Malaysia Premiere Literary Award. Apart from this, Adi presents many working papers in various seminars and symposia.

AT THE HEIGHT OF SILENCE

(For Tanggang and Malim Kundang)

I caught my breath at the summit
staring at rock pieces racing to the valley
pebbles that I once stepped upon
to get to this spot

ah, how many twigs I snapped
how many blooms I plucked

here—I embraced the dream of the times
only to face doubts
if trees each other will not hail
leaves for certain will not be cordial

to return to the valley
the love I violated
I am too arrogant to turn
with the breast of the renegade child

now at the height of silence
left by myself
with doubts not quite dead
cold night rushing away.

Night

because without permission
I knocked on your room door
and then rushed in
night

forgive me
too bold and rude
standing alone here
like a colossus and a ballerina both
prancing and singing

looking for and chasing my own shadow
from corner to corner
on an empty stage

without music or song
without conductor or audience

let us settle this
here now
night in your loyal embrace

we swap interpretations of the brevity of your journey
ploughing through the heavy dew

and loneliness without edges
before the arrival of dawn
with the crowing of cockerels or the chirping of birds
with the transience of presence
and the limited space of my movements

like the white froth that suddenly bursts
and disappears from the shore
between the ebb and flow of the sea water
or the coming of waves

that never admits defeat

so you accept me yet
night
lying down in your cold embrace
in this your confined space
like you accept every new birth
sans question sans query
even though too greedy and passionate am I
lapping up the clarity of your nocturnal calm

heaping the fragments of past experience
to build up an answer
for the meaning of this existence

because
your sorrow and your readiness to listen and accept
and because
preparing for me a space
to sing and dance
and a room
to catch my breath in and to lay down my restiveness
but never to thank

or to appreciate with gratitude

night
forgive me once again
someone forgetful who suddenly
became less knowing
and less understanding
of the meaning of this existence.

The Encounter

(for Tifah)

when we meet
do not lay yourself down
on the bed of memories
because to swim again
that lake of memories
will hurt again the heart
beginning to heal
from this cut most painful
when forced to accept the meaning of parting

when we meet
let us face each other
like a pair of lovers
seeking the strength of today's step
to frame the existence of the future
without the huts of those encounters
which we left long ago
at the crossroads.

Night ii

The keener is felt the alienness of self
in the midst of your basis.

When dawn is almost here

and there still is no answer
to that mute question of old
about the meaning of existence, love and longing
a journey which never brings about decisions

because of the limitations of space and intellectuality
when imprisoned is the body and emotions
in this drab old small room.

Will tomorrow keep on spanning its bridge
for me to pass through that streamlet of time

in the desire to mature the self
to complete an existence
in the middle of a silent ocean
which had never sympathised
and making the self more alien
in the to and fro of current flow of the river of time
when we reach this stop
still have not acquired the strength

to make you a companion
for conversation and mutual affection.

Your Lake Will Not Ripple

I reckon your lake will not ripple
 when I drop
 the leaves at the end of branches
 onto the surface of your water

clarity which was never violated
 because I
 am the green leaf
 crossing the ladder of time
 from branch to branch
 with no guide
 until the last crossing
 drying up

I reckon your lake will not ripple
 when I blow
 cold winds from the mountain
 onto your surface
 calmness which was never ruffled
 because I am
 the wind from the interior
 descending the valley of time
 from valley to valley
 without aim
 till reaching the mouth of the river
 becoming tired
 because I am
 only the green leaf at the end of the branch
 which becomes dry
 and because I am
 only the cold wind from the interior
 which becomes tired
 I reckon your lake will not ripple
 when I drop
 and blow

(Translated by Hasnah Ibrahim)