

The Malaya I first got to know was Wong Phui Nam's,
a spectral realm of unregenerate spirits
and revenants, unfulfilled

squatters from a moment gone

completely sour
(impossibly?)

yet what I tasted
of that concentrated bile had it in

a licorice sweetness & might I say
an unexpired magic

the same frisson I felt when Phui Nam & I
sucked durian seeds on the streets of Geylang

or when he powered his shuddering wreck of a car
through the KL of his mind, where
old oligarchs continued to reign & ravage

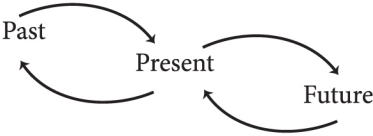
Malaya had me,
him & his family
of ghosts

(in its barrenness lay
its fecundity)

ghosts do not just speak of what is past
they are aborted possibilities, reeking
of what could have been
& so following this scent I have come
to this threshold
where you & I now momentarily reside

In my mind in-vi-ti-ro
we are always going a floating
space,
inhabiting.

a pocket dimension where



co-a-lesce

am ongoing act of collective being

who-say-can dreaming
imagining
forgetting

'we' are unencumbered
fit neatly in a jar

of enterprise
fit neatly into words

moulded by my tongue
in sentences put together
by another mouth. My own?

My-Own are strung together in a web

of unrepeatable syllables

My Malaya is a collective of pissing thoughts.
It aligns with yours – whatever they may be.

I am a visitor in this vale
this is the place for misfits
who chafe at straitjackets
of nation-state
those who wish to dream beyond

immigration counters & automated gates
unrelenting progress, a BTO of our own making, a representation

this is a pool of simple forgetting

We make do with the dowry
I am beside myself
How long do we suffer the company

The riverbank ends

where I say it ends,

It ends at the end of the page gushing in an instant

and forever into eternity

like what S. Rajaratnam tried to say
in his first draft of the Singapore Pledge
before LKY edited it – "to forget differences
of race, language or religion and
become one united people"

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
(I have never felt so alive) of dead languages
of dead fore-mothers
dead fore-fathers

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

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

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.

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?

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

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

在我们的梦里
di luar sana
kami mencipta
bunyi suara
berangan2 makna
可见到一把刀