



Contemporary  
Progressive  
Indonesian  
Poetry

*Poetjita Ha Soebrata*

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*5/6 - '64*

CONTEMPORARY PROGRESSIVE  
INDONESIAN POETRY

to my wife Suwanti and Sibi  
who did most of the work.

... ..

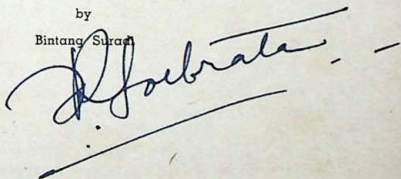
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# C ontemporary Progressive Indonesian Poetry

Translated and edited with an Introduction

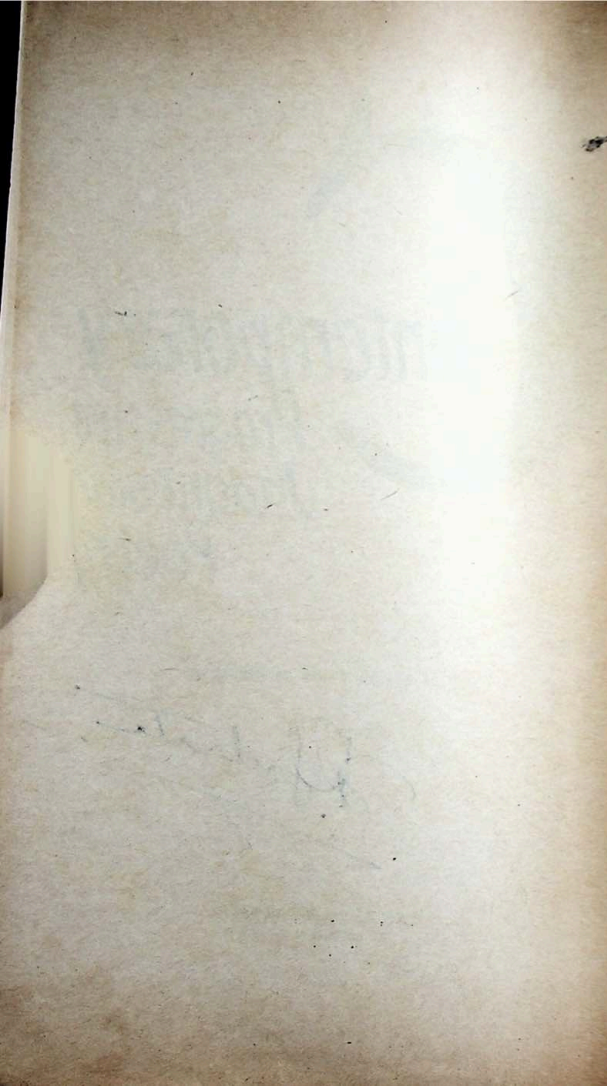
by

Bintang Surana

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Bintang Surana', is written over the printed name. The signature is fluid and expressive, with long, sweeping strokes.

league of people's culture

— indonesia —



## *a few words of introduction*

Modern Indonesian literature, that is, literature written in *Bahasa Indonesia* (the Indonesian Language) is of relative recent date. *Bahasa Indonesia* — the national language of the 97 million Indonesian people inhabiting 3,000 of the more than 10,000 bigger and smaller islands constituting the Republic of Indonesia — is closely related to the struggle for national independence waged by the Indonesian people for scores of years.

When, at the turn of the present century, this struggle for nationhood and for a national state began to take on modern forms with the emergence of the first national workers' organisation, the Trade Union of Railroad and Tram Personnel (1905) and the first nationalist organisation, the "Budi Utomo" (1908) and then political parties like the Sjarikat Islam (Islam Association) in 1912, the Indies Social Democratic Union (1914), forerunner of the Communist Party of Indonesia (1920), *Bahasa Indonesia*, too, began to take shape.

Originally a language spoken by the Melayu nationality in Sumatra and for hundreds of years used in a simplified form throughout the Indonesian archipelago as the *lingua franca*, the Melayu language, which bears close affinity to the language of the Malay Peninsula, was destined by history to play a decisive role in the formation of the Indonesian nation. From the language of a minority, this Melayu language, in the course of the struggle for national independence grew into a full-fledged national language recognised today as the official language of the Indonesian people.

In this book *Indonesian Society and the Indonesian Revolution*, D.N. Aidit, dwelling on the yeoman service rendered by *Bahasa Indonesia* in forming the Indonesian nation, observed: "A most interesting thing is that *Bahasa Indonesia* does not originate from the language of the largest nationality (i.e. the Javanese nationality amounting to about 63 million — BS). This language has never throughout history been the language of colonisers; on the contrary, it is a language which unites more than one hundred nationalities.

*Bahasa Indonesia* is a language which has been forged in the struggle for national independence, it is the language of the liberator."

Modern Indonesian literature did not appear on the literary scene as a competitor of the centuries-old literatures of the Javanese, Sundanese, Melayu, Balinese, Bugis and other nationalities. The reverse is true. Modern Indonesian literature embodies the finest anti-feudal, anti-colonial and popular traditions of the local literatures. It enriched its vocabulary and form by drawing on the old literatures, and in its turn, made these literatures known and loved by all the nationalities inhabiting Indonesia.

Instrumental in developing the national language were the novels and articles of one of Indonesia's first novelists, pamphleteers and journalists, the working-class leader, *Marco Kartodikromo*. His novels "*Amuck*" (1914), "*Freshman*" (1919), "*The Feeling of Freedom*" (1920) and his "*Verses of Spices*" (1921) and especially his speech at the Congress of Indonesian Journalists in Solo, 1919, in which he exhorted his fellow journalists and writers "to write in good Indonesian", exerted a great influence on the developing *Bahasa Indonesia*. His novels "*Freshman*" and "*The Feeling of Freedom*", because of their revolutionary and anti-colonial spirit, were banned by the Dutch authorities, and Indonesians, especially the students, had to read these novels in secret up till the thirties. The Indonesian literary critic *Bakri Siregar* and the well-known contemporary novelist and essayist *Pramudya Ananta Tur* place *Marco Kartodikromo*, who died in exile in the late twenties in West Irian, at the very origin of modern Indonesian literature.

In 1928, on October 28, *Bahasa Indonesia* gained the official recognition of the national movement when the Indonesian youth, gathered in a congress, solemnly declared that they belong to one fatherland, Indonesian, to one nation, the Indonesian nation, and speak one common language, *Bahasa Indonesia*.

Following *Marco Kartodikromo* in writing novels in Indonesian were *Semaun* with "*Hikajat Kadirun*" (1920) and especially *Marah Rusli* and *Abdul Muis* secured themselves a lasting place in Indonesian literature with their novels "*Sili Nurbaya*" and "*Salah Asuhan*" (Wrong Upbringing) dealing with the resistance against feudal family relationships and forced marriage.

In the 1930's some intellectuals, the poet *Muhammed Yamin*, the essayist *Amir Sjarifuddin*, the poet *Amir Hamzah*, the novelist *Takdir*

*Alishahbana* and the *Pane* (Sanusi and *Armiijn*) brothers founded the literary magazine "*Pudjangga Baru*" (New Bard). The novels, plays and poetry of that period vividly describe the efforts of Indonesian intellectuals to find their place in the struggle for national independence and the renovation of Indonesian cultural life. Two contradictory trends are characteristic of the "*Pudjangga Baru*" writers — those who looked for salvation for their cultural needs mainly from the West and who denied the existence of an Indonesian culture (*Alishahbana*) and those who orientated themselves to the national cultural heritage (*Yamin* and the *Pane* brothers). The social element reached its highest literary expression in Sanusi Pane's play "*Manusia Baru*" (New Man), depicting the struggle between workers and employers. Because of the Dutch censorship, the author had to set the action in Indian surroundings.

A subsequent period in Indonesian literature was the period of the Japanese military occupation of Indonesia during 1942-1945. In this period *Bahasa Indonesia* made great headway, becoming as it did an effective weapon for the Indonesian people in defending and upholding their national dignity against the master race theory of the Japanese fascists. Though officially Indonesian literature was only allowed to sing the praise of the Japanese invaders and serve their "Greater Asia" dreams, Indonesian writers managed to produce a number of patriotic short stories and poems. A case in point in Chairil Anwar's poem "*Diponegoro*". M.S. Ashar's "*Awaiting the Dawn*", however, could not escape the attention of the Japanese censorship and could only be printed after the Japanese had surrendered.

The Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, for which the Indonesian people had been preparing for decades, threw the gates for creative literary work wide open. *Bahasa Indonesia* sang for and about the Revolution, and, freed from Dutch suppression and Japanese tutelage, it flourished and acquired a real mass basis.

The revolutionary period (1945-1948) produced a number of poets, playwrights and essayists known as the "Generation of 1945". Reared by the struggle for national independence and inspired by heroism of their people, these young people used the power of expression of *Bahasa Indonesia* to further increase the revolutionary ardour of the people. Poets Chairil Anwar, Rivai Apin, Bandaharo, Buyung Saleh, Asrul Sani, Sitor Situmorang and the woman poet Rukiah Kertapati, novelist Pramudya Ananta Tur, short story writers

*Usmar Ismael, Bachtiar Siagian, Bakri Siregar*, to mention only a few, brought *Bahasa Indonesia* to new heights and firmly established it as the literary language of the Indonesian people. They successfully explored the possibilities hidden in *Bahasa Indonesia* and gave the lie to the numerous sceptics who asserted that the national language was "too simple, too underdeveloped and too primitive grammatically to be used to express the finest and deepest stirrings of the human soul". Chairil Anwar's "*Between Krawang and Bekasi*" and Ananta Tur's "*Stories of Blora*" are fine examples of the flexibility, melody and beauty of *Bahasa Indonesia*.

As a whole, the "Generation of 1945" remained faithful to the source from which *Bahasa Indonesia* originated and drew its strength — the revolutionary movement for national independence — and devoted their talents and energies and even their lives to helping the people consolidate their hard-won freedom and build a national culture. Apart from the cynicism, intellectualism, scepticism and individualism which characterises the works of some of the "Generation of 1945" like Idrus, Rosihan Anwar and Mochtar Lubis and the somewhat anarchistic tendencies in some of Chairil Anwar's poems, the bulk of the "Generation of 1945" rejected the theory of "art for art's sake".

The picture changed, however, when the 1945-1948 Revolution ended in political compromise with the Dutch in 1949, the year of the signing of the Round Table Conference Agreement. This agreement which restored Dutch political, economic and cultural influence in Indonesia, created confusion too, in the minds of cultural workers and a period of disillusionment, bewilderment and uncertainty set in in the field of creative thinking. In line with the de-nationalising activities of the Dutch Institute for Cultural Co-operation (Sticusa) and American organisations such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, a number of western-orientated Indonesians like Alishahbana, Rosihan Anwar, Sudjatmoko and Mochtar Lubis, utilising the confusion in which the majority of Indonesian cultural workers found themselves, tried to detach Indonesian art and literature from its life-giving source, the people and the revolution, by raising the slogans "pure art", "art without politics", etc.

This situation prompted progressive writers and artists to rally together in an effort to contain the flood of anti-national, anti-revolutionary and imperialist culture. A bitter struggle ensued against the demoralising and undermining effects of imperialist infiltration

in the field of culture and in the course of this struggle the *League of People's Culture (LEKRA)* was born in 1950. LEKRA, which rallies some of the finest creative talents of the Indonesian nation, adheres to the principle that art and science should serve the people and that cultural workers should artistically express the aspirations of the people.

With the adoption in 1959 of the Political Manifesto of the Republic of Indonesia — a document enthusiastically acclaimed by virtually all Indonesian cultural workers — which states among other things that the aim of Indonesia's national and democratic revolution is the setting up of a unitarian and democratic republic, the building up of a just and prosperous society (Socialism) on Indonesian soil and the establishment of friendly ties with all nations of the world for a New World free from colonialism and imperialism, Indonesian cultural workers have obtained a powerful weapon in the still raging battle against the proponents of "art for art's sake", "art without politics", and "art for those who understand it".

★

The present volume deals exclusively with poetry since poetry is the most popular branch of literature in Indonesia. It is the author's intention to publish another volume dedicated to prose.

Love for poetry is one of the national characteristics of the Indonesian people and perhaps in no other country of the world is poetry practiced on such a mass-scale, especially among the younger generation, as in Indonesia.

Indicative of this is the fact that for any newspaper in Indonesia to be successful it must, at least once a week, put a cultural page at the disposal of its readers, and invariably the greater part is filled with poems. Another "must" for Indonesian papers is a "Youth Column", a forum for young people to publish their literary products, and here too, most of the space is devoted to poetry. The Radio Republik Indonesia runs a special program entitled "Blossoming Buds" devoted to analysing poems sent in by young people from all over the country, to help them improve their style and guide them in the choice of words and subjects.

This great interest in and preference for poetry rests on a firm popular basis. Indonesians do not look on poetry as something one practices occasionally, or something that should be left to the pro-

fessional poets. No, poetry is part and parcel of daily Indonesian life. Put some Indonesians together and before long they will start to improvise on the spot verses alluding to the cause of their gathering, making love, criticising and giving counsel in versified form. The vehicle used to express these impromptu feelings is the *pantun*, a verse of four lines, sometimes in a.a.a.a., but generally in a.b.a.b. rhyme pattern. The first two lines of the *pantun* bear no visible relation, either in meaning or in text, to the last two lines, yet on closer examination it becomes clear that the first two lines are, as a rule, used to create a setting, a specific atmosphere for the idea introduced in the last two lines. The following "classic" *pantun* may serve as an example :

Terang bulan terang dikali  
 Buaja timbul disangka mati  
 Djangan perijaja mulut lelaki  
 Berani sumpah takut mati

The full moon shines on the river  
 A crocodile, seemingly dead, floats on the water  
 Do not trust the mouth of a man  
 He's brave in words but afraid to die.

The full moon evokes a sense of serenity, the crocodile, however, that of suspense and distrust. By means of this device, the women who sings or recites this *pantun* wishes to warn her sex not to trust men. Indonesian women, it seems, wholeheartedly agree to Shakespeare's Balthasar that :

Men were deceivers ever  
 One foot in sea, and one on shore  
 To one thing constant never.

However, the men thus exposed, may take up the challenge by using the Sundanese *pantun* —the Indonesian we give on the right—

Aja listrik dimasigit  
 Tjaangna kabina-bina  
 Aja istri ahli teknik  
 Rentjana pasti djadina

Ada listrik dimesdjit  
 Terangnja luarbiasa  
 Ada isteri ahli teknik  
 Rentjana pasti djadinja

In the mosque there's plenty of electric light  
Setting everything in radiant shine  
There's a technician's wife  
Rest assured, she will realise her design.

*Pantuns* are not only used for purely "personal" motives but are also skillfully employed in social criticism as the following Melayu *pantun* shows :

Mentjampak sampai kehulu  
kenalalah udang diseberang  
Apalah tjupak oleh penghulu  
mempermainkan undang-undang ?

Throw something across the river  
And you will hit a crab  
What's the yardstick for a mosque scrivener  
When he treats the law like so much scrap ?

or to express certain political ideas :

Mondar-mandir perahu ladju  
Mondar-mandir ke Surabaya  
Menang di Kuba karena bersatu  
Amerika Latin dan Asia-Afrika.

The little boat sails there and back  
And reaches Surabaya  
In Cuba they repelled the attack  
Latin America being united with Afro-Asia.

As a rule *pantuns* are not written down since they are created on the spot and on the spur of the moment. They are memorised and handed on from mouth to mouth. It is only of late that efforts have been made to collect and publish *pantuns*, notably by the daily "Harian Rakjat", from all parts of the country and from every nationality.

We have dealt at great length with the *pantun* to show that it is not fortuitous that the Indonesian people have a strong preference for poetry over the other branches of literature. Their love for poetry stems from the age-long tradition of the *pantun*.

Modern Indonesian poetry, that is, verse written in *Bahasa Indonesia* and not bound by the traditional *pantun* form style or other traditional styles such as the *sjair* and *gurindam*, began to appear during the early twenties of this century.

Muhammad Yamin, who published a collection of poems in *Bahasa Indonesia* in 1922, is not only the first Indonesian poet to have written his verses in *Bahasa Indonesia* but also the first to have discarded the *pantun* and other traditional forms for the sonnet form.

The second poet to write modern verse in Indonesian is Roestam Effendi, who was soon followed by the poet-playwright Sanusi Pane. Of this trio, often called the pre-Pudjangga Baru Poets, Pane is the most important for his style, richness of language and artistic expression. The pre-Pudjangga Baru poets, as is the case with the great majority of later poets, were active participants in the struggle for national independence. The conflict which arose among the Pudjangga Baru men of letters over orientation — should it be to Western or to Indonesia's own cultural traditions? — is also reflected in the works of the Pudjangga Baru poets Amir Hamzah, Alishahbana, M. R. Dajoh, Asmara Hadi and Intojo. Amir Hamzah, the most productive of the period, is essentially a religious poet who shunned the reality of the political and social struggle and as a result rarely rises above the "God-man" relationship. M. R. Dajoh who, unlike the bulk of the Pudjangga Baru poets, did not hail from Sumatera but from Sulawesi (Celebes), distinguished himself by the subject matter of his poems which intercede for the poor, disinherited common people. His compassion for the exploited is best manifested in his poem "Child Labour". The poetry of Asmara Hadi (South Sumatera) and Intojo (of Javanese nationality) is pervaded with revolutionary ardour and militancy.

A virtual revolution in poetic style and form was effected by the "Generation of 1945". The poets of this group considered themselves no longer bound by the forms established by the Pudjangga Baru poets. The dominant form of poems — and this is still valid today — became the "free verse", free from end-rhyme, free in form, free from static measures and traditional metaphores yet abounding in melody and rhythm. Others, weary of the well-polished and smooth verses of the preceding generation, not always equally successful, produced verses which, though in form do not resemble poetry, are full of poetic beauty and power. Chairil Anwar's verse

"1943", a verse of 29 lines of which 21 lines consist of one single, forceful word, is illustrative of this trend.

Among the best known poets of the "Generation of 1945" are Chairil Anwar, Asrul Sani, Rivai Apin, M. S. Ashar, Buyung Saleh and Rukiah Kertapati.

★

*Contemporary Progressive Indonesian Poetry* aims at acquainting the English-reading public with the work of those Indonesian poets who adhere to the principle that art should serve the people and that Indonesian cultural workers should stand in the foremost ranks in implementing the goals set by the Political Manifesto. In selecting the material — taken from the cultural magazine "Zaman Baru", and the cultural pages of the dailies "Harian Rakjat" and "Bintang Timur" — the editor deliberately limited himself to the years 1955-1961, the period in which the Indonesian people, as President Sukarno puts it, "rediscovered their identity and their revolution".

Though not all poems selected are of equally high literary achievement, they show the subjects, the aspirations and the yearnings living among the Indonesian people that prompted the poets to write their verses. The poems selected are the works of poets — many of them under or just over thirty years of age — hailing from Indonesia's different nationalities and prove that, next to speaking their own respective local languages, these poets find in *Bahasa Indonesia* the instrument *par excellence* to express their innermost feelings.

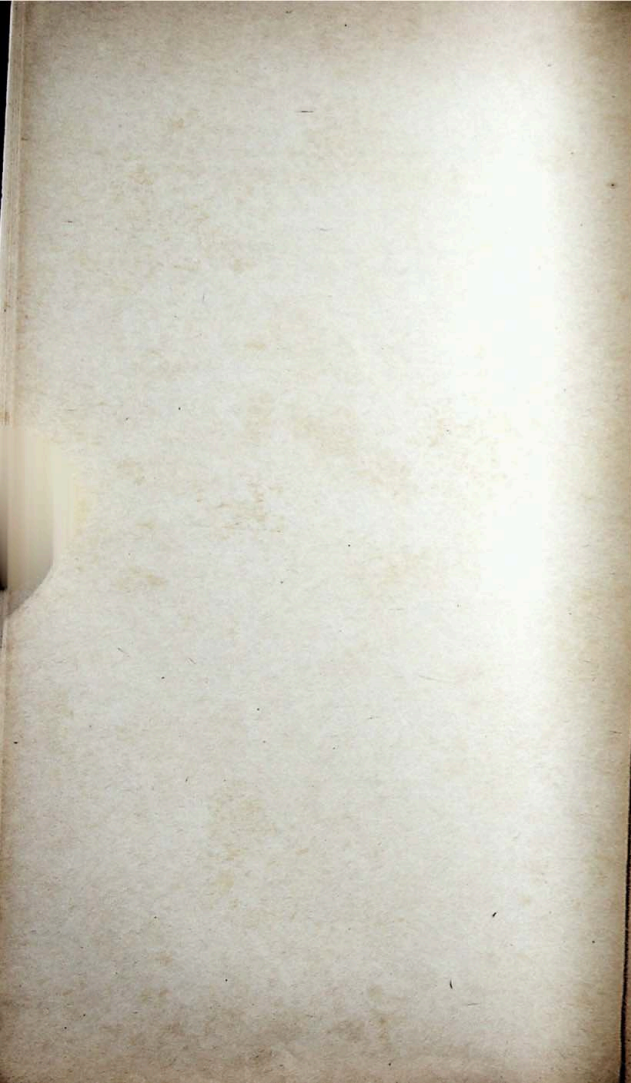
This selection speaks of the heroic struggle of the people against Dutch-supported native feudalism before 1945 — "Malia Lehi", of sacrifice for the Revolution — "Fallen in Battle", moments of grief — "My Father", temporary dejection — "The Anchor Chain Is Broken", and of supreme conviction in the righteous struggle and unshakable loyalty to ideals — "No One Shall Return". The poems sing of the basic forces of the Indonesian Revolution, the real masters of the land, the workers and the peasants, about their hardships, their troubles, their joy in struggle and their ultimate victory — "The Downtrodden Shoulder Freedom", "Death of a Peasant". The women-poets Sugiarti Siswadi and Rukiah Kertapati take pride in the role Indonesian women have played and are playing in the struggle and passionately defend the rights of women to live as human beings — "Women". "Indictment". Love and the fight for ideals.

gave birth to "Revolution" and "Young Man", whereas "Sampit" gives the reader a glimpse of the unlimited and untapped resources of Indonesia's natural wealth. It tells the foreign reader of the current struggle for democracy, "Challenge", "Democracy" and the fight against terrorist gangs to restore security in the countryside, "Native Village", and exposure of the counter-revolutionaries "Granite Wall". A number of poems in this selection express very well the deep feelings of solidarity, sympathy and one-ness with the struggle of other peoples, especially in Asia and Africa, for national independence, peace and a better world, "Scarlet Red", "Jamila".

In short, imperfect as this selection may be, it gives the reader a glimpse of the problems and ideals that stir progressive Indonesian poets of today. It is testimony of the fact that *Bahasa Indonesia* has become the inalienable property of Indonesians of all nationalities and minority groups (see Explanatory Notes), it substantiates the fact that progressive Indonesian poets are consciously-living citizens, striving for national and international solidarity and co-operation, dedicating their creative abilities and talents to build a happy life, not only for their own people, but for all peoples of the world, to build the better world which the best poets of the world have been singing of and dreaming about throughout the ages.

Djakarta, May 8, 1962.





## coming of age

it was born  
thirty-five years ago  
from the pains  
of the most progressive class  
a child of an era  
that will give birth to an era

braving tempests  
lulled not by the breeze  
it penetrated into the people's heart  
deeper than the sea of Banda  
adorning life  
more beautiful than the chempaka blossom

it lives from life  
withstanding terror and provocation  
yesterday, today, tomorrow  
it is Antaeus, son of Poseidon  
invincible as long as it stays faithful to the earth  
child of an era that will give birth to an era  
now it has come of age.

## the only road

wornout boots stuck in the mud  
on the path leading to the hut  
water drips down from the roof  
soiling my most cherished possessions  
the lessons of germany, britain, france, russia, china  
and many more  
thoughts of the best sons of the world

my wife sleeps again after answering the door  
the silence outside helps me  
the further night proceeds the more I become absorbed  
I remember the oath of fidelity to their teachings  
the crowing of the cock doesn't startle me  
the days and nights are all alike  
the road they've shown is always bright

we shall surely reach the end of this road  
no wornout boots are there  
no sticky mud  
no leaking huts  
but only this, the only road.

## granite wall

with bayonets  
you raised the diehards  
to sit with the people and me

you hope to retard  
the sweep of history  
not knowing tis you who are doomed

you hope to repeat the outdated tale  
of Nero in forty-eight  
of Magelang and Ngalian  
but you forget Amir and Hadji Bakri  
and the peasants dividing land  
in Wonogiri and Bojolali

the march of history  
will trample the diehards  
and the bayonets will break  
a granite wall is harder  
than a skull of stones  
the granite wall of a people united.

sad memories of a  
tjiandjur peasant

I

bright are the Tjiandjur skies, the fertile soil binds the peasant  
sadri, an old peasant, owns a plot of land  
his life is harmonious, peaceful, beautiful  
blossoming like the seasons

the banana ripens, the oranges, the papayas  
littering the branches, flagrant overripe  
ask sadri when he will pick them and he replies  
when my son comes home from the battle

ah, the sweet fragrance of the fruit moistens the tongue  
the orchards flourish on the rich Perianggan soil  
beloved land, united, defying the splitters  
full of beauty, fertility, but what of the heart?

## II

sadri waits with pounding heart  
his eyes glued to the southern skies  
the flames leap up high  
a brutal force is burning peace

lovely Periangan, burning, reddened by fire  
the peasants trapped, scorched on their native earth  
comrades, brothers, against this challenge the will is supreme  
resistance, revenge in every heart

the crops, the oranges and the papayas  
once overripe and weighing down the trees  
lie destroyed, overrun by fire  
and thousands of lives nipped in the bud.

# l i f e

life does not depend on some external force  
it must be grasped by we who live  
it bears fruit that grows from within  
ripening slowly but never for a moment still

life is as vast as the raging seas  
but it flows not on its own, it must be steered  
advancing towards an objective  
firmly and accurately aimed

life is a vast flood of water  
green and blue, its depth can be gauged  
not veiled in mystery but with fineries interwoven  
and things that are important for you and me.

## the society of my class

udin, seventeen times you have been kicked around  
eight times you have dragged your bruised body away  
forty-five times perhaps kicked from pillar to post  
when you visit your home in no man's land  
you'll be driven away on the morrow to tears and wails  
but tears and abuse are of no avail  
because there it is still : the bustle of life under the bridge

udin, endure the kicks and the knocks  
do not say : where next shall I be thrown.  
but contain your vengeance till it hardens as the river stones  
till the time comes : victory or death

ah, my country, only part of it feels the touch of the sun's  
golden breath  
the other lives in darkness, touched by the wind of death  
such are the extremes between the high and low  
in a society split into classes since times of yore

the society of my class, long have I dreamed of the sunrays  
of a future for udin and for the others  
who yearn for friendly love binding equals to each other  
ah, how black and soiled it is today  
but wait, for the boil will burst, molten fire will burst forth  
the time will come when the enemy meets death at the point  
of the dagger  
the battles for the people were not in vain  
they have fertilised the sturdy seedling planted by lenin

udin, wait, for the boil will burst all of a sudden  
the wheel of history will surely turn round  
effacing the darkness and the wind of death  
and for my class only the golden sunrays.

## the anchor chain is broken

everyone feels it  
the links in the chain break one by one  
and each time one breaks  
anxiety grips the heart of the passengers

and finally all will break

the links in the chain break one by one  
and breath too goes one by one  
each minute, each second  
who knows when all this will end.

## e l e g y

what we feel we need not state  
what we think we need not say  
do not grieve — let us proceed  
we bring this truth to its star and its earth  
we do know, since we have preserved one of your words  
one vision of the parched lands drying up then suffocating our breast  
oh, your memory will forever haunt us  
terrifying like the shadows in a shaky hut when the oil-lamp is lit  
yet full of love like the father's with hands outstretched  
and you'll come back like of old when you and this soil  
vibrate with life

we shall not forget you the time you were hunted and hunting  
— because what we are hunting and running for  
to that you dedicated your life  
and we who view your merits  
know well, as you too know. that there's no other deity  
—  
or god worth living for:

let the tempest blast this barren field  
yet our steps are planted in the scorched land where you  
lie deeply buried  
keeping alive the flame and we that stand here are fire !  
we preserve life in this night, the night that bears the noon  
we are the children of one father  
we are the children of one mother  
and death for us is but a matter of time  
yet we, preserve all one god

the younger will come, the elder has gone  
we lift the parched land, these barren lands  
the burden's weight, the aching of shoulders that carry the  
bitterness of hearts defeated  
will lead the love of the faith that we profess.

# peking

## I

do not say that the night is as hard as granite  
since here in china not a stone is left unworked by the people  
here nature is like marble  
everything is carved and polished by the hands of working  
people building culture

## II

the cruel peking wind has no equal  
the nights are heavy with dust, yet from bustling cracks  
the rumble of mountain rocks being split booms forth  
in the night the whirlwind gathers strength  
and still people are at work tempering the steel  
from the stones split in the night is born the morning twinkling  
and the fountain of sparks forged by the blows of the smith  
are the stars in the sky, the medals of the workers.

the downtrodden shoulder  
freedom

we the downtrodden shoulder freedom  
without rank, nameless  
we've kept our country from becoming a prison

we possess nothing  
but ninety million burning hearts  
do not try to keep us still  
fear lies buried under barren hills

we possess nothing  
but burning hearts that seek no reward  
we guard the islands that kiss the beloved sea  
we fight for wages and land of freedom

we possess nothing  
but burning hearts roughened by suffering  
that may turn into lava, fire and thunder  
destroying foes, grinding them to dust

we the downtrodden shoulder freedom  
without rank, nameless  
we've kept our country from becoming a prison.

# j a m i l a

the world did once inflict a wound  
but understanding rose from within

one touch of light in the soldier's breast  
and willingly she accepted death  
for she herself is the world and holds life in her hand  
for she herself is the native land and the fruit of love

another touch came down at dawn  
and she defended all her dreams

the world has inflicted a wound  
but consciousness was conceived within its womb

one draw of breath in the soldier's breast  
and she did profess herself  
slowly but without complaint  
for she herself is time and the blaze in the sahara  
for she herself is liberty and freedom in imagination

another draw as night did fall  
and away she flung the world full of wrath

the world has inflicted a wound  
but she herself is the world and holds life in her hands.

## to people's bandung

wherever they come from, the people are the people  
wherever they are, times are with the people  
and the wind touches every bosom :  
the free heart of africa  
the revolutionary heart of asia

those who have come  
are lovers, fighters all  
children of the sun  
sparks of multi-coloured fireworks  
and the colour grows at the waist of the mountain  
and embraces the faith of bandung

those who are here  
are all beloved, are fire all  
children of the earth  
who with flowers combat death  
and the flower grows at the waist of the mountain  
and embrace the solidarity of bandung

wherever they come from, the people are the people  
wherever they are, times are with the people  
and the wind touches the free heart :  
the song of revolution  
peace in all the world.

## native village

when evening falls the village lies deserted  
and the villagers fence themselves in  
engulfed by fear  
for soon the fiend will encircle their dwellings

this land was once peaceful and safe  
man grew up surrounded by love  
but that's a cherished memory now  
when death stalks the land  
when rifle shots fired by terrorists  
resound from house to house

this beloved land of mine  
has today become my prison  
the days pile up revenge  
and common folk have become each other's slayer.

## freedom and prison

its not because you do not need to search for freedom  
for you are freedom itself  
its not because the paltry judges do not need to threaten jail  
for pettiness of soul is put in prison  
this is not the reason why we speak  
of freedom and imprisonment

dishonesty of hearts and turbidity of eyes  
turn freedom into bondage  
but freshness of hearts and the sparkle of eyes  
turns bondage into freedom  
and this is what turns talking into steel  
and hoping into real strength

and then, when the names of paltry judges have all disappeared  
forgotten, burnt or eaten by the rats  
your name will still live on, — Son of the Masses  
born of a powerful womb  
your name will live forever, death it shall not know  
for you are life itself ....

## to uncle ho chi minh

we bid you welcome, uncle ho  
although we always meet  
are you not, uncle ho  
a tale of the mighty jungle and of fragrant flowers  
each bud that falls infusing a thousand energies  
into those which bloom ?

and didn't the sun once refuse to set in your country  
and dusk did not descend :  
a new road for the new man ?

ah, we too have our tale of sun and jungle  
kissing and hiding the bodies slain  
mending the torn threads of history  
with sweat and love together

and we who still stand erect  
we too are just emerging from the mud  
strength on the right, hope on the left  
clearing a new road for the new

a friend will soon pass by  
with a beating heart that stores memories  
and blood that gushes forth  
the same, the very same ideals

we bid you farewell, uncle ho  
although we never part.

## rukmanda

mention all dungeons  
and you have mentioned me  
mention all storms  
the bitterness of exile  
the longing for the ketjapi  
the stillness of silent nights  
the memories of Periangan  
and the listlessness of waiting

I who counted  
the chain of seconds  
for tens of years  
dedicating all I had  
to the feast of struggle  
all the time, each moment  
my soul breathed the spirit of youth  
and if this very instant I were asked  
I would sing "arise ye starvelings from your slumber"

now I am no more  
I am one with the soil of my beloved land  
but my song I'll finish  
together with the dimming stars  
with the last song of my heart  
which beholds the shimmering dawn  
and the buds continuing life

mention all dungeons  
and you have mentioned me  
but mention also loyalty  
enthusiasm and heroism  
for this too is me.

## tidings from the party

this night is a lonely night  
wrought up with anxiety of birth  
this night is a sacred night  
bearing tidings from the party  
bidding farewell to yesterday  
hailing the day of tomorrow

I kiss this night  
which arouses morning in my heart  
I kiss you my party  
dawn in this day

tidings from the party unfurl the banners  
of battles against myself  
confront me with this choice  
of delight in life  
abandoning personal passions  
or fading away before death

tidings from the party have shown  
the road which ends defeats.

## fallen in battle

nine hours after the battle

there he lies  
rifle at his side  
and his breast pierced with bullets

deadly silence all around  
broken by his panting breath  
he raises up his head  
as if in doubt :  
there it is  
the rustling of wings  
is it the angel of death ?

almost weary of waiting  
suddenly from far away  
he hears the shout of victory  
carried by the wind  
to the lonely fighter  
freedom ! freedom !

his very being shouts for joy  
this cry is his reward.  
in the battle for which he staked his life  
freedom means victory  
and the free man lives in paradise

a new strength surges through him  
covered as he is with blood  
he musters all the will in his feeble body  
pressing his hands on the soil he defended  
he rises slowly  
he shouts and clenches his fists  
freedom ! freedom !

this was the last sound he uttered  
joy in his heart  
victory in battle  
he stepped forward  
and fell.

## no one shall return

the masses march towards the day  
the mass I represent  
the sorrows and sufferings of my times  
lie heavy on my shoulders

no one shall return  
though death awaits ahead

this road leads on to the break of dawn  
and stirring, peaceful chants  
our aspirations give birth to love  
directly drunk from life

no one shall return  
though death awaits ahead.

## after panmunjom

for Major Yoon Gil

after panmunjom  
everything maimed  
except ideology  
the imperialists vented their malice  
on things and innocent people  
everywhere destruction  
everything in ruins  
corpses of partisans piled up  
and no two stones standing  
after panmunjom  
nothing has been steeled more  
than the people

ideology unmaimed  
people steeled  
that's a giant creator  
korea stands gloriously erect  
on the red soil.

## the hero on the hill

from the top of the hill  
the road stretches forth  
casting ahead the images  
of life and death

(a bridge in the distance the limit of all feelings)

loyal souls are always  
fond of singing  
songs of heroism

which is higher  
the sky above the hill  
or the clouds drifting overhead  
which will disappear at any moment ?

behind the shirt button  
something lies hidden in the breast  
how red is young blood

then from the valley deep below an appeal echoes  
and weapons whine and boom

the smell of gunpowder belches into the sky  
because the angels spread  
the most fragrant of scents

with firm strides  
the hero advances.

# d e a t h

death, hero of the prosecutor  
laughs  
on the back of the bent judge

death lurks in every corner  
waiting patiently  
for the ailing man

(sometimes, bearing a sack he appears on a mattress  
to kidnap sleeping children)

sometimes, hiding  
behind a lamp-post  
he coaxes a passing car  
as somebody goes by

death jingles  
at the tip of everything sharp  
and explodes  
in the mouth of a gun

gloomy indeed is death  
for the black king  
is death.

## challenge

if this world is to be scorched at the points of bayonets

must we then sit by

with trembling knees ?

poets !

sing a song :

of freedom !

## malia lehi

malia lehi  
in Kui you rose up together with your people  
to fight injustice  
and the rape of Kui

malia lehi  
though heavy with child you shed your blood  
drenching, enriching the heroic soil  
where it glowed for forty-eight years

Kui  
buildings, coconut trees  
drums  
the people rising, holding out

malia lehi  
no one knows  
where your tomb stands in Kui  
but everyone knows your struggle

Kui fell  
it could not be held  
but in the year sixty-one, january  
the anvil thundered  
everyone returned  
celebrated  
Kui has become the tomb of the poisoner.

s o n g

to W. R. Supratman

when hearts were full of surrender and loneliness  
and when a ray of light pierced the gloom of suffering and ignorance  
you stirred this scarlet blood, you tore away the veil of secrecy  
and stagnation  
which entombed the greatness of your people and glorified  
exploitation.

Out of the shed that housed your hunger, suffering and dissolution  
amidst the shadows of everything decayed in the glitter  
portending death  
your song rose swiftly over valley and mountain, prison and privation  
caressing each heart soiled and wrung dry by the sweat of labour

standing forth, straight and certain, finding a place in consciousness  
of this eternal truth so long obscured:  
Indonesia my native country, Indonesia my fatherland.

and your great energy compelled each heart to sing of and to love  
the greatness and wealth of a fatherland submerged  
making the blood throb with exultation flooding the  
battle-field with joy  
to settle accounts and bring to life what you made clear.

comrade, in the darkness that obscures the last moments before dawn  
your song steeled us, the generation you left behind, in ideals  
and work  
to give birth to that which must be born and cultivate countless buds  
at your behest and greatness, on the frontiers of past tears.

## of things to come

dawn sends a message on rays just breaking through  
stealing into the sobs of children, whispering on trembling lips  
resounding in the houses, over ricefields and amid roses  
making hearts speak out that till now could only feel.

there's dew in the dawn of Vietnam, the dew of happiness of a  
million mothers  
making the stiff begin to flow, each body building life  
in joyful work together, building upon the darkness of yesterday  
there's no more news of misery destroying laughter.

a new sky cleanses, protecting the hopes of the Korean man,  
beginning to build tomorrow's victory, man's victory over ruins  
and dawn's message blossoms forth in the heart of every working man  
carrying hope in brilliant array to those still full of pain.

and from the summit of perfection towards which man firmly climbs  
the road of peace lights up, though covered still with weed confused  
and one by one the nights vanish, submerged in early day  
in the redness of the future, the love for labour and for struggle.

Hadi, S.

## lonely night

the night is lonely  
but my heart is lonelier still  
the cold wind yearns for your cabin door  
and all of you are lulled to sleep

I come ...  
albeit the dew has merged as one  
albeit the cold has penetrated my bones  
for all of you are my devotion  
I must come  
though you know nothing

I set my longing to verse  
though it has no meaning  
but I do it for the sake of love and purity of heart

the night is lonely  
but my heart is lonelier still  
and tomorrow ...  
the day will return on the surge of labour  
the harbour will bustle  
the workshops will ring again  
and the radiant morning will dawn.

## my father

my father was not among those who returned  
my father fell on the field of battle

my heart's torn asunder with sorrow and grief  
and the red-and-white flag flutters high in the sky

oh, people of today

do you hear?

my father is dead, he was slaughtered by bullets

oh, why does such suffering still stalk the earth?

## indictment

the morning breeze blows cool and soft  
and the blossoms quiver at its gentle touch  
it softly caresses the green foliage  
but Mother I know!  
the morning breeze, the flowers and foliage  
do not bring you beauty

lyrical music sweeps the heart  
blending with the thrill of a song at dusk  
and with it, love, passion and joy burst forth  
but Mother I know!  
lyrical music and afternoon merriment  
do not bring you happiness

the blaze of the lamps dazzles the eye  
laughter, dancing and gaiety  
and when evening falls, the laughter rings loud  
but Mother I know!  
laughter and lamps at evening tide  
do not make you happy

you shiver with cold when you're out in the wind  
you have no eye for foliage and flowers  
your naked feet get stuck in the mud  
for you there's just hunger, fatigue and rent  
capitulation, whipping and flogging  
is it true, Mother, that nature has beauty for you?

you have to go out in the hostile rain  
your labour is squeezed for a wage  
recreation and music mean nothing to you  
disease, taxation, repayment of debt  
throttles your life and tears it to shreds  
truly Mother is life happiness for you?

Mother!

year after year you have waited  
an endless longing in your heart  
but your suffering has only augmented.  
sweat and toil, blood and tears  
terrorists, usurers and landlords  
join one another to suck out your blood  
is it true Mother  
that all creatures on earth have your love?

Mother!

words do not dare to make any promise  
who knows, today, tomorrow or when  
but you will find faith and conviction  
if you join the ranks  
your heart will be as hard as steel  
your feet will be as strong as iron  
your body withstand a mountain of rocks  
Mother, do you believe  
that I leave "the future"  
only to you?

Mother!

this is our dream  
our thoughts  
our struggle  
our song  
our life  
"this future" is yours!

## the child of a worker

my father's a worker  
troubled every day  
he toils  
and sweats  
to make a living  
oh, how he suffers !

my mother sells greens  
the day's rounds wear her out  
she sells spinach and parsnips  
beans, chillies and corn  
to help keep the family  
forgetting herself in her troubles and toil

when evening comes  
my father lies down  
my parents think of their meagre earnings  
faint from fatigue  
oh, how noble they are !

today my father suffers  
and my mother lives in misery  
yet, oh, my parents  
wait for the day !  
get ready for tomorrow !

brace yourself and the world  
kindle a glowing fire  
I shall rise and seize for you  
victory with my hands

victorious tomorrow !  
victorious tomorrow !

## scarlet red

lumumba's blood is scarlet red  
lumumba's blood is scarlet red  
congo !

your hunger is our own  
your hunger we have in common  
hunger for the revolution

lumumba's blood is scarlet red  
lumumba's blood is scarlet red  
congo !

your revolution is our own  
your revolution we have in common  
world revolution

# haiku variations

for yoko

## I

flowers on the aerodrome  
hearts beat in unison  
two fighters embrace

## II

fuji and kenji  
nature is there to be harnessed  
man to be won

## III

the uji flows  
senji's spirit marches on  
relentlessly

## IV

chimneys without smoke  
the soil is hot  
the spirit is hot

## V

triumph of mankind  
waves that roll o'er the roof  
when will the people be master?

VI

shimonoseki  
soldiers departed smiling  
returning ghastly pale

VII

hiroshima  
atrocities unbridled  
turned to boundless struggles

VIII

on the right tidal waves  
on the left the beaches  
the train is heading for sendagaya

IX

thank you  
domo arigato  
half my heart I leave behind.

b a l i

in bali too the rice ripens for miles around  
but in bali too thousands of peasants die of hunger

we come to bali and there are dancers  
we come to bali and there are temples by the score  
both are typical of bali

we come to bali and the peasants dies  
not because the crop failed to ripen  
this too is typical of bali  
this too has a meaning

# l i f e

life should not be measured by luxury  
though luxury is the aim pursued  
but by whether poverty repeats its cycle  
and spreads conspicuously across the earth

in the restaurant a gentleman dines lavishly  
on the ground a beggar with a tin  
is there a deal of life ?

life should not be measured by luxury  
and we shall not be counted in  
though part of its blood flows from us

let us put an end to such account  
we too demand  
we too work.

## the grave on a hillside

at your side the pines have yellowed  
but not because of age  
at your side sand conceals your face and mine  
I'm a wanderer who knows not your countenance  
I'm a man who knows not your struggle

lonesome is the night in your grave  
deserted on the hillside  
the feet of a man passing by are sandy  
and he does not know your name  
yet before you lay down to rest  
you gave your heart to this earth of yours  
and unfurled the beloved banner in your land  
and I know your struggle now

a grave on the hillside  
I'm a wanderer who knows not your countenance  
with this paper and pencil  
I pay my country's tribute to your struggle

I see you stand up erect again  
on guard at your mother's side  
the bullet so wasted in your rifle  
like snow in winter time

the days pass by and the rain drips slowly down  
moistening the sand  
your heart is ever singing  
the freedom song of your people  
the heroic calls of your people  
like the ever-shining sun

you open your eyes  
and throw the door to your heart wide open  
and I see you stand eternal  
on guard at your mother's side  
on your shoulder your rifle lies wasted

oh, eternal grave  
the grave of one that never died  
the grave of a hero unforgettable  
with this verse I convey my country's greetings.

## yesterday and today

for the Arab people

yesterday a peasant  
a soldier without rank today  
he lies prostrate in Beirut  
the tale still shakes the earth

with trampling steps the colonialists swallow cities  
everything withers and lies scorched

no time to gaze at sweetheart and parents  
where will sorrow go  
where?  
the enemy steps in front

yesterday a peasant  
a common soldier today  
he lies prostrate in Beirut  
facing victory in his heart

over the dust of the roads  
heavy steps resound  
the Arab patriots enter town  
their voices echo in the hearts  
arise ye Arab patriots  
the age of victory is right ahead

yesterday a peasant  
a soldier true today  
in Beirut he was slain  
in Beirut he will live again.

## anniversary poetry

this day has been ours  
and therefore love will never die.

wherever we may recline  
against a stone wall roofed with tiles  
locked when the day has passed to night  
but breathing the moment morning returns  
bringing love closer to the light  
to the struggle that will never surrender.

this day has been ours  
therefore even bullets cannot part us.

wherever we turn our eyes  
the view never changes  
those who work race against time  
for the one and only love  
our place is clear and we see before us unmarred  
the day when victory will be ours.

## the steel mill

that which we know of steel  
is that it's solid and strong  
how many types and what its uses  
how much, too, it will expand  
the dreams of people who shape tomorrow

that which we know of the times is  
that it's solid and strong, if in the hands  
of the people, this is the revolution of mankind  
far stronger than its happening  
the process of tempering steel of the new age  
from metal exploded from history  
moulded by the aspiring hands  
of its creators. In it the hardest metals  
soften and become  
spirited, become a hammer  
and a mate of the liberated worker.

## a cuban maid in peking

Zoila is a maiden from Cuba  
in Peking. With pride  
she hands me the banner  
of her country, celebrating  
the victory of her land  
over American aggression.

Zoila is a maiden from Cuba.  
in peking she studies languages  
far from her native shores.  
in tribute to her people  
I gave a flower  
when she spoke on the first of May :  
this day my homeland was proclaimed  
a socialist republic.  
when I return  
I'll become a pioneer !  
in the evening  
on the square of tien a men  
when the whole of peking  
was celebrating labour day,  
how beautiful was this Cuban patriot's dream  
sprung from a thousand sparks of fireworks  
setting the entire sky in colour.

# eating the bread of the commune

to Paul Eluard

A visit to a commune in  
an erstwhile poverty.  
stricken part of Peking.

there are those in want of bread  
there are those in want of rice  
but of all wants  
the most insulting is  
the lack of social life

there are those in want of lodging  
there are those in want of clothes  
but of all wants  
the most paralysing is  
the lack of solidarity

there are those in want of strength  
there are those in want of skill  
but of all wants  
the most humiliating is  
when hopes come to end

social life, solidarity and hopes are  
rice, bread and bloom and fruit  
filling the life of the worker  
when free  
from falsehoods, oppression and fraud  
colonialism, feudalism and banditry

social life, solidarity and hope  
I encountered and felt  
in this commune, hence :  
I want to drink from the warmth  
of your hopes  
I want to press your hands  
so busily at work.  
I want to eat this bread  
the bread of the commune, as a token  
of social life, solidarity and  
human hopes regained.  
forever together in love, in  
ideals and the reality of the socialist world.

w o m e n

no longer  
are we gilded posies  
engaging when compliant  
exquisite when yielding  
enchanted when submissive.  
to hell tis our duty to go  
to heaven permitted to follow.

and no longer  
are we blossoms cast aside  
downtrodden  
selling our sweat for next to nothing  
workers at half the price  
no security  
no equality  
only duty

we have cried out  
from behind the walls of segregation  
from the clutches of the spiteful bed  
from the nightly business in the gutters  
from the revenge of unwilling wedlock  
"we are human beings!"

# f r e e d o m

freedom has changed the face of the world  
it rules the mind, the heart and the person  
it dispels the mist hanging over the mountains, the valleys  
the shores, the fields, the factories and the cities  
and the hearts of us, women.

now we are no longer  
just giving birth to worker soldiers.  
we too are worker soldiers.  
no longer just wives of people's heroes,  
we too are people's heroes

and when the fortresses of obsolete time are smashed  
and workers' power stands proudly in our land  
we shall no longer only tend the graves  
read the prayers and weep for the dead  
we shall be part of the foremost ranks.

s a m p i t

three centres of life has Sampit city  
factory — harbour — river  
all three are bustling with life  
the scratching of saws on timber  
the hissing of the rubber mill  
the boom of trucks, motors and cars  
the roaring of ships' engines

but one rises above all the rest  
resounding throughout the city  
the voice of the workers  
who release from their heavy hearts  
the bitterness of life

the Mentaya river cares for  
its oily water in turbulent whirling pools  
wanting to see life as it's really lived  
a never-drying source

that is the Mentaya, Mentaya  
the girl that has not yet been wooed.

## the fishermen of katingan

when the waters are low in the river and its tributary  
which twists round the island like rattan round a tree  
when the flood waters have receded from the edge of the village  
the fishermen search for a place of solitude.

here among the cold, the mosquitos, the bears and the forest birds  
I feel the great significance of man  
— much tortured in war and the fierceness of life —  
when the sun pushed away by the wind goes down  
and the evening approaches from the east  
I feel very close to my father.

when the moon sinks to the feet of the dawn  
I awaken remembering the tender tale  
how my father's blanket covered my body.

— oh, he's a rough yet tender man  
he's the home of our family  
a simple fisherman  
a man who always thinks of others.

among the rustle of the leaves and the river water  
I call out to him :

father !

and I see his feelings under the hazy moon  
from the smile he throws at me.

— I want to be like father  
simple and kind of heart  
a man loved by women  
by my wife and child

— no, my son shall be a general  
a poor man's life is not a pleasure  
there's too much want in the village.

— today, many generals are as feeble as cork  
I want to be like you, father  
a worker with an ardent heart  
and as hard as ironwood.

here among the sprawling fish  
our laughter makes the forest tremble.

birds and water flies leave their nest  
and the fishermen go homeward.

— when there are many buyers in the village  
and people live far from town  
the fish will sell, father!

— your mother, brothers and your sisters  
and we too  
will always need this fish  
therefore after having shared them  
salt and store the rest.

— father are you not disappointed ?

a fleeting smile greets my glance and my words  
I know the taste : bitter !

— son, fantasy  
is not the answer to privation.

— oh, I want to be like father, like father  
an ardent, simple worker kind of heart.

like the river waters  
fleeted our smiles.

## radiant baku

baku, the oil town of the strong winds  
barren, yet gorgeous green gardens  
stretch forth as far as the eye can see  
surrounded by ranges of hills  
footed by shores that are tempered by waves  
a forest of towering glittering drills  
the oil rainbow rippling on the water.

in the darkness of yesterday  
a ray burst forth  
brilliant red  
the oil buried  
twenty-six  
valiant officers  
glowing, glowing  
red, red, red  
the victory of today and tomorrow.

baku bathes radiant and fresh  
dancing on captivating smiles  
nimble movements call for motion  
stirring songs of oriental tone  
alternating dainty dances  
sweeping down, rising to the sky  
holding tight the sacred white dove  
hearts glow red like pomegranates  
illuming the endless universe.

## the struggle of erevan

erevan the heart of armenia  
has barren mountains rising high.  
the snowy cap of mount ararat white as foam  
melts and flows to the soviet-turkish border.  
for centuries lake sewan abounded in trout  
and silently she saw oppression.  
lovely armenia lay stiff and cold  
her bones covered with dried-up skin  
crawling up in resistance  
the struggle of erevan, of ajastan.

on november twenty-ninth in the twenties,  
erevan's struggle found its throne,  
red silk fluttered  
changing humiliation into shining faces.  
the barren hills bear iron ore.  
densely rise the electric poles  
and ararat's wines refresh the thirsty.  
lake sewan bends its clear water down  
for coal.  
the glittering gold sends beams  
electric lights the child of times  
the fruit of love of erevan's struggle.

erevan has become young again  
the twitter of the swallows resound  
accompanied by native tones.  
come, clap your hands and dance and sing  
erevan's struggle glows fiery red  
triumphant now and tomorrow.  
human hands are harnessing nature  
gone forever lamentations, laughter was born  
gone forever privations, nirwana was born  
erevan's struggle rejoices in happiness.

## young man

when the mountain wind blows in the late afternoon, Idjah  
part of my breast snaps on the village fence  
a pair of grey-blue ricebirds sing  
flying in circles afraid of the drizzling rain  
how desolate is my yearning heart

when the mountain wind blows in the late afternoon, Idjah  
a lump of my heart is tied to the village fence  
the rice field stretches far, proliferating rice  
my eyes are glued to your tomb, my love  
how pulverised is my ravaged heart.

## the hungry

if we eat only once a day  
its not because we're fasting  
but because we haven't anything

the city wealthy pile up riches  
we look on hungry and sweating  
oh, how hot is this life

our strength almost exhausted  
but still we have no rice  
and our pockets remain empty

we hungry people carry a conviction  
pounding in our breasts  
that a new world will dawn

we hungry people carry a conviction  
that nothing can prevent  
the sun from reaching our hearts.

## partnership

to Mario d'Andrade

I too am called upon — Angola  
urges all our sympathy.  
I can't sit down with folded hands

when people are deprived of freedom.  
what then is left, oh people of today ?  
I dare not look at the faces  
of those still young.

Angola.  
because your ranks are not alone  
I raise this partnership :  
solidarity for you !

## the ballad of upit

Upit !

among the tea shrubs on the slope of the hill  
your fingers dance from twig to twig  
the leaves are gently swaying  
kissed by the mountain breeze.

eight hours you have sweated  
on the verdant shady hills  
why is it that your heart  
fails to find repose ?

Upit !

when the crimson setting sun  
bathes the bushes in a reddish glow  
your heart is full of woe.

and when the ketjapi strings  
play the song of labour  
it resounds in every heart  
the struggle of women will never cease  
till victory is won.

## revolution

I entice you into the woods, my love  
and you follow me like a shadow  
the shore vanishes, the sea remains  
and corpses pile up in the disputed city

red ribbon and sun  
love bleeds on until death.

# the death of a peasant

to Darman L. Tambunan

## I

there, before the office of my lord the regent  
lies a peasant  
because of land  
because of land.

there, in the office of the peasant union  
the hungry fume  
because of blood.

land and blood  
turn the wheels of history  
from here the flame springs  
from here peace everlasting.

## II

he fell  
prostrate  
a bullet in his head.  
his mind went back in torture  
yet torture was only for his body.  
he remembered the days of his youth  
his son turned soldier

— ah, who will give them food ? —

my wife weeds the ricefield.  
let the rice rage at the stalk  
pity them  
pity them  
they are our comrades

give me water, I am thirsty  
my body weak with hunger,  
I came to them  
then back to you,  
and as the dry land lay white on the skin  
we had food together.

and then, all went gloomy,  
gloomy  
extinguished  
and black  
as night.

### III

they say  
that those in power  
who murder the people  
should quit.

#### IV

the pregnant paddy withstands  
the wind.  
the sound of the flute in the dismal hut  
impregnates life.

the pregnant paddy dances  
on the wind.

just see, the women boldly going naked  
their hoes and paddy smashed to smithereens  
the prison is their home  
and even the baby at their breast knows torture.

they say  
that those in power  
who rob the people  
should quit  
before being forced to do so.

if the tractor comes  
to destroy our dwellings  
we'll hang at every door.

## democracy

generals, it's we that adorned  
your chest with medals  
wrested from landlords' and usurers' torturous hands  
we now demand of your medals: where's our land?

generals, it's we that adorned  
your chest with medals  
out of the sweat of a seven-hour that became a ten-hour work-day,  
we now demand of yours medals: where's our pay?

generals, one after another we fell  
arms in hand against the Dutch  
we now demand of your medals: where's our Irian?

generals, certainly it's not you  
who will give land, wages and Irian  
what we want is: let us build one mighty front  
and above all, give us freedom to speak.

## *explanatory notes*

*AIDIT, Dipa Nusantara.*

From the Melayu nationality which inhabits the whole eastern coast of Sumatera. Born on July 30, 1923 in Sumatera. Chairman of the Communist Party of Indonesia, Vice-Chairman of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia and since March 1962, Minister in the Sukarno Cabinet. Co-founder of the League of People's (LEKRA).

The poem *"The only road"*, written on January 27, 1955, describes how Communist leaders, living under difficult conditions at that time — in leaking huts standing along muddy paths and without electric light — dilligently and painstakingly studied the works of Marx, Engels, Leinin, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Maurice Thorez, Palmiro Togliati, and "many more thoughts of the best sons of the world". This was an important beginning in the building up of the CPI as a genuine Marxist-Leninist and mass Party.

The poem *"Coming of Age"* was written on the accasion of the 35th anniversary of the Communist Party of Indonesia on May 23, 1955.

*"Granite Wall"* was written in September 1957 when counter-revolutionary 'councils' threatening to overthrow the government, forced the then Djuanda government to sit down together with representatives of the 'councils' at the conference table. In February 1958, however, the 'councils' in West Sumatera and North Sulawesi staged the notorious "PRRI-Permesta" counter-revolutionary rebellion. The "outdated story of forty-eight" in *"Granite Wall"* refers to the 1948 Madiun Affair when thousands of progressive people were murdered or thrown into prison on the orders of the then Vice-President of the Republic, Hatta. Eleven top leaders of the CPI, amongst them the first Communist Prime Minister of Indonesia, Amir Sjarifuddin, were executed without trial at Ngalian where

they lie buried. Magelang is a town near Ngaliem, and Wonogiri and Bojolali, also in Central Java, are districts where in the early days of the Revolution a democratic land reform was carried through. Hadji Bakri (a hadji is person who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca) was a well-known Communist leader.

#### AIDIT, Sobron

Younger brother of D. N. Aidit, born in 1934 on the tin island of Belitung. Began to write poetry when still at elementary school. His first collection of poems *"Home from the Front"* was published in 1959. Is also writer of short stories, one of which, *"Story"*, obtained top literary reward of the *"Kisah"* literary magazine. Another story, *"Basimah"* was awarded the annual prize by the daily *"Harian Rakjat"* for the best short story of 1961.

The numbers seventeen, eight, and forty-five in the poem *"Society of my Class"* refer to August 17, 1945, the days on which the independent Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed. *Udin* is a common name for men in West Java. *Tjiandjur* and *Periangan* are mountainous districts in West Java where fierce battles took place between Indonesian forces and Dutch colonial troops during the Indonesian war of liberation.

#### ANANTAGUNA, Sabarsantoso

Anantaguna is Javanese. He was born in 1932 in Jokjakarta, Central Java. Represented Indonesian students at the IUS Secretariat in 1958 and is at present secretariat member of the League for People's Culture.

At the beginning of 1962, he published a volume of 35 poems about the struggle of the Indonesian peasants entitled *"With Fatherland But Without Land"* and wrote a number of poems devoted to the heroism of the peoples of Asia and Africa in the struggle to rid their continents of colonialism. His *"Jamila"* was written when reports shocked the world about the atrocities perpetrated by the French occupation forces against the Algerian girl independence fighter, Jamila Bourheid.

*"To People's Bandung"* was written to welcome the Fourth Session of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Council in Bandung in April 1961.

*"The Downtrodden Shoulder Freedom"* was written in early 1962.

APIN, Rivai

From West Sumatera, of the Minangkabau nationality. He was born in Padang Pandjang on August 30, 1927. Played an important rôle in developing Indonesian literature after the Revolution through his editorship of various literary and cultural magazines. Published together with Chairil Anwar and Asrul Sani a collection of poems "*Tiga Menquak Takdir*". The title is a pun which can mean either "Three Low at Fate", or "Three Brush Away Takdir". With the latter title, this collection of poems is a polemic against the "nestor" of the Pudjangga Baru writers, Takdir Alishahbana.

His poems "*The anchor line is broken*" and "*Elegy*" were written during the early years of independence.

His "*Peking*" is the outcome of a visit to China after he had attended the Bureau Meeting of Afro-Asian Writers in Tokyo in 1961. He was a member of the Indonesian writers delegation to the First and Second Conferences of Afro-Asian Writers held in Tashkent and Cairo in 1959 and 1962 respectively.

Today Rivai Apin is a member of the LEKRA secretariat and editor of the organisation's cultural magazine "*Zaman Baru*" (New Era).

ARSJAD, M. S.

Lives in South Sulawesi. "*Native Village*" deals with one of the most burning problems faced by the people of his region, the cowardly attacks on villages by the counter-revolutionary Darul Islam gangs. The Darul Islam (Islamic State) is an anti-popular movement which, by utilising the religious sentiments of the people and by terrorising the peasants, aims at setting-up a theocratic Moslem State. Especially during the late fifties, the Darul Islam terrorists were active in North Sumatera, West Java and South Sulawesi. The now outlawed Masjumi party was the backbone of this movement. In 1958 the Darul Islam gangs joined hands with the counter-revolutionaries in West Sumatera and North Sulawesi. Both anti-republican movements have now in the main been smashed.

ASHAR, Munir Samsul

M. S. Ashar was born in 1921 in Kotaradja, the extreme northern tip of Sumatera, and is of the Melayu nationality. Began to publish poetry during the Japanese occupation. One of his poems "*Awaiting Dawn*" was banned by the Japanese censorship. Prominent member of the "Generation of 1945".

Visited the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union and China in 1951 and paid a second visit to the Soviet Union in 1961 as leader of a LEKRA delegation. In 1959 he was elected member of the Lekra secretariat.

His poem "*Freedom and Prison*" was written in 1955 during the trial of D. N. Aidit tried on a charge by Hatta of having 'slandered' his name in connection with the Madiun Affair (see Explanatory Notes on D. N. Aidit). During the trial the accused turned accuser proving Hatta to be responsible for the massacre of Madiun in 1948.

"*To Uncle Ho Chi Minh*" was written on the occasion of the visit of the President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, to Indonesia in 1960.

BANDAHARO, Harahap

Born in May 1917 in Tapanuli, Sumatera. From the Batak nationality which inhabit the region round Lake Toba. Established himself as an outstanding poet with his collection of poems "*Sarinah and I*" which was published just before the Second World War.

Was alternately editor of the daily "*Rakjat*", the weeklies "*Kerakjatan*" and "*Djalan Baru*" and the daily "*Pendorong*", all in Medan.

In 1956 he published his collection of poems "*From the Region of Love and Hunger*". One of his most popular poems, printed in this present volume, "*No One Shall Return*" was set to music by the young composer Subronto K. Atmodjo.

"*Fallen in Battle*" tells the story of Jahja Kalek, member of a people's fighting unit, who was killed in battle during the first days of the Revolution in North Sumatera.

"*After Panmunjon*" was written in tribute to the Korean people when the writer visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1959.

DHARTA, A. S.

Also known under his pen-name *Klara Akustia*. Was born in 1924 in West Java. Was very active in the trade union movement as Head of the Information Department of the Central Bureau of the All Indonesian Trade Union Federation (SOBSI). One of the co-founders of LEKRA whose General Secretary he was till 1958. Published a collection of poems "*Rangsang Detik*" — Stirring of the Moments — and won fame through his poems dealing with the workers' struggle.

"*Rukmanda*" narrates the struggle of one of the popular leaders of the 1926 anti-colonial uprising, Rukmanda. This poem, too, was set to music by Subronto K. Atmodjo. The *ketjapi* referred to in this poem is an extremely popular cither-like instrument typical for West Java.

The poem "*Tidings from the Party*" was written immediately after some hand grenades had been thrown at the office of the Communist Party where the Central Committee was in session in July 1957.

DJIWAPRADJA, Dodong

Djiwapradja was born in West Java in September 1928 and is of Sunda nationality. Began to publish poetry at the age of twenty. Attended the First Congress of Afro-Asian Writers in Tashkent and was a member of the Indonesian writers delegation to the 1961 Tokyo meeting of the Bureau of Afro-Asian writers.

Djiwapradja is at present Information Officer of the Indonesian Air Force.

His poem "*Challenge*" which appeared in 1960 is a forceful protest of the writer against the arbitrary use of martial law which has been in force in Indonesia since the outbreak of the counter-revolution in 1958.

FERDY, Samuel

Promising young poet from the island of Timor in East Indonesia where he was born in 1936. By profession a teacher at a junior high school and began his career as a writer with the publication of some poems in the local news-sheet in Kupang, the main city of the Indonesian part of the island of Timor.

Malia Lehi was one of the leaders of the anti-feudal and anti-Dutch revolt which broke out in 1913 against the ruler of the Kui

principality on Alor island, a small island off Timor. The prince of Kui, unable to cope with the revolt, called in the assistance of Dutch colonial troops stationed at Kupang. The revolt was crushed, the woman Malia Lehi was killed and all possessions of the inhabitants of three villages, their cocount gardens, their dwellings and even their revered traditional drums, were confiscated by the Dutch and made the property of the prince of Kui.

In January 1961, the judge of the Kupang State Court, after long legal procedures started on the insistence of the local Communist Party branch against the present ruler of Kui, annulled the confiscation carried out by the Dutch. Three days prior to the announcement of the Court decision, the ruler of Kui committed suicide by taking poison.

#### HADI, S.

Young poet from the Daya nationality inhabiting the centre of Kalimantan. The red-and-white flag referred to in his poem "My Father" is the Indonesian national flag.

#### HADI SOSRODANUKUSUMO

From the Madura nationality inhabiting the island of Madura and some parts of East Java. Published his first collection of poems "Growth and Decay" in 1955, a collection of short stories "At the Cross Roads" together with M. A. Adinda and a selection of prose and poetry together with Sitepu in 1956. Two of his poems contained in that selection which is entitled "Rice and Jasmin" (1956), are reproduced in the present volume.

Visited the Soviet Union and China in 1951 after having attended the 1951 Berlin Festival of Youth and Students.

At present prominent LEKRA leader in East Java.

W. R. Supratman to whom the poem "Song" is dedicated, is the creator of Indonesia's National Anthem. The anthem was composed in 1928 and begins with the lines "Indonesia my native country, Indonesia my fatherland".

#### KERTAPATI, Rukiah

Was born in Purwakarta, West Java on April 25, 1927. She won fame with her collection of short stories and poems "Tandus" —

Barren — which was awarded the National Prize for Literature in 1952. Is also the author of the novelettes *"Fall and Heart"* and *"Soldier's Wife"*. Apart from her short stories and poems she is also well-known as a writer of children's books. At present she is editor of the children's magazine *"Kutitang"* and member of the editorial board of the progressive woman's magazine *"Api Kartini"*.

In 1961 she attended the Congress of German Writers in the German Democratic Republic as a member of the LEKRA delegation together with Sugianti Siswadi.

*"Indictment"* was written to mark International Women's Day, March 8, 1961, whereas her poem *"Child of a Worker"* is taken from a collection of poems for children.

### NJOTO

Was born in Blitar, East Java in 1925. Njoto is Second Deputy Chairman of the Communist Party of Indonesia and Editor-in-Chief of the daily *"Harian Rakjat"*. Co-founder of the LEKRA.

Well-known as essayist, journalist and translator of foreign literature. His poem *"Scarlet Red"*, set to music by the Indonesian composer, Amir Pasaribu, was written in tribute to Patrice Lumumba.

The *"Haiku Variations"* was written after a visit to Japan in August 1961. In the first variation Njoto tells of his encounter with Kenji Miyamoto, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Japan ; in subsequent variations, of his visit to the grave of Senji Hayamoto near the Uji river, who was murdered by fascist thugs in the 1930's, of the layed-off factories of Fukuoka, of the underwater tunnel connecting Kyushu and Honshu islands, of Shimonoseki, the military base from which Japanese soldiers departed to invade S. E. Asia during the Pacific War. Sendagaya in Variation VIII refers to the street where the office of the Communist Party of Japan is located, and the *"domo arigato"* in the last variation is the Japanese for *"thank you"*.

The *"Haiku Variations"* are dedicated to Mrs Yoko Kitazawa, Japanese representative at the Secretariat of the Organisation of Afro-Asian People's Solidarity in Cairo.

### OKA, Putu

Oka is a native of the island of Bali, at present studying of the Gadjah Mada University in Jokjakarta. This Balinese poet in his poem *"Bali"* shows the other side of his island which is alternately

referred to by wealthy foreign tourists as "Island of the Gods" or the "Paradise of the South Seas".

Like so many cultural workers in Bali, Putu Oka, too, is a member of the LEKRA.

#### RISAKOTTA, Ferdinand, Lodewijk

From the island of Ambon, one of the famous spice islands of the Moluccas in East Indonesia. Apart from his poems, Risakotta has won fame as a producer of radio plays and as reciter of poetry. Studied Chinese literature at the University of Indonesia and is a prominent students' leader. Has translated many foreign poems.

His "Yesterday and Today" is taken from a series of poems dedicated to the struggle of the Arab people. His "Grave on a Hillside" was written while on a visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The poem "Anniversary Poetry" was written on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party of Indonesia.

#### SITUMORANG, Sitor

Was born on October 2, 1924 in Harianboho in the Batak region of North Sumatera. He became known as an essayist and poet during the early days of the Revolution. Worked for a time as official at the Indonesian Embassy in Paris. Is one of the founders of the national League for National Culture of which he is currently General Secretary. Published several collections of poetry the latest of which is "New Era" printed by the LEKRA in 1962.

Visited with Jubaar Ajub, LEKRA General Secretary, and Rivai Apin the Bureau meeting of Afro-Asian Writers in Tokyo and was Chairman of the Indonesian writers delegation to the Second Congress of Afro-Asian Writers in Cairo.

Situmorang is represented in this volume with three poems he wrote during a visit to China after having attended the Tokyo Bureau Meeting.

#### SULANG, Kusni

Became known through the poems he regularly contributes to the cultural page of the "Bintang Timur" daily. He hails from

Central Kalimantan. He is a member of the group of young writers in their early twenties who rally round the "Young Indonesia" group which published their work in the literary columns of the "Bintang Timur". "Sampit" sings the praise of his home town Sampit, and his second poem in this collection portrays the life of the fishermen of the Central Kalimantan Katingan river.

#### SUGIARTI SISWADI

She was born in Central Java and she established herself as a talented poet and short-story writer in 1950. She became especially well-known through her much-read short-story "Paradise on Earth", the story of an old grandmother.

Visited Rumania in 1955 and the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union and China in 1961 together with Rukiah Kertapati as head of the LEKRA delegation.

She is a leader of the Djakarta Branch of the LEKRA is active in the progressive women's organisation Gerwani and is co-editor of the journal for women "Api Kartini".

#### SUDISMAN

Prominent working class leader from Surabaya where he was born in 1920. He took active part in the battles against the invading British troops immediately after the Japanese surrender in Surabaya. Today Sudisman is a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Indonesia.

"Struggle of Erevan" dan "Radiant Baku", are taken from a series of poems Sudisman wrote after an extensive visit to East European and Asian countries in 1957. His poems about Korea were published together with those of Risakotta and Rumambi in a collection entitled "Hill 1,211".

#### SUPRIJADI, Piek Ardianto

Poet from the East Java town of Madiun. Secondary school teacher. Regular contributor to various literary magazines, amongst others the LEKRA magazine "Zaman Baru".

The name Idjah referred to in his poem "Young Man" is a common name for girls in Indonesia.

### TJUNG, Benni

Was born in 1937 in Padang, West Sumatera. Of Chinese extraction. Benni Tjung is one of the leaders of the group of "Young Indonesia" writers and is permanent collaborator of the LEKRA magazine "*Zaman Baru*". Wrote a number of essays on the work of young Indonesian writers.

His poem "*Partnership*" is dedicated to the youthful leader of the Angolan fighters for independence, Mario d'Andrade whom the writer met at the Council Meeting of Afro-Asian Solidarity in Bandung, April 1961

Upit, the title of his second poem in this volume, is a common name for women in West Java. Upit is a tea-picker at one of the many tea plantations in the mountains of West Java.

### WISPI, Agam

Is of the Atjeh nationality and was born on December 31, 1930 in Pangkalansusu. He is the author of a number of plays of which "*Railway Compartment*" is generally considered his best. Agam Wispi spent a year in the German Democratic Republic in 1958 and wrote a number of poems about that country, later published in a collection called "*Friend*".

His poem "*Death of a Peasant*" deals with the land dispute in the North Sumateran village of Tandjung Morawa. In 1955 the then Minister of the Interior Mohammed Rum, of the now outlawed Masjumi party, ordered the peasants to leave their lands which, he said, the peasants had illegally occupied. The peasants refused to do so and the Minister sent the notorious "death tractors" to level the peasants' dwellings with the ground. The peasants defending their houses and land put up resistance and victims fell. The women played an especially important role in this struggle. Some of them threw them selves naked before the tractors in a desperate attempt to halt the machines in their destructive work.

Darman Tambunan, to whom the poem is dedicated, was a leader of the BTI peasant organisation which championed the cause of the evicted peasants.

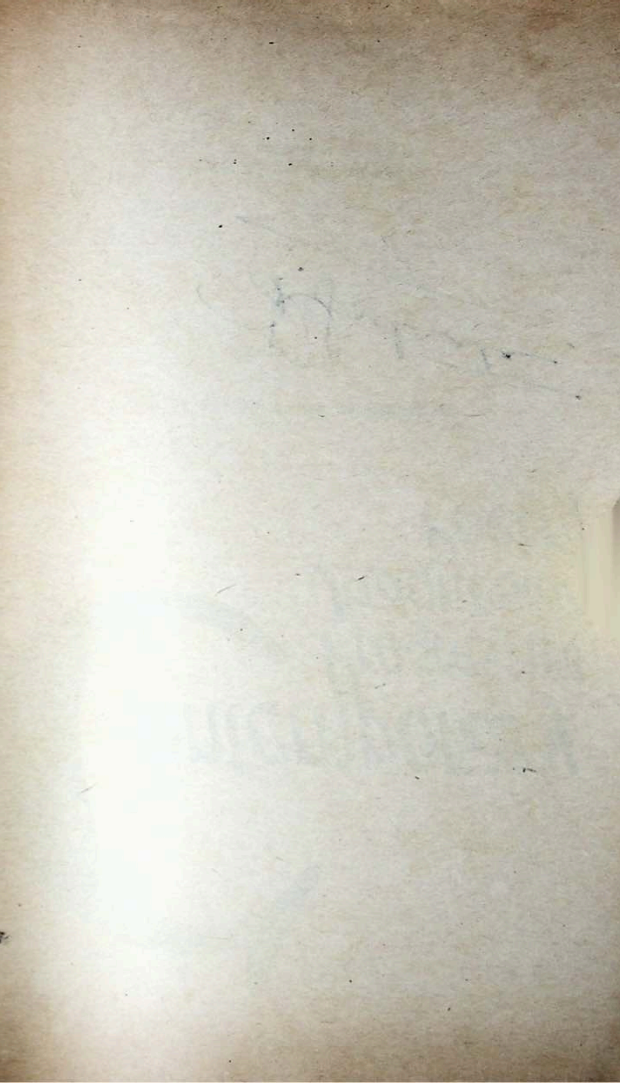
The poem "*Democracy*" is by far Wispi's most popular poem and is often recited at popular manifestations. It was written in 1959 in protest against frequent violations of democratic rights.

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