



UTS
ePRESS

PORTAL Journal of
Multidisciplinary
International Studies

Vol. 19, No. 1/2
December 2023



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Citation: Campbell, I. 2023. Le vieux jacaranda / The old jacaranda tree / Jacaranda, pohon tua!. *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 19:1/2, 121–125. <https://doi.org/10.5130/pjmis.v19i1-2.8896>

ISSN 1449-2490 | Published by UTS ePRESS | <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/portal>

CREATIVE WORK

Le vieux jacaranda / The old jacaranda tree / Jacaranda, pohon tua!

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5130/pjmis.v19i1-2.8896>

Article History: Received 03/11/2023; Accepted 04/11/2023; Published 22/12/2023

Abstract

Ian Campbell's poem series about an age-old jacaranda tree in a university courtyard is an artistic venture across three languages: French, Indonesian and English. The series initiated with a French poem composed in 1989, followed by an Indonesian rendition published in the literary section of a newspaper in Bandung, West Java, in 2004, and concluded with an English version. Campbell's trilingual poetic exploration demonstrates how a single 'concept,' or the essence of a poem transfigures when articulated in the languages he is conversant with. His approach is reflective of his work in an earlier issue of PORTAL—Vol. 14, No 1, April 2017—which displayed thematic unity across poems in English, Spanish and Indonesian.

Keywords

French; Indonesian; English; Trilingual Poetics; Ian Campbell; Jacaranda

Le vieux jacaranda

Tranquille la cour entourée de colonnes civilisantes,
vieux jacaranda, jacaranda osseux,
résistant aux éléments, aux époques de guerre,
aux temps de paix invincible contre la mêlée étudiante qui
marche au dessous des arches – triomphante –
à leur manière abandonnée et impétueuse

tout le long des arcades pavées et écrasées par
la jeunesse des générations.

Glissent maintenant les rayons du soleil
sur les pétales de poupre, fruits du royaume
langoureux et mûrs: mes yeux sont aveuglés
par l'éclat fécond des pétales transformés
en une tapisserie de pourpre, lavande et violette.

Mais si tu te promènes dans ces sentiers
quand le clair de lune danse au milieu
des forêts de pierre rosée,
entrevois-tu les reflets?

- scintillant sur les pétales que tombent,
et tournoyant et voletant légèrement
à la terre cultivée,
aux esprits enterrés,
aux générations d'autrefois!

Non, on ne chante plus les poèmes héroïques de Virgile:
"Arma virumque cano..." – on n'entend plus
dans les gargouilles de cette Notre Dame australe,
un certain bossu qui fait sonner les cloches énormes –
seulement la poussière dans les couloirs
et le cadran sombre sur le clocher illuminé.
Passe, oui passe le temps où les pétales tombent
au clair de lune.

L'aube – née de la nuit éternelle;
âge d'innocence quand les gouttes de rosée viennent;
seules traces résiduelles du temps de l'obscurité
et pendant ces moments insouciantes
un brise légère d'automne caresse la douceur d'une jeune étudiante
qui reste à côté de la basse muraille de la cour:
instants de repos avant de recommencer la quête
en cherchant les perles de culture –

celle-là, inconsciente de la figure indistincte
 d'un vieux jardinier
 qui ramasse avec énorme faiblesse
 sur les sentiers de la cour
 les pétales tombés du feuillage brillant de la nuit australe!

The old jacaranda tree

They have walked, triumphant, ramblers all -
 impetuous are the generations, the mêlée of students,
 who have passed through these corridors and arcades,
 who have worn down the stones beneath.

Yet gnarled is its resistance to the weathering of time,
 old jacaranda in the corner of the courtyard,
 whose branches appear as jutting bones,
 survivor of seasons of war and peace,
 even if no longer do you hear the incantation
 of Virgil's heroic poem; 'Arma virumque cano...'

For now, the sun's rays are sparkling,
 upon the purple petals, fruits of the kingdom,
 languorous and ripe, the grass below
 a carpet of purple hues,
 of lavender violet, and lavender blue.

If you walk along these paths when the moonlight
 fragments amongst these forests of stone
 you can catch reflections of the moon,
 glistening on the petals which fall
 twirling and fluttering
 to an earth cultivated,
 to the spirits interred,
 to the generations passed on.

Perhaps, too, in this gargoyled Notre Dame
the sound of the hunchback
ringing the great bells of the tower -
dust in the corridors lifts and rises,
sombre the darkened watchtower clock,
as if time has come to repose as
petals fall in the moonlight.

Then the dawning, borne of night, age of innocence,
a light breeze in the courtyard rustles the hair of
the young student resting awhile before gathering strength,
to resume that quest for worldly knowledge,
she does not see, catch even a glimpse, of the old hunchback,
raking in the leaves of violet that have fallen in the night.

Sun of midday is shining upon me – my eyes, my eyes,
are flooded with the violet rays,
around this wizened and bony body of mine!

Jacaranda, pohon tua!

Sunyi senyap sekarang halaman ini,
dikelilingi oleh tonggak-tonggak peradaban.
Di halaman itu ada pohon sejenis *jacaranda*,
pohon tua, kalbu dan tulangnya menonjol,
menahan serangan musim apapun.

Tak terkalahkan melawan huru-hara mahasiswa mahasiswi
yang melangkah dibawah lengkungan-lengkungan
tonggak batu, dengan jaya,
secara sembrono, tanpa perasaan sabar,
sepanjang trottoar berbatu, yang diikis
oleh semangat generasi yang menyusul generasi.

(Orang berkata bahwa pada pukul dua siang
kadang-kadang seorang bungkuk bersembunyi diri diantara
menara berhiaskan gaya Notre Dame
dan melonceng, jarum lonceng raksasa itu).

Tapi kalau anda berkeliling-keliling
selama sinar bulan menari diantara
hutan berbatu yang diukir dengan patung-patung aneh,
terlihat bayangan terang bulan melalui kaca berwarna;
keatas daun-daun bunga *jacaranda* itu,
yang jatuh, berlingkar dan meluncur
dengan lemah-lembut ke bumi,
ke bumi manusia,
ke roh-roh terpendam,
ke generasi-generasi dari dahulu,
nenek moyang, semuanya.

Pagi-pagi angin segar bertiup,
menyentuh rambut seorang mahasiswi
yang beristirahat disebelah dinding rendah
dan berbatu, sebelum kembali lagi berusaha
mencari pengetahuan duniawi.

Mahasiswi cantik itu tak pernah melihat,
sekejap saja, seorang bungkok
yang mengumpulkan dari trottoar
daun-daun bunga *jacaranda* tua
yang tulangnya menonjol.

Dan bersinar matahari, sekarang diatas saya:
mata-mataku diliputi
dan dibanjiri warna subur dan lembayung,
terbuta oleh cahaya lembayung
disekitar badan bungkokku!