



Creative Things

Selected Works from 2008-2009 Fulbright ETAS

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Thank you for sending in your entries, I hope you all enjoy this memory book!

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Part II: Visual Art
Photographs & Drawings



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Courtney Pelletier



Courtney Pelletier



Kevin Connell



Rohan Mulgaonkar



Rohan Mulgaonkar



Kelimutu Sarungs
Katie Loebner





Heather Akin



Heather Akin

Part III: The Written Word

Stories, Poems, Song Lyrics & Writings

A Bedtime Story

Erin Shitama

Not so very long ago, in a land not so very different from our own there lived a group of courageous young men and women who answered a call.

“Wanted: Explorers.” Are you brave enough to journey into the unknown? Do you have what it takes to leave behind your world to discover the next?

We will never know what compelled these brave young individuals to venture forth from their homeland. Perhaps there were those searching for glory, or maybe riches. Perhaps even love? Whatever it was that drove their feet forward rest assured that it would change them all forever.

They set sail on a blustery day. That sort of day when the wind rushes from behind you, gathering beneath the tails of your coat to push you off familiar streets. As the ship charged over foaming seas, their spirits went bounding ahead in anticipation of darkest jungles, bluest seas and the most intoxicating of savage maidens.

The journey was long and arduous, but each of our explorers carried a light within that kept their spirits as high as the winds. Even when rain pelted the sails and drove the fish deep beneath the sea our heroes created a warmth and glow with their stories, their songs, and their dreams.

At first, this varied cast of characters eyed one another with suspicion. What was the chimney sweep to understand of the poet or the scholar? What business did the street musician have on such an expedition, queried the biologist? How could the young law student ever hope to survive contact with the natives, demanded the linguist?

Only moments from the dock their conversation was shallow as the harbor, but as the waters deepened so did their bond. Though they came from many different lands, and though the colors of their skin were as varied as the colors of the sea they shared that connection so commonly found amongst fellow travelers. Those who leave behind their loved ones. As the weeks and months passed on that wide open watery plain, they found mothers, brothers and bosom friends to fill the spaces left empty with longing.

When the day came to step ashore once again, it was with hearts full to brimming with anxious anticipation, and a hint of sadness, that our brave heroes and heroines parted ways. With handshakes and embraces they vowed to remain comrades always. “Our paths will cross again,” they assured one another.

There were not a few who silently wished they could remain together. Wouldn't it be just a little safer, a little more pleasant to travel this land with a companion or two? But it was

only a fleeting hope, for they each knew that, though together is better, it is at our worst, at our most desperate and lonely hour that we discover what truly lies within our souls. Only when the night stretches before you in endless hours of silent contemplation do we understand the question that has been lying within all the while. The question that requires total silence and a pleading ear to be heard.

It was then that they flung themselves to the most distant and exotic corners of this new and strange land - each searching for something different. Or perhaps not even knowing for what it was they were searching. From the soaring peaks of the tallest mountains to the glimmering sands of blue lagoons they wandered. Through pounding monsoon and blistering sun they trod the path.

There were those greeted by tribes of fierce warriors, ready to skin the intruder alive and roast him on a spit. These unlucky men and women learned what it is to fear. What it is to be powerless in the face of a more powerful predator. Perhaps, as they singed above a flame, they learned humility. Perhaps they realized after all, that we are not quite masters of this universe.

There were those greeted as gods and goddesses for whom there was feasting and many a celebration. Unluckier still were these, our once valiant adventurers, for they learned how quickly one is deceived by the groveling of another. How quickly the generous become selfish and the energetic lazy when there are others so quick to do your bidding. Let us hope they did eventually catch a glimpse of the truth through their delusion. That is, the destruction that arrogance wreaks upon the soul.

And then there were the luckiest of all. Those greeted, not as deities or delicacies, but as brothers and sisters. Those taken into homes and offered a place by the fire and a sympathetic eye. It was there amongst the most vile and filthy of savages that some were to discover humanity and the thread that weaves through all our hearts.

And they were not to become liars, for their paths did indeed cross. Always, it seemed, just as the last of the provisions were swallowed, just when hopelessness threatened to stay the feet of our weary traveler, our friends were reunited. Ne'er did you see a more joyful gathering than two lonesome voyagers by a fire, given the brief reprieve of good company. It was by those fires that they shared their victories, their joys and discoveries. It was by the still-glowing embers, long after the fire had died down, that they whispered their greatest fears of defeat and failure.

But this luminous communion could not last. Sometimes before the eye of the day blinked open above the eastern skyline our intrepid women and men had shouldered their packs and headed down separate paths. And though these brief meetings served to sustain our travelers through dark and lonely times, the brilliance with which these friendships shone served also to cast ever darker shadows upon the land. For in this land of wild men and beasts it was not only the fellow traveler that brought light to a darkened heart, but the reminder that there were others, over seas and sands, who waited with the lantern shining to guide their sons and daughters back home.

And so the months passed. And then years. Some perished by the wayside, but for most, the sun and moon continued to rise and fall, but with each passing day the longing for home became a greater and greater burden to bear down the treacherous trail. One by one, each of our heroes succumbed to the temptation of that lantern burning so very far away. Hitching rides on merchant ships or bartering for passage with pirates, paying with savage gold, our battered men and women found their way back to what was once a familiar land.

Of course, one cannot ever really go back. Just as the tropical air had breathed its way

into the bones of our heroes, the homeland had stretched and grown as well. Even as our returned heroines searched amongst new buildings and street signs for familiar landmarks, so fathers and sisters searched amongst the weather-worn faces for glimpses of the person who was before. But like I said, one can never really go back. Although all of them eventually did return.

They returned with treasures to share. Gold, jewels, women, and above all, fabulous stories. Some of them told of triumph and bravery, others meant only to mask disappointment and despair.

“I have catalogued 78 new species,” said the biologist.

“I have learned four new languages,” said the linguist.

“I have seen that the law of our land is nothing in comparison to the laws of nature,” said the student.

All of them returned, bringing with them a part of their journey. All of them, that is, but one.

On a clear night when the stars danced in the heavens and a roaring fire danced below, one of our young men sat amongst his newfound brothers and sisters in a celebration of life. And between the stars and the fire there danced a girl.

As her feet beat the ground it seemed to our young man that the ground became softer beneath his feet. And a wind swept among those gathered, whipping her hair about in a fury and encircling him in its murmured invitation. And when she caught the gaze of this young man, the luckiest of our heroes, the light of her eyes ignited his heart just as the fire consumed the gathered wood and the stars burned across galaxies. It seemed to him that all the glory of heaven and earth was but a reflection of that which shone out from her.

And in that moment, the lantern that had burned so long for his return ceased to be a guide.

You see, home is the glow that sustains you in the darkest of times. It is the light that burns brightest in your heart when all else has gone black. What had once burned by the door of a small country cottage so very far away now smoldered in the eyes of the woman before him.

Bule Song
Chris Boveroux

Well you see him walking down the street
His nose juts out, his teeth too neat
He sticks out like a flare on a dark and stormy night

With hair in shades from blond to red
A "Hello Mister"s all that's said
To him, everyone stares 'till he passes out of sight

He's an accidental celebrity
Though he just acts like you or me
Better ask to make a photo, hope he doesn't think you're loco

(chorus)

It's just 'cause he's a bule
Digital camera and a Lonely Planet
It's just 'cause he's a bule
Laptop computer needs wireless internet
It's just 'cause he's a bule
Peeling off the Bali bills* and knocking back Bintang
It's just 'cause he's a bule
And no matter what he does, he can do no wrong...2, 3, 4!

Well he bisa's bahasa inggris
He hopes that you will give world peace
A chance, he likes cheap hostels, pricey booze and Alfalinks

He waves, then smiles and waves again
Each day he shakes a thousand hands
He always has hand sanitizer, he's always got juice drinks

He wants toilet paper and hot water
He misses cheese and real peanut butter
He might have lots of money, but you just think he's funny

(chorus)

Well he looks just like Leonardo
(not the turtle, but DiCaprio)
All the local girls are swooning whenever he drops his hat

Everyone wants his telephone
He's never, ever left alone
His every movement's headline news, he always needs his map

He pays a bit more for goods and food
If he's tired, he might be rude
Just smile and walk away, you'll see another one someday!

(chorus)

Gone
Chris Boveroux

Don't bring me back, don't bring me down
You know you can't turn me around
Your words may be designed to hurt
But deep down, it just doesn't work

(pre-chorus)

Well, why do you have to try to keep me at your level
My plane of operation is a different one by far
I'm flying through the astral while you're stuck in the material
Don't try and hold me back when I'm chasing for my star.

(chorus)

Because I'm going, going, going, going, going, going,
Gone, across the stratosphere
Well I'm gone, where it's all crystal clear
Well I'm gone, I'm anywhere but here
I might come back someday, but right now I am gone

Don't tell me that I just can't go
My vocab doesn't know the word no
All that you ever do is spout negativity
But I move so fast I'm defying relativity

(pre-chorus)

(chorus)

Orwell learned doublespeak from you
It's sad how fluent you are
But my happiness is not a fluke
Your bitterness can't mar

My adventure or my thirst for fun
Your attitude, it hasn't won
Be cross, be angry, be upset
'Cause my trip ain't over yet

(pre-chorus)

(chorus)

Durian
Daniel Owen

The morning water, its closing
around me offers
more than a distraction.

A thousand points of light
and I am inside. Where
do I want to go?

Once, I cut my teeth on lakes, and now the mornings
come earlier and sleep is
a transparency. Night's projector,
humming bumblebee. The image
and its shadow on the wall.

When I knocked on your door and no one answered
but the cluck of knuckles on wood, the water
came to my ankles and then to my thighs,
and before I knew it, what I had wanted to ask
you fell beneath the undertow and I could not
retrieve it. This sharp weight in my hands.

This new mortgage of youth. No one answered.

And the paperwork signed on the wooden planks of the dock,
cobwebbed in its filing cabinet, where no one thinks of it.

A new kind of light touches a new kind of water.

Opening one's eyes beneath the lake's surface,
forgetting what one came for and taking what's found.

Only a taste. Only to see for one's self.

In the Jungle
Daniel Owen

When I first saw it in their hands,
the bird's beak opened and closed,
motion automatic as dreaming,
and the sound of it a dry reed.

The old woman in a shroud of clove
smoke, darkening with the light left.

The children stroking the feathers
like a lucky stone, almost dropping
the poor thing. And the price
of rubber is falling, what can we do
about it? Everyone wants to know,
what can we do?

*

It's taken this long to think of how long it's been.
Not a letter in weeks with pictures of an autumn
or snow or trolley cars. You can remember
everything, but you can't have it. Not again.
And there's a mobil hung from the ends of the calendar,
the shapes ordinary but seen as through a sooty
periscope. Among the background noise,
someone is playing a blues, leaf-crackle,
minor-thirds, photographs of the places
we've moved out of, still holding our bookshelves,
dirty plates, scissors, a few half-burnt candles
on the kitchen table. And no one there to claim them.
So sing it.

*

Now it is raining again and it's all
I can hear. Not wanting to cancel
our plans, we wait. Smoke rising
from my mouth like a flock of stray birds.
In a closed room, the only thing to seek
is the drafty edges of a window pane.
Like the famous ghosts who've left their sculptures
alone. Trying to find a way through
the overgrowth. Ancients wandering
the humid air. We breathe. The lights go out
so we burn candles. In the morning,
I make phone calls overseas, try to sort things out.

*

Red smoldering horizon's edge.
Skin scraped away by asphalt,
ragged. Coming down the mountain,
I found myself in the dirt, bleeding.
If you are lucky enough to see yourself
in the mirror, then you know that taste.
Salt-lick of longing. The little lizards
on the wall, scavenging meals.
I could write a pop song or a technical manual
on ventriloquism, it'd be the same in the end.
Always cicadas, unseen in the tree bark,
mating songs like a quilt of motors running, harsh enough,
loud enough to lie beneath. Scrape of wings.

**Some enak memories together:
The Journey There or ghostly swirling thump-thump**

I arrived in Singapore, Malaysia via Seattle and Tokyo with some other friendly ETAs around midnight. We were checked into what would be the first of several ridiculously luxurious hotels to accommodate us in our travels and then a large group of good good people took to the streets. Wandering, forgetting names left and right, flowing between conversations. As the night went on the group dwindled down to maybe six. Armed with surprising snacks and satisfactory spirits we settled on steps beside a river, talked and talked until last sip gone, drifted towards distant thump-thump. Saw a fire in the street, like moths to the flame we draw near and see locals tossing pieces of paper in with apparent intention—we discover that today is a Chinese holiday which offers protection against ghosts and the fragile rice papers sinking into the flames are the spirits of ghosts being kept at bay.

Eventually we make our way back to hotel, maybe 6 am? Dove into pool as morning light swirled in, chanted by waters with new friends, floated about blissfully. After breakfast, excursion to the oldest Hindu temple in Singapore, the Sri Mariamman Temple. So many brightly colored sculptures crowded everywhere, gods, plants, and animals clinging to each other on the rooftops, I was reminded of La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. Then we all piled onto a bus to the airport and on to Indo!

(re)orientation, or pocket monkey superpowers

Mmm this experience was good good talks, not so much sobriety, sleep-deprived, drink coaster doodling during lectures, singing spice girls outside the atm with a very tall boy and a very skinny boy, the discovery of sweet avocado juice, poolside and beside guitar jamming, aksi kucing! beers in the bathtub, call to prayer kite soaring sunset serenades, thirtyfinger massage, too much time in elevators, daring motorbike dashes to and from cloud 9, snakeskin fruit seed puppets, birthday cakes for Obama and boats for friends, delicious warung food, world peace through angklung, swimming lessons, shotgunning beers in front of the circle K across the street is keeping it classy, musical melodicas, bad jokes aplenty, ginger tea, team extreme! nonexistent gay bars, much unpleasant pooping for many, super extra hot ramen heroes, ridiculous rolling stones cover band, dancing with children, big beautiful whale wives and pocket monkeys, Novotel Indonesian Idol, confessions, fiending for hotel mints, planet earth love, traditional bamboo instrument rendition of I Will Survive by Indo high schoolers, fruit bat penises, crazy alien lake complete with actual alien playing the zither and superpower mud, and OH so much more.

Mid-Year Conference in Jakarta, or seasoned with rainbow sprinkles

Hurray for reunions in fancy hotels! So much good musical jam time, all the time! (lacking my friends' mad guitar harmonica or melodica skills I rocked out on the rainbow sprinkles) oh so mysterious, highly anticipated, and surprisingly sensual TIM TAM SLAM rituals MmmMMMmmm, making our GREAT ESCAPE from lavish hotel lifestyle to the traffic circle out front??? Er, yes for guitar strumming and song singing in the grass watching the sunset over skyscrapers horizon. Disney songs at the top of our lungs. creative attempts to thwart or at least subdue boredom at official conference proceedings. Far too much time spent walking lost down sidestreets and hopelessly stuck in taxi traffic and putting along in tiny *bajaj* (motorized 3 wheel rickshaws that make you feel like you're in an unruly amusement park ride that's jumped the tracks!) just to find a cold beer. Mouthwatering, curative brunch spreads. Poetry readings of the silly and stirring sorts. precarious group stage dancing at a club that stays open from Thursday until Monday morning. Dinosaur alphabet love!

The Tana Toraja Hike
Caitlin Patrick

...or how Rachel almost nearly practically died, seriously.

It's the afternoon. All morning we've been visiting a funeral. There have been Ibus so cute you want to put them in your pocket - it's possible, they are small enough. We eat cookies and drink coffee and feel all kinds of awkward and special and voyeuristic in this space. And then the pigs begin to squeal; they know what's coming. It's the most horrendous noise you've ever heard (unless you've heard my bird "alarm clocks" in Surby...). But then Katie eats the pig's heart and it's yummy, so tidak apa-apa, g! We're standing in the middle of a rice field, blood spilled on the ground, intestines being emptied next to us, a bamboo cup filled with palm wine in hand. Life is good.

After lunch (and the carnage), we decide to hike down into the valley back to Rantepao. Six strangers, picked to live in a developing country half-way around the world... it's an adventure. We stop at someone's house and Jonthon buys a rather large knife. Protected. We trek through bamboo forests, gawk at vistas, say hello to buffalo, and meet Michael, my imaginary boyfriend who exists so my crazy counterpart will leave me alone and stop making me feel bad because I am "normal" yet single. Another layer of "Indo-proof" protection established.

And then it starts raining. This is not your grandma's rain. This is the rain that actually makes you sick. Don't let the poncho fool you; every inch of your body will be soaked. Enter: the terraced rice fields. Now, when walking through the sawa, you must be careful not to step on the crops, but to walk along the edges instead. In a terraced field, especially one where the next level is no fewer than eight feet below, you must be particularly careful. This much needed attention is only heightened when the cats and dogs start coming.

So Rachel is walking along in the back of the line. Little does she know she might die soon. Our guide, of course, is leagues ahead of everyone, nowhere to be seen. Katie and Chris head up this rag-tag group. Jonthon and I are humming along somewhere in the middle, and Samson is walking along with Rachel, making her laugh, distracting her in these moments of serious focus- it's all his fault, what's about to happen. I mean, we're walking in *rain* here!

Rachel slips. Dundundun. She's holding on to the edge, sliding slowly, feet dangling. It's possible that she might fall *eight feet* into a mushy rice paddy. Serious problem. Rachel is making noise, so Jonthon and I turn around. Imagine the scene. Green, flourishing rice fields as far as the eye can see in a sloping valley. Rain gently caressing your face. Rachel hanging off the edge of a precipice, her jeans and sneakers flailing out from under her wind-blown blue poncho. Samson leans over her, grasping her hands. We almost fall off the edge ourselves from laughter.

And then, suddenly! As if out of thin air, Ibu to the rescue. She comes running along with the familiar precision of someone pretty well acquainted with this terrain - go figure. She's got her rice hat on, so she's good. Whoosh! She's on the scene. Whew! She lifts Rachel up onto her feet. And just as quickly, she's gone, a figment of our precious memories. Samson wants to take the credit for saving Rachel's life (literally, "I saved your life!"), but I'd beg to differ...

It's the night after. Everyone is on the porch wearing a sarong. There is alcohol involved, and very little food. And let's not forget the singing. It is Christmas season and we want to get in the spirit, so let the sing-along begin! No one will sleep in our hotel tonight because today we all survived another day in Indo-land!

Flood or Disneyland? Ken Moore

Even while the country is amidst so much hardship, Indonesian culture still manages to embody overwhelming sensations of acceptance and hope. Before coming here, I had never imagined that so many people could cohesively work together to create such a solid bond of support. Every country has its faults, and it is easy to frown upon the negative aspects of our respective communities, but a smile goes a long way. And in Indonesia, when there is nothing left to do but simply submit to a somber set of circumstances, a smile almost always manages to emerge from the wreckage. I had never before considered chuckling at some of the humorless situations that I have encountered in this country; however, I have found that my western outlook and my culturally-conditioned natural reactions to hardship really do have their limitations. Pity, sympathy, and even empathy can only go so far. Every once in a while, someone needs to just “buck up,” “bite the bullet,” and change the subject to something more cheerful!

The early months of 2008 in Central Java brought with them heavy rains and nearly unprecedented flooding. Juwana, the closest city to where I was living at the time, was not spared. For a week or two, I had been hearing about how parts of Juwana were under water. I had listened to stories about people helping their friends move out of saturated houses and about others who were desperately trying to prepare for an imminent river through their neighborhood. With only signs that conditions were going to get worse, I began to feel a bit uneasy.

My home in the village of Guyangan ended up managing to “weather the storm,” but many of my friends who lived within Juwana city limits found themselves right in middle of the worst flood that the area had seen in about 10 years. The graphic news reports I had been watching every day could have just as easily been filmed within cycling distance from my house. Yet, it was not until the end of January that I witnessed any of the destruction with my own eyes.

Sitting and eating on my friend Ms. Eny's crowded front porch, she casually asked me if I was interested in visiting the flood, which had just displaced much of her family. So with all of these said family members sitting right in front of me, seeking refuge in her home, I felt slightly uncomfortable and a little pressured to answer. To me, it seemed like the subject of the flood would be one that we all talked about with the utmost sensitivity, much less refer to as some sort of tourist destination. Nevertheless, Ms. Eny's enthusiasm was matched almost perfectly by her refugee cousins, and I was unanimously encouraged to make the trip into town. With two cameras and plenty of plastic bags, we hopped on a motorcycle and headed toward the disaster area.

Upon crossing the familiar bridge into Juwana, I looked down at what was once a calm stream but what had become a massive torrent of water, engulfing houses farther than I could see. From this perspective, even the word, “flood,” seemed like an understatement. Traffic was terrible because so many streets were blocked, and once we finally parked the motorcycle, I saw canoe-like water taxis taking people to their homes. But even from a distance, I still noticed that most people were just treading or swimming through this newly-formed, unclean lake. I was happy to be experiencing such unique and rare circumstances, but images of the 2005 flooding of New Orleans in the U.S. immediately began emerging in my head. I started to feel hesitant because, with a video camera strapped around my neck, the last thing I wanted to look like was a foreign tourist at Disneyland, filming the misfortune of crying families who had just lost everything. Even with a gleeful Ms. Eny at my side, I was still not sure I wanted to continue with our plan.

But as we made our way closer to the scene, approaching road's end, I could immediately see that the atmosphere of this occasion was certainly not like that of any flood I had ever previously imagined. All the those engrained images of families seeking refuge on rooftops, and of rescue boats frantically stretching their limits to save as many lives as possible were thrown completely out the window. None of misery, grief, nor despair entered anywhere into the equation at that intersection in Juwana. In fact, it had just come to my attention that the backed up traffic was only partly due blocked streets; this traffic jam was actually just a queue. It was a line in which people were waiting patiently to come and enjoy this once-a-year festival, brought only by the broken banks of the Silugonggo river.

Children splashing and playing, vendors selling *kerupuk* and other fried goodies, people fishing off their front porches, and life continuing otherwise as normal were all making my American head spin. I remained speechless for the better part of the canoe-taxi ride through this engulfed neighborhood until we made our first stop. It was at the home of one of Ms. Eny's relatives who decided to brave the usurping water. We could have ridden the boat right through her front door and into her living room, but instead we got out and waded through the entry way. Once inside, I could see how perishable furniture and electronics were stacked at the top of mounds of other household furnishings, which could withstand the inundation. A bed sat on top of another bed, where Ms. Eny's aunt was taking a nap, and in fact, she had the TV turned on, watching soap operas. In three feet of water, I could not imagine any electrical appliances functioning (at least safely), but desperate times call for desperate measures, and arrangements had been made to enjoy life as much as possible, while still enduring what ended up being weeks of flooding.

By the evening, there were so many people chest deep in water playing merrily in the alleys that the boats could barely pass by. People who were not even residents of the neighborhood had come to enjoy this surreal sunken city. But even among all the joy and delight, I could hardly shake my deeply seated western perspective, and I was constantly focused on all the blatant destruction in every direction. I could not begin to count how many times I exclaimed to Ms. Eny, "...and they're not even upset about this?" To which she finally responded, "Ken, this actually is like temporary Disney Land for these people."

Wrapping my mind around that statement was not easy, but I think I can understand now. For example, world traveling is not a normal pastime for Javanese people; in fact, it is an opportunity that I have been extremely fortunate to have been given. If someone rarely gets to leave their hometown, then when something unusual happens close to them, it will automatically be exiting, no matter what the context. And to further illustrate why flooding is not as grave of a situation as it would be in the U.S., the fact of the matter is that houses are simply not the same here. A flood is not going to do a significant amount more damage to many of the homes in Juwana than would a hard rain. Since Indonesia does not have a winter, when building a new home, there is no need to include such equipment as weather stripping, expensive carpets, or insulated walls. Wood, which will rot if it gets too wet, is also not nearly as common in Indonesian construction as it is in America. And since the sense of community is so much stronger here, cleaning up after the water finally drains away is not the depressing, murky, dangerous project that it would be for a populated city in the U.S.

Clothes drying on tall television antennas, people bathing waste-deep in their front yards, and witnessing couples dating on motorized canoes next to flooded schools and mosques will forever remain some of the most powerful imagery of my experience in Indonesia. Sometimes I have found myself getting frustrated with the laid-back, no worries culture of *jam karet* (rubber time) in this country; however, there is a lesson to be learned from this kind of attitude toward living. If life throws you a sack of potatoes, by God, you make potato salad!

Nona Asing's Angkot Encounter
Regina Sierra Carter

Yelping yellow hues linger, flash, and are lost in a summons of smog...
As "Weeyo," "weeyo," "weeyo,"...sirens shriek in the still silence.
Determined index fingers shoot and slice through the arid air...
While determined, underpaid, and overworked drivers contend for attention.

"Back off" my subconscious sneers.
Only one banana boat with wheels will win my affection;
Letters O and WK signifying destinations in the distance
For which I have no clear knowledge.

Letter P is my passion.
Mini van on wheels I long for.
Though my heart yearns for the corroded cushions
Of this fleeting lover...I realize I must wait for perhaps...eternity.

Skin Black Sweet sizzles under the sun's glare.
Passersby look once, twice, and three times to gaze
Upon the Papuan princess, Nubian queen, African-American diva in disguise.

Lo, my eyes linger no farther
Yellow prince soon to be king of the Land of Line P
Approaches me.
My royal finger flickers like lightening once...no twice towards the prince—my target.

Behold! Land of Line P prince pulls over and looks on passively
As I bend my limbs of noble birth to squeeze into my pint-sized chariot.
My elusive prince's minivan "Weeyos"...rushes forth and flings me into tiny quarters
Before finally delivering me to the Kingdom of Joyoboyo

Where the kaki lima awaits
Beckoning her highness to come forth for a soto ayam dish...
Into my batik bag my fingers frantically plunge while almost tearing it asunder;
5000Rp I give the good mas with my left hand...then realize my blunder.

Mas moves away...shakes his head...looks stunned
Meanwhile the entire Kingdom of Joyoboyo reprimands me...*alas*...I am shunned.
I...mistaken native of royal blood...am ordered to sit in the scorching sun
Oh Indonesia...I have been undone!

We Will not Go Down
Kami Tak Kan Kalah
Jonthon Coulson & Abi'e Dimitri

<http://jonthon.org/attic/Aby%20and%20Jonthon%20will%20not%20go%20down.mp3>

“We Will Not Go Down” by Michael Heart

A blinding flash of white light

Lit up the sky over gaza tonight

People running for cover

Not knowing whether they're dead or alive

They came with their tanks and their planes

And their ravaging fiery flames

And nothing remains

Just a voice rising up in the smoky haze

<chorus>We will not go down

In the night

Without a fight

You can burn up our mosques and our homes and our schools

But our spirits will never die

We will not go down

In Gaza tonight

Women and children alike

Murdered and massacred night after night

While the so-called leaders of countries afar

Debated on who's wrong or right

But their powerless words were in vain

And the bombs fell down like acid rain

And through the tears and the blood and the pain

You could still hear that voice in the smoky haze

“Kami Tak Kan Kalah” oleh Michael Heart

Sinar putih yang membutakan

Membuat langit di atas Gaza terang

Korban cari tempat yang aman

Tak tahu apakah mati atau hidup

Mereka datang dengan tenk dan pesawat

Dan api yang menghancurkan

Dan tak ada yang tersisa

Hanya suara dari asap berkabut

Kami tak kan kalah

Di malam

Tanpa perlawanan

Kalian bisa bakar mesjid2, rumah2, sekolah2

Tapi jiwanya tak akan mati

Kami tak kan kalah

Saat di Gaza

Wanita dan anak-anak

Dibunuh dan bibantai setiap malam

Saat pemimpin di negara yang jauh

Berdebat siapa salah siapa benar

Kata-katanya tak dilaksanakan

Dan bom-bom jatuh seperti hujan

Walaupun air mata darah dan skarot

Masih bisa dengar suara di tempat hancur

Translated and Performed by Jonthon Coulson and Abi'e Dimitri

Spinning a Web of Hope
Melinda Ammann

On January 21, I walked into class with a spring in my step. We slog through so many rainy mornings this time of year, but the day opened with unusually clear blue skies, perhaps an omen for what's to come.

"Why am I excited today?" I asked. Their brains were still warming up, and the question provoked no response. "I'm American. Why am I excited today?" Some shifting in seats and a few "Oh, oh...!" sounds told me that a few students were turned on and searching for the words.

"Obama!" they started shouting. The inauguration ceremonies had concluded only a few hours before. A million hopeful Americans who gathered at the Lincoln Memorial were joined by more than a handful of viewers from my small city in North Sulawesi and across Indonesia who were glued to their TVs.

For the first time, I wrote "President Barack Obama" in the middle of the white board and circled it.

"I want to know what you think," I told the 10th graders. Indonesian students are rarely asked to share their thoughts and opinions. Usually students spend their days respectfully deferring to authority, scribbling down their lessons and asking precious few questions.

"Picture President Barack Obama in your mind," I said. "What do you see? What does he make you think of?" I explained that we were going to create a web of ideas on the board, like a spider web, with their ideas branching out from the central theme.

The flow of ideas started as a trickle. Many Indonesians view shyness as a virtue, particularly for girls. Some students feel obliged to perpetuate the impression that they are too cool for school. The foremost impediment to our web's progress, however, was that most students, even those with strong English skills, lack confidence in their language ability. A little patience and a little goading got us started, and soon the floodgates opened. These students knew a lot about Obama, and they had already formed quite a few impressions of him.

"Clever."

"He has good speech."

"He's gonna make a change."

"The first young president."

"An exotic person."

"He comes from black people."

"Handsome."

All of my students, like all Indonesians, know that President Obama lived in Indonesia as a youth. They were not as sure what this tells us about him or the future of our countries. Does he speak Bahasa Indonesia? Is he a Muslim? Can he make peace? My students couldn't wait to find out.

We spent the first half of a 90-minute lesson on the web of ideas and discussion that it sparked. Discussion-based lessons are not an easy trick with 40 students in a small, hot room. This was our most successful attempt in my first five months here.

"You look very fresh today, Miss Melinda," one of my colleagues commented on my satisfied glow after class. As a teacher and as an American, I felt I had new fuel for optimism.

Indonesia
Samson Swanick

24 Im getting old just trying to save the world. Aint got much no name on the map with a voice that is seldom heard. Got no wife no kids no house no job just a suitcase full of ambition. Dart to the map to the wings to the heart its time to start living in....

Indonesia ah ah
Indonesia Woah
Indonesia ah ah
Indonesia my new home

days on end Im stuck with strangers, only friend a vomit bag. Never knowing what to expect but the most fun Ive ever had From the plane to the car to the cart to the horse to the feet excessive sweating. Discovering what Im made of now Life is so amazing in...

Indonesia ah ah
Indonesia Woah
Indonesia ah ah
Indonesia my new home

but in a tunnel with no light at the end despair is easy to fi-i-ind in a sea of confusion and youre drowning in your mi-i-ind no one cares, alone and your scared will someone please just throw me a rope Ive tracked across the boundaries of my soul just to find a spark of hope

and I survived and i tasted life

I sacrificed my security a steep price for some wisdom, but my life was just a foreign land. Now it is my kingdom. Fantasy now reality since the beast has been tamed. If you want to feel the depths of your heart I suggest you do the same in...

Indonesia ah ah
Indonesia Woah
Indonesia ah ah
Indonesia my my new...thank you...welcome to my new home!

Got a new hand tailored suit
I have on loan an old motor bike
every night I eat from a warung
and have diarrhea every single fucking night
and...

YOU DONT WANT TO FUCK WITH ME!

Im a VIP wherever I go
I got 10 million eyes all on me
but everything is just a little more expensive for this bule celebrity
YOU DONT WANT TO FUCK WITH ME
Half the time I dont even work
I just travel and dont pay my rent
and Ive been drunk for over a year now
thanx to my Fulbright scholarship

YOU DONT WANT TO FUCK WITH ME!

You talking to me?
Samson Swanick

PART IV

You Know You've Been in Indonesian too Long When...

- ...you naturally say "I have ever..."
- ...you get a stomach ache if you belum makan nasi
- ...you refuse to eat the last piece of food on a plate and offer it to others continuously
- ...you cannot walk 100m without being exhausted
- ...you can't drink your coffee without half a pound of sugar
- ...hopping on the back of the motorbike of a complete stranger is not a problem
- ...you stand on top of a western toilet and leave your footprints behind.
- .. you meet bules for the first time and you ask "How old are you?" "Where are you from originally?" "Why are you in Indonesia?" "Do you like Indonesian food?" "Are you married?"
- ..you think it is a good idea to stop at a mall kiosk, dress up like princesses, and take pictures (peace signs included!)
- ..you greet becak drivers with "Hello Mister!"
- ...you are hungry if you have not yet eaten rice.
- ...you speak Indonesian English. "No what what," "Today I am going walking-walking," "Would you like to accompany me?", "Is it delicious?"
- ...you sing along to the call to prayer like it is the beginning of "The Circle of Life" on The Lion King soundtrack.
- ...you have performed Rihanna's "Umbrella" more than 10 times.
- ... you feel compelled to spit your toothpaste on the floor...even when there's a sink.
- ...your pants are as tight as your students'
- ...you associate airports with that wonderful treat ROTIBOY!
- ...you have ever gotten reflexi at an airport
- ...you start to question your taste in movies
- ...you think nothing of flying across the country for the weekend
- ...you suffer from masuk angin
- ...you don't go anywhere without your minyak kayu putih
- ...you can text message faster than you can type
- ...you can understand Indonesian teenagers text message
- ...you are not worried about accepted a motorcycle ride from a kid who looks like he's pushing 11
- ...you think all food tastes better with sambal and/or kecap manis
- ...you start to panic if there is no sambal and/or kecap manis involved in your meal
- ...you do not wait in lines, but instead get out your elbows
- ...you follow cinetron
- ...you douse your fruit in spicy peanut sauce
- ...you add lah to the end of your sentences
- ...you have bought something that was placed in your lap on a bus ride
- ...you are no longer skilled with knives and forks

...you own more than 5 sarongs
...you think \$10 is a pretty large denomination
...you actually believe you're sick because it's raining
...you think it's weird when a cat has a whole tail.
...people bring random bules they find to your door, because you're white and obviously can help them out. (true story haha).
...when people tell you no and you ask how much it costs to make that a yes.
...you own more headscarves and muumuus than jeans and t-shirts
...you asked your friend how much her eggplant cost.
...you gawk and whisper with your friend whenever you see a Bule
...you actually start to think that you are very very brave for traveling sendirian.
...you have no concerns and gladly get in any strange vehicle with any strange man in any strange location.
...you gladly accept rides from strange men in strange vehicles with full confidence they know where you want to go and will get you there safely.
... you start your sentences with "I ever" and tell others "Wait me" to ensure clear communication with Indonesian friends.
...you notice your English speaking skills have plummeted and your vocab becomes comparable to that of a 3rd grader.
... three 7-year-olds piled on a motorcycle barreling through a busy intersection doesn't seem the least bit strange to you anymore.
... start getting really excited about the prospect of a shower in a bathtub.
... "live concert" means "dancing at the club."
... you take the guitar from a boy band and tune it for them.
... you sing along with a boy band.
... you have two cell phones and four SIM cards
... you prefer to drink your Es out of a bag
... you ponder growing your pinky fingernail out
... you ask your students "already or not yet?"
... you notice when people have particularly pointy noses
... you point and yell "kertawa!" when someone starts laughing
... you prefer mandi-ing from showering
... you say "waduh" and "adu" spontaneously
... you move your pointer finger in a slanted up and down motion on your forehead when you think someone is "gila"
...you feel slightly offended when someone calls you a monkey