



Block F, Level 4  
Ngee Ann Kongsi Library

LASALLE

# LENS & LINES

*Poetry*  *Photography*

A MULTILINGUAL  
POETRY-PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

30th July

**OPENING**

10 am - 11 am

Poetry Reading

Artists' Sharing

Guided Tour

Guzheng Performance

Presented by

**POETRY**  
FESTIVAL SG

Supporting Partner

**PSSO**  
THE PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY OF  
SINGAPORE

Educational Partner

**LASALLE**  
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

## Preface

When light treads on poetic lines, a magical trail is formed, when poetry multiplies by photography, abstract wonders emerge from the shadows of concrete physicality.

From the onset of preparing this exhibition for our third edition of Poetry Festival (Singapore) (previously known as National Poetry Festival, NPF), we wanted to marry poems with photographs, only to discover they have already eloped once both caught sight of each other. Incredible creations emerged as visual wonders complement literary artistry. Of course, all these could not be possible without our brilliant curator, Vincent of PSS and our wonderful editor Zhou Hao of PFS.

Initially, we wanted to name this exhibition Poetic Shadows, then we remembered that poetry exists everywhere, not only in darkness and shadows. The beauty of the visual and the verbal can intertwine in an infinite number of angles and possibilities, imbricating as one to exude what Matthew Arnold called “the sweetness and light”.

This is an exhibition where poetics meets photography, where the lightness of shadows engages with the weight of thoughts and inspirations, where languages and translations interact and intersect, and hopefully, where you meet your objects of inspiration.

**Associate Professor Tan Chee Lay**  
**Vice President, Poetry Festival (Singapore)**

## Foreword

Photography is widely used to record a moment of time, it can also be used to illustrate an artist's statement.

I am pleased to know that some of our members' works have inspired poets and will be exhibited alongside their poems in the Poetry Festival Singapore (PFS).

The Photographic Society of Singapore is pleased to collaborate with PFS in this special 'Poetry-Photography' exhibition.

Poetry and Photography complement each other perfectly in their respective fields. With integration of the two art-forms, poem readings are even more vivid along with the visual impact emitting from the photographs.

I would like to congratulate the poets and photographers for their excellent works that made this exhibition a success. And I hope this exhibition inspires more poets and photographers to scale greater height through this platform.

**Mr. Goh Kim Hui**

**President, The Photographic Society of Singapore**

## Curatorial Statement

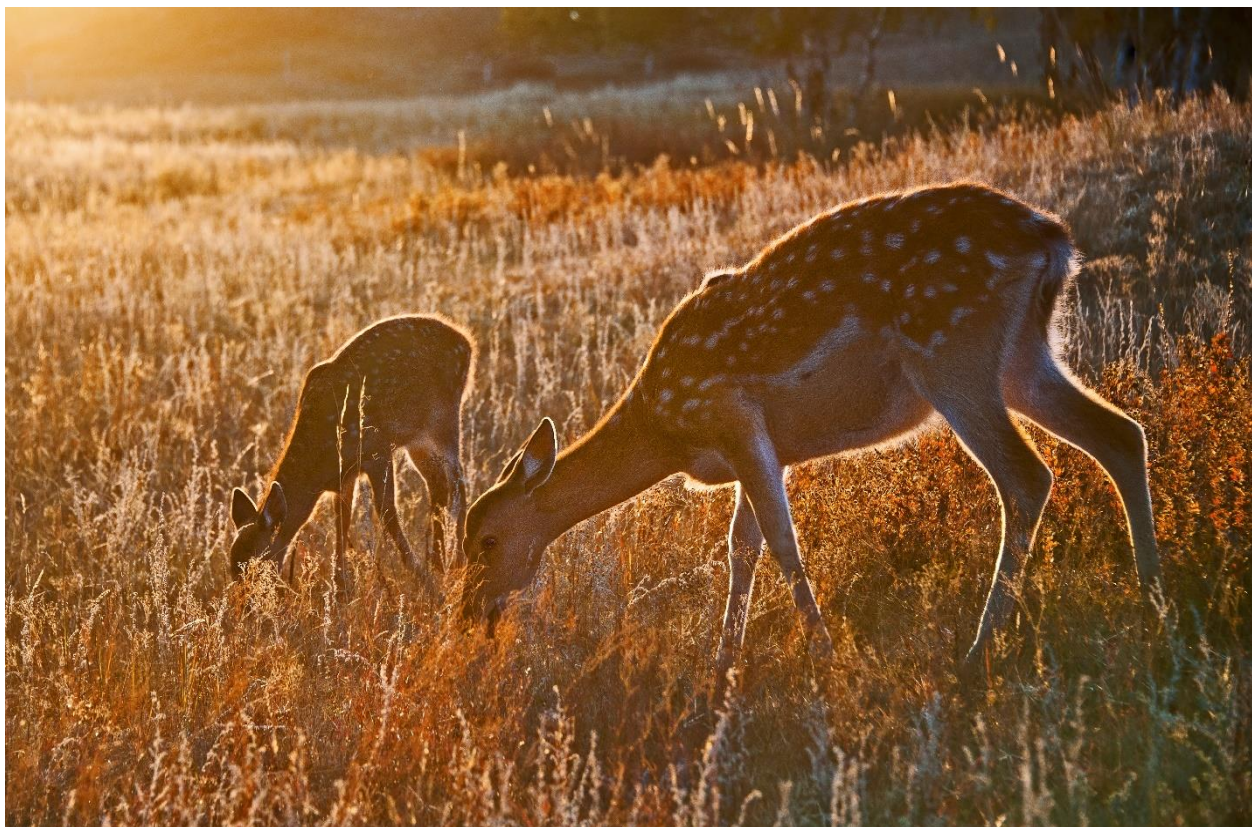
I am privileged to curate the photography component of the Poetry Festival Singapore 2017 (PFS). This year, PFS partnered with The Photographic Society of Singapore (PSS) to produce a photography exhibition that culminates with poetry writings based on the curated photographs. The exhibition assembles the creative talents of both local poets and art photographers.

The curatorial theme for this joint exhibition premised on “Regardless of Race”. My intent is to show that personal and social responsibilities transcend beyond individual races. The exhibited photographs show important aspects of humanity such as conserving nature, parenthood, religious freedom, harmony and patriotism. I hope the viewers can draw inspiration from the exhibition in realizing that notwithstanding our racial differences, we are not so different after all.

I am thankful to have worked with such a wonderful team and be part of this event that promotes collaboration between art forms. I am convinced that such partnerships can bring new life and vibrancy to the arts scene.

**Mr. Vincent Liew, MBA, MA (Candidate)**

**Curator**



*Mother and Son by Lee Hai Poh*

The sambar doe and fawn chew the cud in sunlit green  
Disturbed only by a song from the black-naped oriole  
The night is past and nature's bounty is everywhere seen

嘘 不吵我 不吵我  
让大地依旧酣睡 让露珠不会着凉  
让希望 有他自己升起的从容与优雅

Di padang melata si kijang dan anaknya  
Terlunta dan asyik mencari rumpunan yang bererti  
Tetap harus berjaga dari hendapan yang menyerangi

அளவற்ற அழகுடன்  
வெளியைச் சித்திரமாக்குகிறது விடியல்  
மாய வண்ணத்தில் மயங்கும் மான்கள்

*By All Language Directors of Poetry Festival (Singapore)*



*Long Shadows* by Jack Goh Kok Leong

## **In the Shadows We Are All the Same / Rachel Lim**

Waves of lies crash in ceaselessly  
dragging remnants of childlike wonder with each backwash  
Is this where the battle line's defined?  
Our dreams we traced together;  
It was the most magnificent picture we painted  
Yet now, colours seemed to highlight strange beliefs and warped meanings  
Instead of canvases, it became casted on people  
Funny how the sands of time buried visions we once held dear  
In the shadows, aren't we all the same?  
For in this time of imperfection  
we see an enigma  
then in reality and face to face



*Frozen by Goh Kim Hui*

## **A Melancholy Quiet / Elijah Chai**

A monochromatic hue of silence and shadows  
balanced  
on a lingering palette of  
stenciled symmetry.  
Perhaps a little  
compassion  
and kind regard  
For that moment  
in time  
Frozen –  
a landscape  
defining  
Peace and the hereafter  
at once sterile  
always  
senile



*Prayer by Jack Goh Kok Leong*

## **Light Upon Light / Ow Yeong Wai Kit**

(Qur'an 24:35; Psalm 119:105)

It is written that you guide whomever you will to divine light.  
Lead me then, to unfurl the petals of daybreak fluttering  
into arabesques of spiraling shadows. Slowly, quietly, waiting  
for the glow of the dawn to entwine with the contours of night,  
time itself gains new birth. The twilight of each day becomes  
an image of calm cathedral stillness, a meditative sanctuary from  
this vain and blood-dimmed world. Your words gleam through  
catacombs of misty solitude to emerge into luminescence, for

it is said that your words are a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto  
my path. Lay me open and read me, as if I were the scripture  
gently resting upon the rehal, grounded on sweet rosewood.  
Then shine upon me with the light of a pearl-white star, lit from  
the oil of a blessed olive tree. Offer me as a tabernacle for the sun.  
Nearby there are church bells, and the whiff of temple incense.  
Let the call to prayer harmonise with the chime, and meld with  
the fragrance of new scents. Here, heaven is maturing to earth.



*Up, Up and Away!* by Ray Shiu

## **Her and All of Us / Kwa Kai Xiang**

In the great expanse of the blue based background that is Singapore,  
we, her loyal consorts, dance with ethereal and visceral spirit,  
splash her with the colours of our engines, infuse character into her with the power of our  
unmistakable flight traces and jolt her with the personalities of our red and white coloured bodies.  
As she speaks to her dreamers who are the forces of nature and history,  
we are tempted to absorb all of them into our radiant and rich narrative. We  
pour our courage into the minds and souls of our inhabitants and so,  
they assume another life of their own, dreaming and drawing their own legends and fables.  
Without knowing, we collude with them, creating a background more intricate  
with a greater force of personality than hers.  
Alas, she notices this and with swift efficiency,  
They and us are absorbed into her narrative.  
She reminds all of us that for the past 45 years,  
we have always been part of her narrative  
and will continue to be so,  
but for the 45th time, we create in her, an unsurpassed portrait that  
shouts to our viewers the exuberance of  
our multi-faceted identities  
and unprecedentedly become the alphabets and lines in her narrative  
that speak of our countless trials and successes.



*Birds by Low Poh Ai*

## 回旋 / 周昊

颜色被一片片叼走后  
肉体只能在光阴之间徘徊  
风好客 但毕竟不容你寄宿  
自由是无远弗届的笼子  
无论向内还是向外  
都难逃被空敞收编  
无数单薄的叶子依然要反复思考  
有关去留的永恒问题 想久了  
叶面便生长出稀疏的羽毛  
把撕碎的手稿抛得再高  
它们也会回返土地  
再次生根 缓慢而固执  
被折腾得干瘦且无言以对  
只能缠绕另一棵孤独  
默默等待下一次循环  
泪水无声坠入年轮的漩涡中  
一切在旋转中消音  
出发与逗留都将  
不动声色



*Blessing by Low Poh Ai*

## 说不出的小名 / 陈志锐

那时我们的年龄，真轻  
轻得所有的未来，还配叫理想  
轻得不戴安全帽没有雨衣  
都坦坦然单骑，穿越风雨

为了点燃，一苗天灯之火  
为了写满，一盏灯笼之纸  
让祈福的语气，冉冉升温  
让仰望的脸，绽开希望的花  
阖家平安，幸福美满  
从今，以后

只是只是，那个人的小名  
还是不敢在睽睽的，众目和炬光中  
闪烁，依然在舌尖颤抖  
在喉结哽塞

而天灯，早已越飘越高



World Friends by Jack Goh Kok Leong

## 鱼与余 / 周德成

鱼的故乡 是  
虚实组成透明 的水缸  
还是一条改道来、改道去的江？

人大隐于喧闹的集市  
还是  
终成其热闹？  
手联手 才可心连心  
还是手放下、心敞开  
才成就更深的拥抱？

追溯原点 都说是  
非鱼 非人 非市集 亦非热闹 更非拥抱  
我们 仅是后来者  
记忆中的一次呼吸

把手心张开 不如握紧  
打开心门 的门把  
然后如一颗细胞、一粒原子、一尾史前鱼的精灵  
住在安静里



Zen by Vincent Liew

## 阁楼的愿望 / 欧筱佩

早知道你不在家  
楼上传来的咳嗽声  
只不过是狂风刮伤窗户时的低鸣  
去年暴雨前  
我们放肆的笑  
我们放肆的哭  
说好一同翻开每个不再年轻的明天

你知道我还在家  
还在煮茶 还在梳发  
还在悼念夹在经书里的名字  
我不走，是为了  
与世界再度过一个夜晚

看，所有的灯都亮了  
我不安分的耳朵也醒过来  
嘴角开始启动那首偏冷的歌  
词如直驶的列车碾碎影子  
才惊觉  
我们的愿望  
是一片未能圆满的月光



*Firework at Marina Bay by Jack Goh Kok Leong*

## **Langit Malam Berbunga / Farihan Bahron**

berdebum, berdegum, berdebum  
dada angkasa berdentam-dentum  
bebunga api mekar berkuntum  
bintik bintang bagaikan mengaum  
kilau kamera memetik kagum

si anak kecil terkebil-kebil  
biarpun nadi gegar menggigil  
guruh meriam gigih dibedil  
menggerhanai ungunya kandil  
persis potret indah terhasil

wahai sang ibu, anak bertanya  
mengapa langit malam berbunga  
disambut sorak semarak pesta  
disambung tawa irama ria  
apakah esok mentari tiada

anak kecil, lihat dan dengarkan!  
deru gemuruh bukan semboyan  
percik suar bukan kebakaran  
ini cahaya kemerdekaan  
yang menyalakan gejolak insan



*Family Matter by Shirly Eng Eng Keow*

## **Sebuah Pawai Musiman / Hamed Ismail**

Mungkin ini pawai musiman yang dinanti-nantikan malam menjulang riang dan pesona wajah Singapura seperti senyuman patung-patung raksasa itu melambai mesra dan sepanjang jalan bercahaya lewat asakan jentera dan badan-badan manusia mengalir arus bahasa kegembiraan semula jadi berdendang suara hati yang tak berbelah bagi puncak gemilangnya disepuh warna-warna girang seperti tambur dan tingkah budaya muncul berselang. Mungkin ini pawai idaman yang menjulang nilai hidup berkibar sepanduk dan cogan kepentingan Singapura sungai manusia itu mengalirkan harapan beraneka warna seperti merayakan keberagaman dalam keharmonian malam menjulang ke puncaknya dan wajah-wajah gembira seperti senyuman patung-patung raksasa itu melambai masa lalu dan pandangannya lugu. Mungkin ini pesta merayakan nikmat hidup kekeluargaan yang jarang terakam di lensa kamera pengunjung asing dan malam pelancong yang tidak juga kesepian teman mungkin ini musim pawai yang berbunga seribu kenangan.



*National Day Parade by Ng Chee Gee*

## Anak Singa Mengopi / Arini

Hebat Pak Zubir Said  
 Tapi Singapura sudah berubah  
 Singapura sudah tidak sama  
 Rasa ragu itu, usah!  
 The Flyer!  
 Yang gergasi itu! Mata.  
 Marina Bay Sands!  
 Kapal di awanan lah! Kaya.  
 Hab Sukan Singapura!  
 Dahulu stadium Kallang! Megah.  
 Esplanade!  
 Durian berlemak seni! Antarabangsa.  
 Taman Persisiran Marina!  
 Pokok buatan manusia! Tek alam flora  
 Benar Pak Zubir.  
 Semuanya bersatu dan berseru  
 Semua ke hadapan, kan Pak Zubir katakan  
 Majulah Singapura,  
 Maju (lah Singapura)?  
 Kan Pak Zubir?  
 Lain bukan, industri dan ekonomi dulu  
 Tunjuk dunia, "Hey inilah dia pulau berdebu!  
 Pak Zubir, kini segalanya kita  
 Terkenal di seluruh buana  
 Negara kita megah, tak sangka  
 Zaman Pak Zubir ada?  
 Kitalah yang bangunkan negara.  
 Zaman Pak, buat apa agaknya?



*Mother's Duty* by Vincent Liew

## Abadi / Aqmal N

terasing  
air dan tangis  
membilas bersih  
dosa seorang anak

hingga tuanya  
membahagi masa  
untuk mengasingkan tangis  
dari airmata

jadilah bilasan para wanita  
pedih-pilu puing-puing rindu  
alasan alah anak-anaknya

pengorbanan penuh raga  
tidak terbalas  
segayung emas intan permata

lalu bagaimana kami nanti?  
ibu-ibu anak kemudian hari  
hingga sampai sumpah mati  
mana mahu dicari airmata lagi?



*Father's Duty by Vincent Liew*

## கண்ணம்மா / Subramaniam Kannappan

கண்ணே! என்னை மாற்ற நீ பிறந்தாய்!  
உன்னைப் பார்த்து நான் வளர்வேன்!

உன் வளர்ச்சியைப் பார்த்து பார்த்து ரசிப்பேன்  
நீ பேசும் பேச்சைக் கேட்டு மகிழ்வேன்!

உலகத்திற்கு அழைத்து வந்தவள் அன்னை  
இல்லறத்தில் இணைய வந்தவள் மனைவி  
இதயத்தை இயக்கப் பிறந்தவள் மகள்

அன்பிற்கு புது இலக்கணம் வகுத்தவள் நீ  
எல்லையில்லா இன்பத்தை வாரி வழங்க வந்தவள் நீ

இக்காலத்தில் என் கைகளைப் பிடிக்கும் நீ  
பிற்காலத்தில் உன் கைகளைப் பிடிப்பவன் யாரோ?

பறவை போல கூடி வாழக் கற்றுகொள்  
பிற உயிர்களை மதிக்கக் கற்றுகொள்  
பண்பாய் வாழக் கற்றுகொள்  
அழகாய் வளர்வாயாக!

ஆசைக்கு மகள் வேண்டும்  
அன்புக்கு மகள் வேண்டும்  
ஆயுள் உள்ளவரை நீ வேண்டும்!  
அன்புடன்  
அப்பா



Joy by Goh Koon Peng

**புதுக்கமுகாய் புத்துலகம் படைக்க பற / Govindasamy Santhanraj**  
(உயரத் துடிக்கும் குழந்தைக்காக ஒரு தாயின் இதயத்துடிப்பு)

பூமியில் முளைத்தெழுந்த வித்தொன்று  
வாழும் காலத்தில் விசும்பின் விளிம்பு தொட  
வாமன உள்ளத்தில் விஸ்வரூப நம்பிக்கை விதைக்க  
கொடியாக்கிப் பாதை காட்டும் தாய் மனம்

நெடும்பயணத்தின் ஊடே காண்பாய்  
சுழற்சியில் சிக்குண்ட பட்ட வால் மனிதர்கள்  
மனம் திற, முகம் கொடு, கை நீட்டு  
விளிம்பு தொடுதல் மட்டும் இலக்கல்ல

உள்ளக் கூர்மை நோக்கால் உலகம் மாற்றும்  
உன்னதக் கழுகு மகான்களும் காண்பாய்  
சிக்கெனப் பற்றாது சிந்தித்தே உயர்ந்து நில்  
சீரான உலகம் சமைக்கப் புதுக்கமுகாய் அவதரி

மனிதம் போற்றும் மாண்புகள் இறக்கைகளாய்  
இனம், மொழி, மதம் எல்லாம் கடந்தே பற  
சிறியோன் பெரியோன் இல்லையே இயற்கையில்  
மனப்பறவையின் ஓசை கேள் உரைத்திடும் உண்மை

பறந்திடு மகனே, புன்னகை கூட்டிப் பறந்திடு  
பெற்றெடுத்த சிங்கையின் சமதர்மச் சாத்திரம்  
உயிரினில் கூட்டிட உணர்ந்த கல்வியால் இனி  
உன்னத மானிடச் சுதந்திரம் உயர்த்தும் கமுகாய் நீ



Kathakali by Goh Thien Chee

## பாரதி பெண் / Morgon Vel

இளம் பிறை காணா,  
காமப்பசி ஊன் சாயந்தினரே,  
வஞ்சி யிவள் சிந்தை கேளீரோ...

காதலது நயமாய் மொழிந்தீர்,  
"காவலிது பயமேன்?"..வரைந்தீர்,  
ஆசைமுகன் உம் பாதம் பணிந்தேன்,  
ஆணைமுகன் நாம் இணையத் துதித்தேன்...

குடி முக்கோடி சாட்சி,  
பிடி சேர்ந்தோடி வாழ்வானது,  
சிந்தாரம் நிலையானது,  
பன்வாரம் விரைவானது...

மதுகுதனன் நீர்,  
மது துதென ஆனீர்,  
ஆண்மை அர்த்தம் பிழையுற,  
எம்பெண்மை யென்றும் உதிரு...

போகிறேன் பசியின்றாற்றி,  
மெல்லுறங்காயோ நீயும்,  
உள்வசி என்காதலா...

முடிவுரையா முகப்புரையா அறியேன்,  
பாரதிபெண்ணாயின் பாரதப்பெண்ணே யன்றோ...



*Joy in Woodlands by Yeaw Choon Wee*

## சிலந்தியின் வீடு / Mohamed Ali

என்றோ ஒரு நாளில்  
எவரும் அறியாமல்  
உலகம் தோன்றினாற்போல்  
தோன்றியது அந்தச் சிலந்தி வலை

நான் அசந்த நேரம்  
அதற்கென்று ஓர் உ  
லகப் பந்து  
அத்துமீறல்தான்!!!

ஒட்டடை-  
கடைநிலை பெயரிட்டு  
மறந்து போகலாம்...  
இருந்தும் இழுத்துத் தொலைத்தது

இழை இழையாய்  
குறுக்கும் நெடுக்குமாய்  
வட்ட வடிவமாய்  
விளங்கமுடியாத  
கணிதக் கோட்பாட்டின் அடர்த்தி

எப்படி முடிந்தது  
இத்தனை உழைப்பு?  
தனியாய்...  
எத்தனை நேரம் பிடித்திருக்கும்?

சிந்தனைத் தரையில்  
நீள்கிறது  
சிலந்தியின் நிழல்

சத்தமில்லாமல்  
என் உறக்கம் கலைக்காமல்  
வீடுகட்டிப் போய்விட்டது சிலந்தி

உள்ளே அசைகின்றன  
வண்ணப்பூச்சிகள்  
விழுந்திருக்கலாம்  
தாமே நுழைந்திருக்கலாம்

எப்படி நுழைந்தன?  
சிலந்தி வீட்டின் கதவு எது?  
சிலந்தி வீட்டின் ஜன

## English Translations

### Main Multilingual Poem

Original and Translation: Eric, Chee Lay, Azhar, Latha

The sambar doe and fawn chew the cud in sunlit green  
Disturbed only by a song from the black-naped oriole  
The night is past and nature's bounty is everywhere seen.

Shh....irritate me not, irritate me not  
Let the Earth continue to snooze, keep the dew from catching a cold  
Let the hope, rises at its own pace with poise and elegance

The motherly deer and her baby  
Grazing the land in search for the best greenly  
But always in alert of the danger imminently

With boundless beauty  
The dawn paints the expanse  
And the deers swoon in its enchanting colours

## Chinese Poems

### **The Unuttered Nickname (说不出的小名)**

**Original: Tan Chee Lay**

**Translation: Tan Chee Lay**

We were then so young, in those years  
As young as when all the future is but an ideal  
As young as one who needs neither safety helmet nor raincoat  
Through the winds and rain, riding alone

So as to lit up the sky lamp  
So as to write up the paper lantern  
To warm up every wish  
To brighten up every face  
In the family, with peace and happiness accompanying  
Ever after

But, that persons nickname  
Remains unuttered in the sight and light of the crowd  
Trembling at the tip of the tongue  
Choking Adam's apple

While the sky lantern drifts higher  
And higher

## **I was Fish, or Fish am I? (鱼与余)**

**Original: Chow Teck Seng**

**Translation: Chow Teck Seng**

A home to fish exists  
Merely when the real and illusionary lose the line:  
A water-filled space separated by unseen glass walls  
Or an ever-changing river pathway?

I, a subject hidden in the crowd  
Or  
An object that completes its rowdiness?  
So, hold hands before hearts are joined  
Or put down what one holds on  
To open our hearts: that's the real embrace

Searching of the origins,  
I am neither fish or man, nor  
Part of a marketplace, its busyness or an  
Embrace. We, the late-arrivals  
Of our ancestral existence, are  
Merely remembered breaths

Instead of communicating like  
How arms stretch or palms cover, why not  
Hold tight on to the knob to open the door  
Of the hearts, I, now sit in silence, as  
A cell, an atom and spirits of a  
Prehistoric fish

## Whirling (回旋)

**Original: Zhou Hao**

**Translation: Zhou Hao**

After the colors were nipped away slice by slice  
The physical body can only wander between lights and shadows  
Wind is hospitable, but could not let you stay for long after all  
Freedom is a borderless cage  
No matter it is facing inward or outward  
One never escapes been incorporated by the emptiness of space  
Countless frail leaves nevertheless ponder repeatedly  
The eternal question of staying or leaving, after long enough  
Sparse feathers began growing on their surface  
Toss those shredded manuscripts up into the air  
They will return to the ground  
Regrow their roots, slowly but stubbornly  
When one is tormented till scrawny and speechless  
One could only intertwine with another solitude  
Quietly waiting for the next cycle  
Tears dripped into the annual ring's vortex without a sound  
All will be silenced in the whirling  
Both departure and lingering will be  
Composed and calm

## A Wish in the Attic (阁楼的愿望)

**Original: Aw Seow Pooi**

**Translation: Chow Teck Seng**

Knowing that you aren't at home  
the coughs merely cut the  
window in low-pitched screams  
as a gush of wind upstairs  
replacing our unrestrained laughter  
and cries, before the storm,  
when we promised  
to venture together in every aging tomorrows

You shall be aware,  
that I'm still at home  
making tea and combing my hair, or  
mourning the name well hidden  
in the pages of the sutra  
I'm not leaving, probably 'cos  
I'm obsessed to stay a night  
more with this world

look--all lamps now lit  
with my restless ears awaken,  
songs of mildly-cold temperature from  
the lips and words, crushed shadows  
resulted from a forward-moving  
train of thoughts, all make me realise  
that  
our unrealised dreams are crescents  
but never full moons

## Malay Poems

### Night Sky Blooming (Langit Malam Berbunga)

**Original: Farihan Bahron**

**Translation: Azizah Zakaria**

debum, degum, debum  
the sky tolls and rolls  
Fireworks unfold in blooms  
and specks of stars seem roaring

cameras clicking with awe

The toddler blinks away  
Even though his nerves' trembling  
Thunderous canons fiercely shot  
Casting an eclipse on the lamp's glimmer  
Seemingly like a beautiful portrait

Dear mother, the child asks  
Why is the night sky blooming  
Rejoiced with glee and glory  
trailed with laughter of joy  
Will the sun be gone tomorrow?

Child, look and listen!  
The rolling rumble is no siren  
sparks of flame is no fire  
This is the light of independence  
That ignites the human fervour

## **A Seasonal Procession (Sebuah Pawai Musiman)**

**Original: Hamed Ismail**

**Translation: Azizah Zakaria**

Maybe this is the seasonal procession much awaited  
the night glorifying joy and charm of Singapore  
Like the smiles on those giant figurines  
waving affably along a lit-up road  
past a congestion of machine and human bodies  
a natural language of joy flowing smoothly  
and the heart sings with not a doubt  
its peak of brilliance coated with colors  
like a weave of drums and cultural motions  
Maybe this is the dream procession bolstering values  
Singapore banners and slogans made to flutter  
in that river of humans, hopes flow in many colors

as if celebrating plurality and harmony  
the night reaching its peak and those happy faces  
like the smiles of those giant figurines  
waving at the past with a look so indifferent

Maybe this is a party celebrating family life  
rarely recorded in the foreigner's lens  
and a tourist night that is not without company  
Maybe this is a procession season that breeds a thousand memories

## **The Lion Cub Over Coffee (Anak Singa Mengopi)**

**Original: Arini**

**Translation: Arini**

Amazing Encik Zubir  
But change has begun  
Singapore is not the same  
This uncertainty is for nought  
The Flyer!  
How gigantic it is! An eye.  
Marina Bay Sands!  
A ship in clouds! Wealth.  
Singapore Sports Hub!  
Previously Kallang Stadium! Grandeur.  
Esplanade!  
Decadent durian of art! International.  
Gardens by the Bay!  
Man made supertree! Nature-tech.  
It's true Encik Zubir,  
All united in exclamation  
Onward Singapore, wasn't it sir?  
Onward Singapore,  
On...again Singapore?  
Right sir?  
How changed it is, industry and economy  
Of this sleep-dusted island!  
Encik Zubir, everything is us now  
A recognized dot by everyone  
Our land, iconic, who knew?  
For we built the future,  
What would you boast,  
Of your time,  
Pray tell.

## **Eternal (Abadi)**

**Original: Aqmal N**

**Translation: Aqmal N**

displaced  
(between) water and tears  
that wash clean  
a child's sin

'til aged  
time apportioned  
to separate cries  
from tears

it is the rinsing water for women  
a dismal-despair, debris of yearn  
excuses of its child

a spirited sacrifice  
unrepaid  
by a potful of gold and gems

so how will we be?  
mothers of future children  
till the vow of death comes  
where else do we find tears?

## Tamil Poems

### Kannamma (கண்ணம்மா)

**Original: Subramaniam Kannappan**

**Translation: Kavitha Karuum**

Dear! You were born to transform me!  
Watching you, I will grow.  
I will enjoy watching you grow!  
Listening to you talk will bring me joy!

A mother brings you into this world  
A wife joins you in making a family  
A daughter arrives to command your heart

You have created a new definition for love  
You have come to give me unbounded joy

Today you hold my hands  
Who will hold your hands tomorrow?

Learn to live in a flock like a bird  
And to respect other beings  
Learn to live with grace  
May you grow up beautifully!

A daughter is needed to pamper  
A daughter is wanted to love  
And you, I want as long as I live!  
With love,  
Dad

## **Fly as a Novel Eagle to Create a Distinct World**

(புதுக்கமுகாய்ப் புத்துலகம் படைக்கப் பற)

**Original: Dr. Govindasamy Santhanraj**

**Translation: Dr. Govindasamy Santhanraj**

A seed grunts beneath the mud  
Breathing alive, it stems to starry skies  
With colossal hope beating its little heart  
When a mother spells a spiraling path uphill

On a fathomless odyssey, you reveal  
Imp tailed men entangled in tornado,  
But to reveal your soul, bear a face and touch  
For reaching heavens is not your goal;

Changing the world with a sharp-eyed heart,  
You'll see the great Eagle-saints too  
Stand up straight, think and not hurrying to hold  
Manifest yourself into a new eagle to create a new world

Thy Wings  
A Parade of humane greatness  
Hover above the race, religion and langue  
For nature conceives the old and the new the same,  
Listen to thy inner godly voices which reveal truth

So Soar high, my heir's, with a galore in smile  
The son and daughters of the Lion city,  
Where thy courage, diplomacy and knowledge rush  
Soar high, like an Eagle  
And rise high to liberate "Our greatness in the freedom of humanity"

## Indian Woman (பாரதபெண்)

**Original: Mr. Morgan Vel**

**Translation: Mr. Morgan Vel**

As the new moon arises, you to whom it makes no sense my beloved,  
for you were keen to satisfy the hunger of lust within,  
oblivious to the wishes of a loving wife

Swept me off with your beloved words then,  
reassured me safe with your love, I surrendered myself completely,  
I sought the blessings of Elephant Lord for our union

As thousands witnessed, we joined in union,  
and my sindoor (a customary signature of marriage for women) served its purpose,  
for weeks rolled over vividly

Mathusoothanan your name my love,  
and you were enslaved to mathu (alcohol) and Soothu (gambling),  
with a questionable manhood of fallacy, it bruised me badly each day

I am leaving you today,  
my love..satisfied that I was able to appease your body hunger for one last  
time... sleep tight, my lover deep inside this animal

(A new beginning or a final chapter for me ahead,  
I least am aware... for though I was bold enough a modern girl to leave an abusive  
relationship... Still an Indian girl bound by the expectations of the society in the name of  
culture

## The Spider's Home (சிலந்தியின் வீடு)

**Original: Mohamed Ali**

**Translation: Mohamed Ali**

It manifested like the earth at a time when no one witnessed.  
A globe onto itself while I was asleep. Clearly a trespass!  
Nothing but a cobweb but my thoughts are trapped in its sticky strands  
Strands crisscrossing,  
forming shapes and circles  
sheer mathematical genius  
What an endeavour!  
A labour in solitude on specks of time  
The shadow of the spinner grows longer on the land of thoughts  
It had spun without a sound  
My slumber unbroken  
The insects quivering within  
Arrived by slip or curiosity  
How did they enter?  
Through the door or windows?  
But which is which?  
Ingress and no exit!  
The spinner shall return shortly.  
To feed on the quivering insects.  
An efficient home that cooks and serves  
Alas, poor insects...  
Shall I extend my charitable hand, tear at the strands and grant clemency?  
And who will answer the spider?  
Strong strands of questions  
Answers that remain trapped like the insects.  
Why has the spider not returned?  
Is it spinning another home....?

## English Poets



### **Elijah Chai**

Elijah Chai is the author of numerous articles and poems online. His books are available on Amazon. He holds an MBA, is currently Discipline Master in a secondary school, and qualified to teach 9 subjects. He is currently teaching English and English Language, and writes whenever his inner muse awakens.



### **Rachel Lim**

A frequent visitor to Laos, Rachel conducts English lessons in a village and treasures moments spent there. She is a graduate of Singapore Management University, where she received a B.Sc. in Economics. She mentors youths and is actively involved in volunteer work.



### **Ow Yeong Wai Kit**

Wai Kit teaches English and Literature. He holds a master's degree (with distinction) from UCL, where he was awarded the John Oliver Hobbes Memorial Scholarship in Modern English. His articles have been featured in journals such as Interreligious Insight and Think Pieces. He was the co-editor of *From Walden to Woodlands: An Anthology of Nature Poems* (2015), published by Ethos Books. He also serves as an interfaith advocate as part of the Holland-Bukit Timah Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle.



### **Kwa Kai Xiang**

Born in Singapore, Kai Xiang spent his 27 growing up years being immersed in the sights and sounds of Singapore's beaches and local food culture. Nowadays, his hobbies include thinking of how to better encapsulate my childhood memories of Singapore in poetry and prose.

## Chinese Poets



### Tan Chee Lay

Dr. Tan Chee Lay is an Assistant Professor at Nanyang Technological University, and is the Deputy Executive Director of the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language. He has a Ph.D. in Oriental Studies from Cambridge University. An award-winning writer, he has published over 20 creative writing and scholarly books.



### Chow Teck Seng

Chow Teck Seng writes poetry primarily in the Chinese language. A frequent contributor to literary journals, anthologies and the Chinese press, both in Singapore and abroad, he has won awards such as Singapore Literature Prize (2014) and Golden Point Award (Chinese Poetry, 2009), and has been featured in several international literary events. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in literary criticism and comparative Sinophone literatures at the University of Cambridge.



### Zhou Hao

Zhou Hao is a research student and award-winning Poet. He clinched awards in Singapore Tertiary Chinese Literature Award, National Poetry Competition, Golden Point Award etc. Most of his works are published in newspapers and literary journals locally and overseas. In 2014, he published a poetry anthology with fellow poets from National Taiwan University's Poetry Society, his individual poetry collection is forthcoming.



### Aw Seow Pooi

Seow Pooi was born in Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. She began writing at a tender age of 13. Over the years, she won numerous literary awards in China, Taiwan and Malaysia. She writes in Chinese across various literary forms, but focuses more on poetry. Seow Pooi's works were published in newspapers and literary journals in Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan.

## Tamil Poets



### **Morganavel Selvarajoo**

Dr Morganavel Selvarajoo, a medical practitioner by qualification, serving as an academician for the past 5 years (and running), with a keen passion for performing arts and Tamil language. Shares vast experience as a part-time artiste with local Indian channel, MediaCorp Vasantham (Best Actor in Negative Shades, Pradhana Vizha 2016).



### **Subramaniam Kannappan**

A former civil servant with more than 16 years' experience in Marketing and Brand Promotions. An avid reader who believes that writing is a means by which the soul of a person – and indeed, of a community and nation – is captured. He is currently an independent consultant and digital marketer.



### **Mohamed Ali**

Mohamed Ali is an Independent Film Maker. He has produced numerous programmes for television. Ali appreciates poetry alongside film and drama. He is a keen observer of the social evolution around him. His writings tend to carry a philosophical tenor.



### **Govindasamy Santhanraj**

Dr. Govindasamy Santhanraj holds a Ph.D. in Tamil language, he is a MOE education officer and part-time lecturer at Singapore University of Social Sciences. He has been a avid sportsman from school to college day, and still indulges in basketball to keep fit. He reads widely on poetry, both classical and modern and has been writing modern poems for the last four years. In short, he is a modern poetry enthusiast.

## Malay Poets



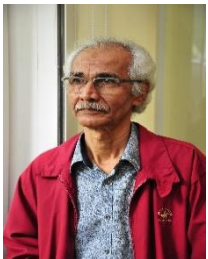
### Noorhaqmal Mohd Noor

After winning Anugerah organized Mediacorp Suria in 2004, Noorhaqmal Mohd Noor or better known as Aqmal, continued winning major national Malay song writing competitions such as Mediacorp RIA Remix in 2006 and Mediacorp Projek Rentak in 2010. He wrote for TV serials such as Tuan Haji, Pulau and Sekuriti. Aqmal also writing and producing TV shows such as Pulau and Kopi Bujang 2 (2010), involving in theatre plays and TV dramas such as MJ12 in 2013 and ManDin in 2015. His works has been published in anthologies with ASAS '50 and National Poetry Festival and is looking to publish his own poetry compilation titled 'DUMPRA'.



### Farihan Bahron

Farihan Bahron is a graphic designer by trade, started exploring his rhyme and rhythm through the art of dikir barat and modern Malay poetry since his late teens. He has transitioned into prose and recently published a short story collection, 'Kesumat Sang Avatar' and a collection of poems, 'Tukang Tunjuk Telunjuk'.



### Hamed Bin Ismail

Hamed Bin Ismail was a Senior Script Supervisor with Eaglevision (MediaCorp) for 28 years. He has written, edited and supervised the production of hundreds of television scripts. Before that, he was a Reader with the Ministry of Culture from 1973 to 1985. He received the Anugerah Persuratan Singapura (Malay Literary Award) for his plays “Anjing Untuk Diplomat” and “Singkap”, and his short story “Pak Long”. He also received the Golden Point Awards for Malay Poetry in 2011, and in 2013. His book entitled, Suara Dalam is a collection of his poems from 1976 to 2012. Bunga Tanjong is his first novel.



### Nurul Arini Junaidi

In short, I am a theater, cultural and literary enthusiast. Where there is room for sound to be echoed, that's where I show myself. Language and culture form self. The pen (or key) often moves after a glimpse of the surroundings. Often equalized with kaleidoscopes due to alternate persona permutations.

## Photographers



**Shirly Eng Eng Keow    APSS, APSNJ**

I see photography as the human desire to capture and express life. As for me, I love travel photography. This is where I can portray the different forms of culture, landscapes and portraits when I travel the world. I hope to turn those colourful landscapes into timeless wonderlands and retain those emotional moments that have melted my heart and share them with friends. I wish I could have a song for my photos where it captures the beautiful memories of my life!



**Goh Kim Hui    Hon.FPSS, Hon.EFIAP, AFIAP**

Photography has been an integral part of Kim Hui's life since he was 16 years old. He is a published commercial photographer whom had won numerous awards and recognitions worldwide. Kim Hui expresses his photography through the Chinese philosophy of Wu Xing, also known as the Five Elements of Nature, a concept that explains the interaction and relationship between the phenomena of nature. He is also the current President of The Photographic Society of Singapore.



**Jack Goh Kok Leong    ESPSS, APSS, APSNJ, Hon.FSAP,  
Hon.APSNJ, Hon.AUPHK, EFIAP, PPSA, GPU-CR2, GPU  
Aphrodite**

Jack is the International Salons & Competitions Chairman of The Photographic Society of Singapore(PSS). He is renowned for chairing multiple successful international photography salons and he is also a multiple award winner. Jack had developed a special interest in Street Realistic and Macro photography. As an avid travel photographer, he had travelled extensively around the region to explore new subjects and to hone his photographic skills. Jack's photographs were featured by Travellution Singapore, a travel magazine, on his exquisite travel images captured during his trip to Inner Mongolia.



**Goh Koon Peng    Hon. FPSS, Hon.FPSNJ, FPSS, ARPS**

Koon Peng is also an award-winning photographer whom had won more than 100 local and overseas photography awards. His works have been published in Asiaweek; Lianhe Zaobao; The Strait Times; Garuda International Airlines magazine; HDB Annual Report; MTI Economic Report; PUB; MICA and NTUC publications. Koon Peng held his first solo photographic exhibition entitled "A Fading Performing Art: Street Opera" in 2013.



**Goh Thien Chee    APSS**

Thien Chee started photography when he bought his first DSLR to photograph his newborn daughter back in 2009. Since then, his perspective had changed by which the way he perceives his subjects through the viewfinder. Till now, Thien Chee is still in pursuit of perfection and the mastery of capturing the right moment, at the right time.



**Lee Hai Poh    FPAS, APSS, ARPS**

Born in 9th July 1948, Hai Poh started to travel the world in search of beautiful images when he retired from his business. He journeyed to 26 countries to seek beauty in all its forms and preserving its perfect moments with a click of the shutter. Hai Poh aims to share his best images with everyone.



**Vincent Liew    Hon.FPSS, Hon.FPSNJ, Hon.FBPS, Hon.FUPHK, Hon.PESGSPC Hon.WPG, Hon.ASPA, EFIAP, EPSA, GPU-CR3, PSA GX2, MEPSP, BEPSS, FPSNY, SPSA**

Vincent is a visual artist. He started his photography journey in 1988 and then went on to learn oil painting. Subsequently, he merged his learning and knowledge of the two mediums. His works primarily centred on the subsistence of people and nature within their environment. The use of complimentary colours is a recurring motif in Vincent's work. Vincent is also a published photographer and a photography educator. He currently curates the Loke Wan Tho Gallery at the Selegie Arts Centre. ([www.vincentliew.info](http://www.vincentliew.info))



**Low Poh Ai    ESPSS, SEPSS, EFIAP, APSNJ**

Poh Ai enjoys capturing images from different genres of photography. She is a passionate traveller whom travels frequently within the different parts of Asia. She aims to deepen her understanding of the various cultures and to further develop her proficiency in photography. Poh Ai is the first person to achieve the Silver Exhibitor status of The Photographic Society of Singapore. She is also in the midst of developing her own style of camerawork.



**Ng Chee Gee    BEPSS, APSNJ, LPSS**

Chee Gee started photography in 2012 after joining The Photographic Society of Singapore(PSS) to learn photography. He started humbly by undertaking a basic photography course. Since then, Chee Gee had developed a special interest in Street Photography as he likes to capture the daily activities of people on the streets. Chee Gee had won awards from international competitions and is currently a Life Member of PSS.



**Ray Shiu    FPSS**

Ray is a self-taught, freelance photographer from the USA currently residing in Singapore. He is also one of the few candidates whom had achieved the Fellowship status of The Photographic Society of Singapore. “Photography, to me, is an aesthetic accounting of my time on earth. Watching, waiting, capturing and sharing moments of significance, is what I endeavor to do every time I pick up my camera”.



**Yeaw Choon Wee    APSS, AFIAP**

Choon Wee is an avid photographer who began his photography passion in 2008. He was conferred as an Artist of the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) in 2014. Choon Wee specializes in photographing people in his environment. He is fascinated by the human aspect of the various cultures and he seeks to portray their beauty and virtue through his works.

## Editor's Note

I had the privilege to work alongside a group of talented poets and photographers in this meaningful collaboration. The idea was conceived with the intention to create a dialogue between two forms of art. The preparation took nearly three months, after receiving some wonderful photos from the Photographic Society of Singapore, I gathered poets from our four official languages to select and write about photos that inspired them. What followed was an extended period of meticulous selection, translation, and editorial work, which is both rigorous and rewarding. The collaboration not only showcase the interactions between art forms, but also between cultures, aligning with Poetry Festival's theme this year: Regardless of race.

Such collaboration reflects our current context. We navigate and negotiate within the labyrinth of visual-verbal milieu daily, where words and pictures interweave into endless threads of intricate sensory encounters that permeates our private and public lives. The synthesis of verbal and the visual representations are deeply embedded in all facets of our (post)modern experience. Traditionally, vivid description of art through poetry, called ekphrastic poems, holds significant status in poetry writing. Today, advances in technology and literary techniques allows for more diversified conversations and exchanges.

The poems and photos in this collection are complementary yet at the same time individual. The multilingual nature of the poems as well as the multicultural elements of the photos epitomizes the diversity of our land. Translations of non-English poems (as well as between visual and verbal) bridges the gaps on the surface, but beneath the external differences, the exhibition seeks to unfold the fabric of a shared artistic vision, of the textures of our human experience and what our mind can imagine.

**Zhou Hao**

**Poetry Festival (Singapore)**

**EDITOR:**

Zhou Hao

**CURATOR:**

Vincent Liew

**ADVISOR:**

Tan Chee Lay