"to shine out
in such magnesium brightness
as to raze and sear all image…"

Wong Phui Nam

I am no longer interested in union or harmony or any of these mirages
what I want to do is to hold your hand &
yank you down this esplanade of what
could have been…

I am sitting in a library of dead books
of dead languages
of dead fore-mothers
dead fore-fathers

(I have never felt so alive)

I blink and the webcam blinks back
and I click unmute and
smile
for whoever is on the other side
of history.

Do you know, Brandon, I became
quite fascinated with Tunku Abdul Rahman
on my last visit to KL – there was just
something about his voice that seemed so
kindly, tolerant, forgiving, that I could imagine him
as Malaya's head of state. An uncle I would look to
for solace.

the Grab has dropped me off at Seputeh
I go up a hill & the buzz of a myriad insects
overwhelms me

I enter a house outside of time

Phui Nam greets me in his wheelchair
his foot shorn of flesh

there is a stillness here I wish I could bottle
it's a stillness like no other

though I have presented no passport
I know this is Malaya

I met him too in a state of paralysis
estranged in a wilderness of his own making

What shall we make of ours?

在我们的梦里

di luar sana
kami mencipta
bunyi suara
berangan2 makna

可见到一把刀

一切都是温暖的慌言

在我们的幻想里

So I am imagining speaking to TAR on the webcam of history…

'I' know there is no 'I' in 'We' are more than 'U' and 'I' am more than 'me' and 'U' but less than 'they' want to say that there is no 'we' in 'I'

The 'We' I have in mind includes
Indonesians, even the ones who were involved
in Konfrontasi, and also the Filipinos,
Who thought that Sabah should belong to them.
This is for all of you &
you & you & you

you don't need a passport, you need only wish
the world was less concerned with what distinguishes,
& more with what excites, what drives up the pulse
like that plate of nasi lemak I devoured
in Damansara

(or that caramel cloud of
appam I had in Bangsar)

Destiny, thwarted, reemerges as a wink, a twinkle in a poet's eye
In a field past forgetting, LKY and TAR are making out
I turn up at the railway station & there's chili padi in my pocket