



## Your Stories

This page will feature the selected short story, poem, or article of the month along with its English translation.

Bilingual writers, we would appreciate your help with the translation of Indonesian work into English. Please contact us at [dalangpublishing@gmail.com](mailto:dalangpublishing@gmail.com)

Please adhere to the following maximum word limits:

Short story – 3000 words.

Poem – 500 words / poem – please submit 5 poems on individual pages.

Article – 2000 words.

Please follow our Writer's Guidelines for formatting and other submission directions.

### Horas, Ibu!



**Reni Renata Wati** was born on January 6, 2001 in Jakarta, Indonesia, from parents who come from the islands of Sumatra and Java. She is a senior student at the Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia where she studies English literature. Reni, who enjoys reading, drawing, and listening to music, dreams of becoming a professional writer. Her fiction writing is based on her research about cultural and social issues which are currently being experienced by Indonesian

communities. She hopes to raise an awareness of these problems in the Indonesian population.

Reni can be reached at [renirenataharianja16@gmail.com](mailto:renirenataharianja16@gmail.com)

\*\*\*

### Horas, Ibu!

Hembusan semilir angin senja memainkan rambut Jakob yang mulai memutih. Kedua netranya menatap nanar tanah merah tempat ibunya dikubur. Sudah lewat duabelas tahun, sejak kematian ibunya, dan limabelas tahun tanpa kehadiran kedua saudaranya yang lenyap di tanah orang karena beralasan mau mengadu untung dan nasib. Kedua saudaranya yang pergi ke tanah Jawa dan menghilang dari Siborong-borong, kampungnya di Sumatera Utara, kini berdiri di samping Jakob, menatap kubur ibu mereka dengan khidmat sembari membiarkan para tukang gali kubur membongkar kubur dan peti mati ibunya.

Di tanah batak, adalah hal wajar untuk keluarga melakukan upacara kematian bagi para leluhur, termasuk kepada orang tua yang telah lama meninggal dengan memindahkan tulang belulang mereka ke tempat yang lebih baik dari sebelumnya. Maksud dari adat ini adalah untuk menghormati mereka. Saat itu pula, seluruh sanak saudara haruslah kembali dari perantauan ke kampung halaman untuk mempersiapkan upacara, seperti yang sedang terjadi pada keluarga Jakob dan kedua abangnya.

### Rest in Peace, Mother!



**Novita Dewi** started writing poetry and short stories during her elementary and middle school days. She published in Si Kuncung and Bobo, children magazines, as well as wrote for the children's columns featured in Kompas and Sinar Harapan (now Suara Pembaruan). She now nurtures her interest in literature by writing articles about literature and translation for scientific journals. Novita is widely published. The short stories translated and published by Dalang Publishing are her first attempts of literary translation.

She currently teaches English literature courses at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Novita can be reached at [novitadewi@usd.ac.id](mailto:novitadewi@usd.ac.id) or [novitadewi9@gmail.com](mailto:novitadewi9@gmail.com).

\*\*\*

### Rest in Peace, Mother!

The late afternoon breeze ruffled Jakob's graying hair. He stared at the red earth of his mother's grave. Twelve years had gone by since his mother's passing, and fifteen years without the presence of his two brothers, who had left Siborong-borong, their village in North Sumatra, to seek their fortune in Java. Now, the two brothers stood beside Jakob, gazing solemnly at their mother's grave while the gravediggers unearthed her coffin.

One of the Batak customs is to honor deceased ancestors, including those who died long ago, by moving their bones to a better burial place and holding a proper funeral ceremony. On such occasions, all relatives had to come home to prepare for the ceremony, and this was now happening in Jakob's family.

\*\*\*

Two months ago, when Jakob and his wife were about to leave their house to sell some produce at the market, his two brothers and their families suddenly appeared in his front yard. Even though the sun had not yet risen, Jakob could see his two brothers were as cheerful as the

\*\*\*

Dua bulan yang lalu, saat Jakob dan istrinya hendak berjalan di pasar, kedua abangnya tiba-tiba muncul di halaman rumahnya. Walau waktu itu matahari belum tampak, tetapi Jakob bisa melihat wajah kedua abangnya yang secerah mentari. Ketika istri Jakob menyambut mereka ramah, Jakob membeku di ambang pintu. Dia baru tersadar ketika istrinya menggoyangkan bahunya dan memintanya untuk segera memotong babi peliharaan mereka untuk dijadikan jamuan. Meskipun Jakob melakukan apa yang diminta istrinya dan menerima kedua abang beserta keluarga mereka masuk, hatinya meneriakkan kata tidak suka dengan kedatangan mereka.

Ketidaksukaan Jakob pada abang-abangnya itu bukan tanpa alasan. Saat kedua abangnya memutuskan untuk pergi hampir dua dasawarsa yang lalu, ibu sedang sekarat dimakan penyakit. Dan seakan mengejek harapannya, ibunya yang mati-matian bertahan hidup akhirnya pergi tanpa pamit dalam tidur. Tidak memiliki uang yang cukup, Jakob menguburkan ibunya di belakang rumah dengan acara sederhana, tanpa kehadiran kedua abangnya.

Tiga hari setelah kedatangan dua abangnya, saat matahari telah lama terbenam dan seluruh keluarga mereka sudah tertelan mimpi, tiga pria masih terjaga dibawah rona lampu teplok. Tidak ada sepetah katapun yang keluar dari bibir mereka sampai akhirnya abang tertua, amang Lamsihar menghembuskan napas panjang sambil menatap Jakob lekat-lekat. "Kami sudah mendengar soal ibu," katanya pelan, "Dia dikubur dimana, Jakob?"

Jakob tidak segera menjawab. Buta karena amarah dan kesedihan, dia kembali menatap kedua abangnya dan menarik napas dalam-dalam, seakan enggan untuk memberitahukan keberadaan ibunya. Tapi dalam hatinya, Jakob sadar kalau kedua abangnya juga berhak untuk mengetahui keberadaan ibu mereka. Mau bagaimanapun keadaan mereka dan dirinya, mereka adalah keluarga. Pada akhirnya, Jakob menghembuskan napas perlahan, dan memberitahu mereka bahwa dia di kubur di belakang rumah.

"Kenapa ibu dikuburkan di sana?" tanya amang Ruhut, "Bukankah dulu ibu pernah bilang kalau dia ingin dikuburkan di antara leluhur kita?"

Mendengar perkataan amang Ruhut, hati Jakob serasa diiris pisau tumpul. Dia berusaha mengatupkan bibirnya serapat mungkin. Jakob mulai tertawa lirih, tetapi masih cukup terdengar oleh kedua abangnya yang menatapnya bingung. Dalam hati kecilnya, Jakob berharap kalau abangnya mengerti kesusahan dan sakit hati yang didicipinya saat pemakaman ibunya terjadi.

"Hatiku sakit melihat kalian berdua," tutur Jakob sambil mengepalkan kedua tangannya, berusaha mengendalikan rasa perih di hatinya yang kembali muncul, tetapi gagal ketika dia kembali menatap kedua abangnya dengan netranya yang memerah dan berkaca-kaca. "Abang bisa saja makmur di tanah Jawa. Punya uang, punya jabatan, punya keluarga yang sejahtera, tapi rasanya sekarang semuanya percuma saja."

"Apa maksudmu, Jakob?" tanya amang Lamsihar dengan suara bergetar.

"Buat apa uang sebanyak pasir lautan, jabatan setinggi awan kalau kalian tidak pernah mendengar ratapan ibu?" Sambarnya pedas, "Jujur saja aku heran dengan ibu yang menangis dua orang yang melupakan keluarganya di kampung."

Jakob melihat air muka amang Ruhut yang mengeras, sementara amang Lamsihar hanya terdiam dengan lekukan memilukan menghiasi wajahnya yang keriput. Tidak ingin menuang minyak ke dalam api, Jakob berdiri tanpa mengatakan apapun dan meninggalkan kedua abangnya dalam kesunyian.

Sesampainya di kamar tidur, istri Jakob yang mengetahui sikap Jakob terhadap kedua abangnya berusaha menenangkan suaminya. Dia mengatakan bahwa ibu mertuanya tak akan senang dengan sikap Jakob yang terkesan kekanak-kanakan, dan tidak mau mendengarkan kedua abangnya yang sudah datang jauh-jauh demi melihat ibu mereka yang sudah tiada. "Adalah salah kalau kau mengusir mereka, Pak," katanya selembut kain satin, "Jangan lupa, kalau kalian itu saudara satu darah dan ibu."

sun. While Jakob's wife greeted them kindly, Jakob stood frozen in the doorway. He only returned to reality when his wife shook his shoulder and asked him to go slaughter one of their pigs to prepare a welcome feast. Although Jakob did as his wife asked and invited his two brothers and their families to come in, he spurned their arrival.

Jakob's anger with his brothers was not without reason. When his two brothers decided to leave home fifteen years ago, their mother was suffering from a severe illness. Despite Jakob's hopes and her desperate attempts to survive, their mother died in her sleep without saying goodbye. Not having enough money for a proper burial, Jakob buried his mother in his back yard with a simple ceremony, without the presence of his two brothers.

Now, three days after the arrival of his two brothers, after the sun had long set and the other family members were fast asleep, the three brothers sat by the light of the oil lamp. They were silent, until finally Lamsihar, the eldest brother, sighed. "We heard about Mother's passing," he said quietly. "Where did you bury her, Jakob?"

Jakob did not answer immediately. Consumed by anger and sadness, he looked silently at his brothers. As if reluctant to reveal the location of their mother's grave, Jakob took a deep breath. Deep in his heart, Jakob knew that his two brothers had the right to know this information, and that despite their circumstances, they were still family. Jakob sighed, "Our mother is buried in the back yard."

"Why did you bury Mother there?" asked Ruhut, the middle brother. "Didn't she say that she wanted to be buried among our ancestors?"

His brothers looked at him, confused.

Jakob wanted his brothers to understand the heartache he had experienced at their mother's makeshift funeral. "It hurts me to look at the two of you," Jakob said, clenching his fists. He tried to control the pain in his heart, but couldn't. Looking at his two brothers with red teary eyes, he said, "Perhaps you succeeded in making your fortune in Java — you have money, you have position, your families are privileged — but now all of that seems pointless."

"What do you mean, Jakob?" asked Lamsihar in a trembling voice.

"What's the use of owning as much money as there is sand on the beach, and holding a position as high as the clouds, if you never listened to Mother's crying?" Jakob snapped. "Honestly, it always surprised me why Mother cried for two men who had deserted their family."

Jakob saw Ruhut's jaw set, while Lamsihar remained silent, a sad curve settling on his wrinkled face. Not wanting to add any more fuel to the fire, Jakob rose and, without saying anything, left his two brothers.

In their bedroom, Jakob's wife tried to calm him. She knew how her husband felt toward his brothers. Nonetheless she told him that his mother would not be happy with his childish attitude and his refusal to listen to his two brothers. After all, they had come from far away to see their deceased mother. "It would be wrong for you to throw them out, dear," she said softly. "Remember that you are blood brothers."

"So what?" Jakob shook his head angrily. "It doesn't bother me that they went to Java to better their financial situation; it bothers me that they not once came home to see Mother. And now, they come twelve years after she died? There's no point in having them here anymore."

Jakob's wife sat down beside her husband and caressed his shoulder. "Darling," she soothed, "don't you realize that what you just said is evil? Don't close your heart because of your ignorance."

Jakob remained silent.

His wife continued reassuringly, "Open your heart, dear. Just give them a chance and time. That's all."

\*\*\*

The next morning, Jakob was preparing to feed the livestock when, by chance, he saw his two brothers smoking in front of the house while sipping their hot, black coffee. He could faintly hear their conversation and couldn't believe it when he heard Ruhut loudly regret not returning home sooner.

"Lantas kenapa?" tanya Jakob sembari menggelengkan kepalanya, "Aku bukan marah karena mereka pergi ke Jawa demi memperbaiki keuangan mereka. Aku marah karena tidak sekalipun mereka pulang untuk menjenguk ibu. Dan sekarang, setelah ibu sudah mati selama dua belas tahun, mereka baru datang? Sudah tidak ada gunanya lagi keberadaan mereka disini."

Tak mengatakan apapun, istrinya duduk di samping suaminya dan mengelus-elus pundaknya.

"Pak," sanggah istrinya, "sadarkah kamu kalau apa yang baru saja kau katakan itu jahat? Janganlah hatimu jadi gelap karena ketidaktahuanmu itu."

Jakob diam seribu bahasa sementara istrinya melanjutkan, "Bukalah hatimu, Pak. Beri mereka kesempatan dan waktu, itu saja." Ujar istrinya meyakinkan.

\*\*\*

Paginya, Jakob tengah bersiap untuk memberi makan ternak ketika tanpa sengaja dia melihat kedua abangnya yang tengah mengisap tembakau di depan rumah sambil menyesap kopi hitam yang masih mengepul. Sayup-sayup, Jakob dapat mendengar apa yang tengah mereka bicarakan. Dia tidak dapat mempercayai telinganya ketika amang Ruhut mengangkat suaranya, menyatakan penyesalannya karena tidak pulang kampung lebih cepat.

"Aku hanya bisa berandai, Bang," ucapnya lesu, "seandainya aku pulang lebih cepat, mungkin aku masih bisa bertemu ibu. Dan mungkin saja Jakob tidak semarah ini."

Jakob termenung. Ucapan amang Ruhut terus menerus berputar dalam kepalanya tanpa henti. Namun Jakob menggelengkan kepalanya dan pergi dari tempatnya berdiri tanpa memiliki niat untuk membuka hati. Rasa sakit hatinya sudah terlalu dalam menguasai dirinya.

Selepas memberi makan babi dan ayam peliharaannya, Jakob berjalan sembari mengenang ibunya. Pikirannya sekalut hatinya.

Saat Jakob melihat sekitarnya, dia sudah berdiri di samping kuburan ibunya dbelakang rumahnya. Jakob menatap kuburan ibunya sambil menghela napas panjang sebelum tersenyum kecil. Dia merasa kalau ibunyalah yang membawa dia kemari.

"Bu, ini anakmu, Jakob," sapanya dalam hening, "Maaf kalau beberapa hari ini aku tidak bisa datang menjenguk."

Jakob menceritakan kepada ibunya yang berada di langit bahwa kedua abangnya sudah kembali dari tanah Jawa setelah lama menghilang ditelan waktu dan bumi. Dia juga menceritakan keluh kesah yang tersembunyi dalam hatinya yang tidak memiliki kesempatan untuk berbicara.

"Entahlah Bu," desahnya lirih, "Rasanya sudah tidak ada lagi yang benar dalam diriku ini," katanya sambil menatap langit biru. "Aku merasa... apa yang aku lakukan ini tidaklah benar."

Tidak ada yang menjawab selain suara tawa keponakannya dari dalam rumah. Jakob mengerjapkan kedua matanya beberapa kali sebelum menghela napas panjang sembari mengusap wajahnya yang sekaras pasir dengan gusar. Batinnya lelah. Sungguh, dia berharap ibunya dapat berbicara kepadanya sekarang dan memberikan sebuah petunjuk atau apapun. Namun kenyataan bahwa ibunya tidak lagi akan bisa membantu, menamparnya keras. Pada akhirnya, Jakob memutuskan untuk kembali masuk ke rumah tanpa mendapatkan jawaban dari siapapun.

\*\*\*

Malamnya, Jakob terbangun dari tidurnya dan tidak bisa mempercayai matanya. Dia yakin sekali kalau semalam dia jatuh tertidur di dalam kamarnya dan bukannya di alam terbuka. Terlebih, yang membuat Jakob bergegas bangkit berdiri dari pembaringan adalah keberadaan ibunya yang tengah duduk bersila di sampingnya. Seakan mengajaknya untuk menari, rumput dihadapannya bergoyang dengan gemulai. Rambut ibunya yang digelung rapi dan mulai berwarna seputih tulang tersisir oleh angin. Ibunya menatap Jakob hangat dan tidak mengatakan

"If only," Ruhut said wearily to his brother, "I had come home earlier, I might have seen Mother, and maybe Jakob wouldn't be so angry."

Jakob contemplated Ruhut's words echoing in his mind. Then, shaking his head, Jakob was again consumed by resentment and continued on without any intention of forgiving his brothers.

After feeding his cattle, pigs, and chickens, Jakob paced aimlessly around, thinking about his mother and feeling troubled. He soon found himself standing beside his mother's grave in the garden behind his house. Jakob stared at his mother's resting place and exhaled a long sigh. Smiling a little, he felt that it was his mother who had brought him here.

"Mother, here's your son Jakob," he said quietly. "I'm sorry I couldn't visit you for a few days." Jakob told his mother that his two brothers had returned from Java after having been gone for a long time. He also told her about the grievances he carried in his heart.

"I don't know, Mother," he sighed softly. "I don't think I'm a good person." Looking up at the blue sky, he continued, "I feel that what I'm doing is not right."

No one answered. There was only the sound of his nephews' laughter from inside the house. Jakob blinked a few times before taking another deep breath. Irritated, he ran a hand across his weathered face. He was tired and fervently wished that his mother could talk to him now and advise him. Realizing once again that his mother was not available to help, upset him. Finally, Jakob turned to go home, even though no one had answered his questions.

\*\*\*

Later that night, Jakob woke up and couldn't believe his eyes. There was his mother, sitting cross-legged beside him. The grasses in front of them swayed gracefully as if tempting her to dance. Jakob was sure he had fallen asleep in his room and not outdoors, but he rushed to get up. His mother's hair was neatly tied back and had started to turn as white as ivory. The wind sifted playfully through the strands. She looked at Jakob warmly and patted the ground beside her.

Hesitating, Jakob stiffly sat down next to his mother.

For a long time, neither of them spoke. Jakob was preoccupied with his jumbled thoughts. He had absolutely no idea if this was a sign of disaster, or a sign from God.

"Jakob, how are you?" his mother asked.

Jakob remained silent. He had never heard his mother speak with such a silken voice, even when she was still alive. Nodding his head, Jakob desperately tried to hold back his tears.

Jakob's mother caressed the top of his head. Happily, she said, "It is all right; things are good." While motioning Jakob to lay his head on her lap, she said, "I know that your two brothers have come home."

Jakob nodded. He closed his eyes and enjoyed his mother's loving touch that he had missed so much.

"I'm very happy to see your brothers have come home after living in Java for such a long time," Jakob's mother continued cheerfully. Her eyes sparkled. "I see that your children and your brothers' children are doing well."

When Jakob nodded without commenting, his mother continued, "Jakob, what's wrong with you, Son?"

Jakob was surprised. He had not expected that his mother had heard him talking to her that morning. He wanted to lift his head and defend himself, but somehow, he couldn't.

"What you said this morning reminded me of the time you tried to defend our family fourteen years ago." Jakob could hear the smile in her voice. He remembered that day in the market when he punched a shopkeeper he knew in the face. Jakob had not meant to cause any trouble, but had lost his temper when the man insulted his family.

"How can one forget his family?" the shopkeeper had yelled at Jakob. "Didn't your mother ever teach your brothers about that? Or does your

apapun sambil menepuk tanah di sampingnya, meminta Jakob untuk duduk. Ragu-ragu, Jakob duduk di sebelah ibunya dengan kaku.

Tak ada yang berbicara di antara mereka untuk waktu yang cukup lama. Jakob sibuk dengan pikirannya yang mulai meracau. Dia sama sekali tidak tahu apakah ini tanda petaka, atau petunjuk dari Tuhan.

"Jakob," panggil ibunya, "Bagaimana kabarmu?"

Jakob terdiam. Belum pernah dia mendengar suara ibunya yang sehalus sutera, bahkan ketika ibunya masih hidup. Mati-matian Jakob berusaha menahan tangis dengan mengguguk-anggukan kepalanya.

Ibunya mengelus pucuk kepala anaknya. Terlihat jelas guratan kebahagiaan terpancar dari wajahnya. "Bagus, bagus," ibunya terus mengatakan hal yang sama sembari membiarkan Jakob tidur bertumpu pada pangkuannya, "Ibu lihat, kedua abang mu sudah pulang, ya."

Jakob mengguguk dalam diam dan menutup kedua matanya, menikmati sentuhan kasih ibunya yang sudah lama tiada.

"Ibu senang sekali saat akangmu pulang setelah sekian lama tinggal di tanah Jawa," ucapnya bahagia sebelum menatap netra Jakob dengan matanya yang bersinar, "Ibu lihat anak-anakmu dan anak kedua akangmu baik-baik."

Jakob hanya mengguguk.

"Jakob, anakku," lanjutnya, "Kenapa dengan hatimu, Nak?"

Jakob tercengang mendengar ibunya. Dia benar-benar tidak menyangka kalau ibunya mendengar perkataannya pagi tadi. Ingin rasanya dirinya bangkit dan membela dirinya, tapi bagai tersihir, tubuhnya tidak menuruti kemauannya.

"Mendengar perkataanmu pagi tadi, aku jadi teringat saat kamu berusaha membela keluarga kita empatbelas tahun lalu," katanya sambil tertawa renyah.

Perkataan ibunya membuat Jakob teringat saat dirinya melemparkan tinju ke wajah salah satu pedagang yang dikenalnya di pasar. Sesungguhnya, Jakob tidak ingin menimbulkan kekacauan, tapi cibiran pedangan itu pada keluarganya membuat dirinya lepas kendali.

"Mana ada keluarga yang lupa akan kedudukannya!" serunya pada Jakob, "Tak pernahkah ibumu mengajari soal itu? Atau memang benar kalau sudah tak ada adat di keluargamu dengan mengizinkan akangmu pergi merantau dan membiarkan mereka melupakan dari mana mereka berasal?"

Hari itu pula, ibunya berkali-kali berlutut meminta maaf kepada seluruh orang di pasar karena keributan yang berkesan kekanakan yang dilakukan Jakob.

"Apa yang kau lakukan ke pedagang itu sama dengan apa yang kau lakukan pada kedua akangmu," tuturnya, "Kau tidak mau mendengarkan kedua akangmu dan terlalu berpaku pada sakit hatimu."

"Lalu aku harus apa?" tanya Jakob lemas, "Bukannya sudah terlambat buat mereka untuk melihat ibu?"

"Mereka kemari bukan tanpa alasan," jawab ibunya sabar, "Ingat apa yang pernah istrimu katakan beberapa malam lalu?"

"Ya. Dia memintaku untuk membuka hatiku," jawab Jakob sambil menahan tangis.

"Kalau begitu, lakukanlah," kata ibunya sambil mengusap rambut Jakob yang seputih tulang, "Ibu yakin, mereka datang untuk kebaikan kalian bertiga."

Jakob mengguguk lemah. Rasa berat di hatinya kini sirna terbawa angin saat air mata mengalir deras dari kedua matanya dan membasahi pakaian ibunya yang tertawa sambil menepuk-nepuk bahu Jakob.

"Janganlah menangisi aku, Nak," hiburnya, "Tangisilah hatimu, dan ingat kalau tidak ada kata terlambat untuk meminta maaf." Ibunya kini bangkit berdiri dan mulai berjalan menjauhi Jakob yang termenung menatap punggung ringkih ibunya yang semakin menjauh dan menghilang terbawa angin.

family no longer uphold any tradition and thus allows your brothers to leave and forget their homeland?"

On that day, his mother repeatedly knelt to apologize to everyone in the market for the childish commotion Jakob had caused.

"What you did to that shopkeeper back then is the same as what you're doing to your two brothers now," she said. "You don't want to listen to your two brothers because your anger won't let you."

"Then, what should I do?" asked Jakob miserably. "Isn't it too late for them to visit you, Mother?"

"They're not here without reason," his mother answered patiently. "Remember what your wife said a few days ago?"

"Yes," replied Jakob, holding back his tears. "She asked me to open my heart."

"Then listen to her," his mother said, stroking Jakob's graying hair. "I'm sure your brothers came for the good of the three of you."

Jakob nodded in relief. He no longer felt burdened. He burst out crying, wetting his mother's clothes with his tears. His mother laughed and patted Jakob's shoulder.

"Don't cry for me, my child," she comforted. "Cry for yourself. Remember that it's never too late to make amends." Jakob sat up as his mother rose. He watched his mother's frail back slowly disappear in the wind.

Jakob closed his eyes. When he opened them, he was in his own bed with tears flowing down his hollow cheeks.

His wife, asleep next to him, woke up. Gently rubbing Jakob's damp back, she felt him shaking and saw his ashen face. "What's the matter, Jakob?"

"I'm fine," Jakob replied in a quivering voice. "I've just had some revelations."

\*\*\*

A few days later, Jakob and his two brothers gathered in the living room with their families. Jakob sat quietly, occasionally taking a drag of his cigarette, as Lamsihar adjusted his seat and started talking about the reason for coming home. "I discussed this situation with Ruhut long before we planned to visit," Lamsihar said. "Ruhut and his family were willing to join us. Still, Jakob, it is not possible to perform this funeral ceremony without your consent."

Jakob looked evenly at Lamsihar. Although he knew about the custom his two brothers were talking about, his curiosity about their sincerity snuffed the last of the burning embers of anger he still carried in his heart. "What do you two mean?" he asked.

"We would like to ask your family to participate in moving Mother's remains to a more suitable place," replied Lamsihar. "That's why we all came home together."

"We knew that it was too late for us to see Mother," Ruhut added, with a sad smile. "But this is the only thing we can do at least Mother can have a better resting place."

Jakob began to sob.

His two brothers were shocked by Jakob's reaction. Jakob confessed that anger had taken the better of him all this time. Bowing several times until his head almost touched the floor, he begged for forgiveness from his two brothers and their families.

"Jakob, stop it, please!" Ruhut exclaimed. "We are just as guilty as you are. Now, let us fix what is broken, starting with relocating Mother's grave to a better place."

That morning, the fog that usually covered the house was gone. It was replaced by the warm glow of the sun.

\*\*\*

Jakob menutup kedua matanya, membiarkan air mata yang menggenangi kedua pelupuk matanya mengalir melintasi pipinya yang tirus sebelum terbangun dari tidurnya.

Istrinya yang tidur di sebelahnya terbangun. Dia mendapati suaminya yang duduk di ranjang, gemetar dengan wajah seputih kertas. "Ada apa, Pak?" tanya istrinya sambil mengusap pelan punggung Jakob yang berkeringat.

"Aku tidak apa," jawab Jakob dengan suara bergetar, "Hanya, mendapat sebuah pencerahan."

\*\*\*

Lepas beberapa hari, seluruh keluarga dari Jakob dan kedua abangnya berkumpul di ruang tengah. Jakob sendiri duduk diam sambil sesekali menghisap tembakau saat abangnya membenarkan tempat duduknya dan mulai berbicara mengenai alasan mereka pulang kampung. "Abang sudah membicarakan ini dengan amang Ruhut jauh sebelum kami sekeluarga berencana untuk datang, dan Ruhut beserta keluarga bersedia ikut serta," ujar amang Lamsihar, "Akan tetapi Jakob, adat ini tidak akan bisa dilakukan tanpa restu darimu juga."

Jakob menatap lurus amang Lamsihar. Meskipun dia paham akan adat yang dimaksud oleh kedua abangnya, rasa penasarannya memadamkan bara amarah yang tersisa dalam hatinya. "Apa maksud abang berdua?" tanyanya sebelum dia bisa menguasai bibirnya.

"Kami mau minta keikutsertaan dari keluargamu untuk memindahkan tulang belulang ibu ke tempat yang lebih baik." balas amang Lamsihar, "Itulah alasan kami datang di saat yang bersamaan."

"Kami tahu mungkin sudah terlambat bagi kami untuk bisa melihat ibu," sambung amang Ruhut sambil tersenyum sendu, "Tapi hanya inilah yang bisa kami lakukan, setidaknya agar beliau bisa memiliki tempat peristirahatan yang lebih layak."

Isak tangis terdengar dari bibir Jakob, diiringi dengan air mata yang mengalir semakin deras. Kedua abangnya terkejut melihat tangisan Jakob dan menanyakan ada apa gerangan. Jakob mengutarakan segala yang ada di dalam hatinya selama ini, terutama amarah yang menguasai dirinya. Berkali-kali Jakob membungkukan badan hingga kepalanya nyaris menyentuh lantai, memohon pengampunan dari kedua abang dan keluarganya.

"Jakob, janganlah membungkuk," sambar amang Ruhut, "Kami juga sama bersalahnya dengan dirimu. Biarlah kita memperbaiki apa yang rusak, diawali dengan memindahkan ibu ke tempat yang lebih baik."

Pagi itu, kabut yang seakan menutupi rumah kini lenyap, diganti dengan rona hangat matahari.

\*\*\*

"Horas! Horas! Horas!" seru para penggali kubur, menandakan tulang ibu si empunya acara telah ditemukan. Jakob bersama abang-abangnya segera membalas seruan yang bermakna doa ucapan syukur itu. Mereka sudah siap dengan kain putih di tangan masing-masing untuk menerima tulang ibu mereka. Mereka membawa tumpukan tulang ibunya ke tempat yang telah disediakan untuk dibersihkan dengan air campuran kunyit dan jeruk nipis.

Saat Jakob membersihkan tulang ibunya, perkataan ibunya menghampiri pikirannya. Terngiang di telinganya suara ibunya yang lembut, yang menyibakkan tabir amarah yang menyelubungi mata hatinya. Satu-satunya suara yang membimbing hati Jakob keluar dari ketersesatan di kekelaman. Air mata kelegaan meleleh dari pelupuk mata Jakob.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Horas! Horas! Horas!" the gravediggers called out, signaling they had found the bones of Jakob's mother. Jakob immediately joined his two brothers in responding to the call which meant a prayer of thanksgiving. The three brothers stood, holding white cloths in their hands, ready to receive their mother's bones.

They carried the bones to the place they had prepared, and cleaned them with a mixture of turmeric and lime juice.

While Jakob cleaned the bones, he recalled his mother's words. Her gentle voice had removed the shroud of anger that had covered him. Hers was the only voice that had been able to guide him out of the darkness. Tears of joy streamed from Jakob's eyes.

\*\*\*\*\*