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CULTURAL WORKS

Puisi Selatan

Ian Campbell

Corresponding author: Mr Ian Campbell, Honorary Research Associate, Department of International Studies: Languages and Cultures, Macquarie University, NSW 2109 Australia. Email: ialuca@inet.net.au

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Abstract

Puisi selatan is a small selection of Sydney-based poet Ian Campbell's Indonesian language poems taken from the author's larger collection titled *Selatan-Sur-South* of Indonesian language poems—which appeared in *PORTAL* in 2008 (vol. 5, no. 1)—but now supplemented, for the first time, with English language versions that have been rendered by the poet himself from the 'starting point' of these original four Indonesian language poems.

In all there are here now eight poems—four in Indonesian and four in English—with the common thread, for the poet, of being written 'in the south.' For the poet also, they now interact across languages as a set of poems that consider the ways in which the actions of 'memorialising' are often intertwined with specific responses to the natural environment.

The poems 'Semenanjung Bilgola' and 'Bilgola headland' reflect upon the efforts the poet's parents made in the late 1960s and early 1970s to restore the natural environment on a headland of one of Sydney's northern beaches, which had been donated to the National Trust. The Indonesian language original poem was read by the poet himself and by Indonesian poets in cities in West Java in 2004 and also at the first Ubud Writers Festival in 2004 by Indonesian female poet, Toeti Heraty.

The poems 'Berziarah di Punta de Lobos, Chile' and 'Pilgrimage to Punta de Lobos' are also memorialising poems and reflect upon the idea of 'pilgrimage' to a natural location near Pichilemu on the Chilean coast that is popular with surfers. In contrast, the poems 'Simfoni angin' and 'Symphony of the winds' describe the sights and sounds of a rural area near Purranque in the south of Chile, but here too the poet reflects upon the ways in which present evokes past. The final poems 'Buenos Aires'—rendered as the title in both languages—explore the ways in which the Argentinian café becomes a place in which memories of the city are

revealed anew through the processes of inversion of light and shadow, of internal and external shapes and sounds, as if through a camera lens.

Puisi selatan can be rendered in English as ‘poetry of the south’ as all poems derive their impetus from settings in Australia or in Latin America, specifically either Chile or Argentina. They were originally written in Indonesian as part of the poet’s interest in using Bahasa Indonesia as a language of creative writing.

Keywords:

Ian Campbell; Puisi Selatan

Semenanjung Bilgola

Errichtet keinen Denkstein. Lasst die Rose
nur jedes Jahr zu seinen Gunsten blühen. (Rilke)

Tiada batu nisan untuk memperingatinya.

Malahan barangkali kalau mawar berbunga tiap tahun,
inilah tanda. (Rilke)

Bangkit di sini bentuk benua kanguru dari tengah-tengah samudera.
benua berkerikil yang tertua, semenanjung lembah batu,
daratan garis utara pesisir Sydney, antara jurang dan langit,
arus angin memukul di sebelah lereng semenanjung ini
yang mengorbankan diri terhadap perairan abu-abu.

Pada saat matahari bersinar cahayanya
dan cuaca tenang, di bawah belukar bermain-main
dan terbang burung kecil-kecil. mengisap madu
dari bunga *banksia* kuning dan *grevillea*, yang
rupanya seperti laba-laba lemah-lembut.

Orangtuaku percaya, seperti Thoreau,
kalau semua kota metropolis, kota metro apa pun,
berlangsung bernapas, meneruskan berjiwa,
seharusnya melindungi tanah sedikit
dalam keadaan lingkungan alam asli.

Pada tiap akhir minggu mereka tolong-menolong berusaha
melestarikan tanah di atas tanjung Bilgola.

Sesudah ibuku wafat Ayah menyebarkan

abu istrinya ke tanah ini. tiada batu nisan,
atau tumpukan tanah kuburan. hanya bahwa abu Ibu
yang diserahkan ke alam, pohon, dan belukar.

Ayahku meneruskan tugas sepi, membangun bangku sederhana
dan tangga kayu, supaya rakyat biasa bisa menikmati alam tanah ini.
Banyak tahun sudah lewat. abu berkaitan dengan abu.
entahlah kalau tugas suci dan penuh kemesraan Ayah
yang pendiam memastikan angkatan yang menyusul
menjaga alam tanah ini.

Saya masih berpikir akan dia, pada saat waktu senja,
bangku kayu hampir selesai, di atas tanah semenanjung Bilgola batu,
yang mengorbankan diri pada kedatangan arus angin dari samudera ini.

(Sydney, September 2002)

Bilgola headland

Errichtet keinen Denkstein. Lasst die Rose nur
jedes Jahr zu seinen Gunsten blühen. (Rilke)
Set up no tombstone. Perhaps if the rose blooms into flower each year,
this can be the sign of remembrance. (Rilke)

in this place the kangaroo continent rises up
from the ocean; northern Sydney coastline,
headland of sandstone clawing upwards,
cleft between ravine and sky,
where the wind beats against the tawny cliff face
that offers itself in sacrifice to the grey waters below.

if you are here when the sun shines high,
and its rays burst through, when the weather is clear and still,
below the shrubs small birds fly with playful wing,
sucking honey from the yellow banksias and grevillea
shaped like gentle spiders.

my parents spent many a week's end restoring that land.
each thought, as Thoreau,
that if the great cities were to be able to breathe, to thrive, have a soul,
some land needs to be conserved, in natural state.

mother had died, and father spread her ashes upon this land.
 no tombstone marks the place, or gravesite,
 only ashes given over to this place,
 its shrubs and low-rising trees.
 father continued in his task,
 built a simple bench, upon that land
 so ordinary people could rest awhile

the years have come and gone,
 ash is now mixed with ash.
 sun going down, I think of him,
 bench of wood almost built,
 high upon Bilgola's stony headland,
 each day it sacrifices its being to the vastness of the currents
 and the coming of the winds.

Berziarah di Punta de Lobos, Chili

Satu demi satu seorang *surfer* yang berziarah
 dewi lautan naik dengan merangkak,
 seperti kepiting sekeliling batu-batu hitam diliputi
 buih ombak-ombak. yang di atas
 kalbu dan belakang badannya, papan luncur sendiri

yang mirip sayap-sayap serangga segera dipersiapkan
 terbang. sampai capai ke genangan tenang permukaan air
 dari lautnya dijaga dari kekuasaan ombak-ombak memecah
 di sebelah depan pulau batu-batu ini.

Satu demi satu serangga ini melangkah masuk
 ke lubang celah di batu-batu hitam dipukul buih.
 tiba-tiba muncul dari batu-batu. menaiki ombak
 dengan papan luncur, ombak diukir
 gelombang-gelombang menggosokkan batu-batu di lautan.

Saya berdiri jauh ke atas sandiwara ini
 di atas semenanjung ditempatkan
 sebuah palang putih beton yang sudah diukir
 oleh si manusia, sekarang dilestarikan

dengan cat putih palang ini,
dua orang laki-laki dari Guatemala:

‘dia ipar laki-laki saya.’ dua puluh tahun
yang lalu remaja ini, umurnya empat belas tahun
tenggelam badannya di batu-batu hitam ini jauh ke bawah.
ayahnya dari amerika utara, ibunya dari selatannya.
tak bisa mengucapkan kata-kata lain pun. hanya kata saya:
“buen trabajo” (sudah patut, ya).

Tiap sikat buih cat putih mirip jiwa remaja ini.
yang akan hidup seribu tahun. dunia yang fana.
saat-saat buih gemilang luncur.
sekali lagi, seorang *surfer* muncul dari lubang
batu-batu hitam abadi ini.
dengan sayap papan serangganya.

yang fana menjelma abadi,
berziarah di atas *punta* keadaan.

(Punta de Lobos, Pichilemu, Chili, 2006)

Pilgrimage to Punta de Lobos

One by one, the pilgrim surfers climb,
like crabs upon the rocks, boards held,
winged insects set to fly.
they reach the pool of innocence
between black rock sentinels,
clambering with webbed feet,
they disappear into the cleft between sheeted rocks.

until they emerge in a rush,
caught at speed a giant swell enfolds them
and ejects them into the light.

High above, on windy slopes
others come with paint and cold memory
to restore and tend a cement cross
affixed on the ridge:

‘Era mi cuñado’—
 he was my brother-in-law,
 mother from Guatemala,
 father from North America,
 four and twenty years past,
 in the black cleft, slit apart
 by the foaming anger of the sea.
 each brush-stroke of that white paint
 calls to mind the soul of that young one.
 let live for a thousand years.

the foam erupts again, once more a surfer emerges
 from the cleft of the eternal darkness, with fragile insect wings,
 a pilgrimage to the point of existence,
 Punta de Lobos.

yang fana menjelma abadi,
 berziarah di atas *punta* keadaan –
 can what is transitory become eternal
 at this point of pilgrimage?

Simfoni angin

Siang ini tersebar simfoni angin
 bersentuhan tiap-tiap pohon.

yang melalui pohon-pohon *cemara*,
 dengan kerucut-kerucutnya bulat,
 nadanya dan ribut-ributnya
 menyerupai sekawan lebah.

yang berlalu *alamo* yang tua,
 angin lemah-lembut sentuhan daun-daun halus
 mengosok-gosokkan daun-daun ini,
 menjelma desas-desus emas.

yang memukuli terhadap penahan *eucalyptus*
 musik Stravinsky yang desir dan desau
 selama penahan menangkap
 sebagian angin dari utara.

Angin dari selatan, datanglah
 angin sepoi-sepoi dari lautan, datanglah.

kadang-kadang angin siang
 menemukan pohon-pohon buah tua,
 sisa-sisa saja yang tetap
 dari kebun sebuah rumah yang rusak,
 dari generasi tanpa keturunan.

dipotong si pemiliknya,
 hanya tetap benih,
 menjelma *prem* dan *ceri* liar,
 yang berbunga. tak ada wali yang
 menjaga selama kesuburan.

Angin, cobalah lagi mencari makhluk-makhluk ini,
 yang menanam pohon. ternyata sia-sia angin mencari
 di tiap ujung dan celah bumi manusia ini.
 tapi angin masih berkuasa. selalu akan.

saya akan kembali ke tempat ini.

(Purranque, Chili, Desember 2006)

Symphony of the winds

In the afternoon what is abroad
 as I walk is a symphony of the winds,
 embracing the sturdy *cypress*,
 with its rounded cones of fir,
 resonating with the humming of bees,
 their tiny bassoon wings,
 mellowed by the light.

When the winds court the old *alamo* tree
 there is gentle play upon hallowed leaves,
 which the wind caresses, and spins around
 in busy rumours of gold but if the wind beats
 against the *eucalyptus* trees, the entire line
 becomes a Rite of Spring, as north wind and south wind
 contend in atonal strife.

On this afternoon the wind and I encounter old fruit trees—
 all that remains in a deserted yard
 of a once-lively homestead. whomever the owner was
 is now long gone, cut down in the passing of time.
 yet even abandoned, flourishes still the old *cherry* tree
 and its mate, the wild *plum*, to flower
 untended and unguarded, as the seasons progress.

Come winds, find again all the spirits of the past
 whose traces linger and whose labour flourishes
 long after death. the winds search and search again
 every nook and every cranny of this earth of humankind,
 the winds are at work, they always are,
 until they find again other spirits of this land.

and perhaps too I will come back to this place
 —like the winds?

Buenos Aires

Muram cahaya, lampu-lampu di dalam salon
 ‘La Perla’ (Mutiara), berkurang cahayanya, tetapi
 cahaya paling jernih hanya bersinar melalui
 pintu terbuka salon; di atasnya ada lengkungan,
 di bingkai yang dipasang untuk saat sekejap saja
 manusia yang lewat di luar:

terlihat seorang pemadam api sukarela,
 si pencopet, agen polisi yang menyusulnya,
 turis asing atau domestik, seorang penjual es,
 satu, atau barangkali dua bekas
 presiden yang pakai sandal
 dan kacamata hitam.

Saya asingkan diri dan mundur,
 dari dunia ini, hanya melemparkan
 pandangan lewat pasang pintu salon,
 dari nuansa ruang kayu
 berwarna kecokelat-cokelatan.

Di belakang saya dalam ruang muram ini
ada foto-foto apa dan siapa -yang sudah pernah berkunjung ke salon
dengan ukiran kayu berwarna-warnanya ini selama masa lima puluh tahun:
Carlos Gardel penyanyi tango, Bill Clinton dan saxofonnya,
Martin Palermo, juara sepak bola tim terkenal 'La Boca'.

Di kemuraman ruang salon ini manusia ini mendapat
nama dan peristiwa, yang dicatat, diidentifikasi,
direkam di dalam kegelapan saja. tiap ingatan
digosok-gosok sekali lagi, dilestarikan ngengat
untuk api abadi, untuk semua yang berziarah ke tempat ini.

Luar ruang ini, apa dan siapa tak diakui.
saya keluar ke dalam kejernihan ini,
mendapat sorotan manusia tanpa nama;
tidak ditinggalkan apa pun di dalam
kegelapan ini.

Dari kegelapan sampai kejernihan,
dari kegelapan ke dalam cahaya gemilang.
nurani, cahaya matahari, nuriah tetapi
selalu di sini, *tanpa nama*.

(Buenos Aires, Argentina, Desember 2006)

Buenos Aires

rays of light in the darkness,
bulbs within their lampshades in La Perla
obscure in the dimness
of the far corner of the salón
whilst the unnerving clarity of the streaming ray
shines through the doorway,
where the arched supports frame momentarily
movement beyond...

the aperture exposes for a second or two
a fireman, perhaps a pickpocket, maybe
a policeman following,
a foreign visitor, someone selling souvenirs,
someone wearing dark glasses.

behind me, in this amber world of ageing wood grain
photographs fade and curl,
but have captured the silver traces of those who came before
and left their names,
Carlos Gardel,
Bill Clinton and his saxophone,
Martin Palermo,
football star.

in the glow of this room
images come alive again, in the penumbra of half-light,
and every glance at them
renews the memory of a city and its past.

I leave through the slender door shutters and emerge into the light,
into the clear and bright light beneath the dazzling sun,
where the passing throng bear no names, and the sun beats down
upon those of whom no trace remains.