

CROWN OF THE EAST



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CROWN OF THE EAST

A King's Biography Pulsing in Verse

Dedicated to

His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim

King of Malaysia

by

Rafid Hameed Faraj Al-Qadi

Translated from the Arabic by

Ammar Al-Hindi

2026

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A Note on the Translation

Arabic poetry has a long and distinguished tradition of panegyric, stretching back well over a thousand years, in which the praise of rulers, patrons, and the great was one of the most demanding and prestigious forms a poet could undertake. The register of classical panegyric is consistently elevated, its purpose to immortalise its subject in language equal to the occasion. What distinguishes this collection from that tradition is that the poems do not sustain a single high ceremonial pitch throughout; they shift the register, sometimes within the same poem, from the commemorative to the elegiac, from the formal declaration to something closer to intimate speech. This range is not incidental but essential to the collection's (diwan) meaning.

The poems in this collection are composed in the Arabic free verse tradition, which discards the classical system of fixed metres and monorhyme in favour of irregular line lengths, internal rhythm, and flexibility. Arabic free verse, unlike its English counterpart, is not simply the absence of metre. It retains from the classical tradition a strong tonal pulse. Each line unit tends toward a consistent breath-length, and the poem advances through repetition and parallelism rather than through the varied stress-patterns that give English free verse its movement. The Arabic line tends toward end-stopping, its unit of sense complete within itself; the stanza accumulates through addition rather than through enjambment. This gives Arabic free verse a vertical quality, rather than the horizontal flow that characterises most English free verse, where meaning runs across line breaks and syntax is used to generate forward momentum.

To render this into English free verse would be to impose that horizontal movement onto a poem built vertically in the original language. The end-stopped Arabic line would dissolve into the run-on of an English sentence, and with it would go the poem's structure. To impose instead a fixed English metre would solve the problem of the line unit but introduce a regularity of stress that Arabic free verse does not have and does not want; its rhythms are varied and asymmetric, and a fixed metre would iron them flat. In an attempt to reproduce in English the structural logic of the original, the solution I have adopted is a form of elevated English prose-poetry in which the line unit is preserved, end-stopping is maintained wherever the sense allows, and rhythm is organised through parallelism and breath rather than through counted stresses. Poetry in its very nature is resistant to translation.

Applying my principle of structural fidelity to the original poems, I've attempted to utilise word-for-word renderings as much as possible. However, when such was not possible, I looked for the word that carried the weight of the original rather than only its meaning. In line with this principle, the line breaks follow the Arabic as faithfully as the two languages allow, departing from it only where Arabic syntax, which tolerates inversions and ellipses that English does not, and would have forced a break that served the structure of the sentence rather than the movement of the poem. Certain terms have been carried across in their Arabic form because the meaning and in some cases the internal wordplay of the original depend on the Arabic word itself remaining present in the text.

Ammar Al-Hindi

Dedication

To the one who does not sit upon a throne... but rather dwells within the idea of justice.

To His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, the revered King of Malaysia — I offer you no ink, for the seas are worthier of their own waters; and no paper, for the forests are more deserving of their own trees.

I offer you the distance that faithfulness crossed from Baghdad to Johor, and I offer you the wonder that lit my friend Ahmed Dahham's face as he beheld in you a homeland that never closes its doors.

I dedicate to you the collection "Crown of the East" — an Iraqi heartbeat that embraced in you the unbroken spirit of the East. From the heart of Mesopotamia to you alone, this crown is raised.

We do not chronicle kings... We chronicle the light
that kings leave behind them.

O bearer of the crown, we have not come to praise
power — we have come to write of the human being
within you. Crowns wither, and justice remains the
true king.

Heartbeats of Words

When you close this book, do not close your inner sight to the light that dwells behind its words — for justice is an art, and art is a revolution, and the true king is he who transforms his people into a poem the world reads with wonder.

Here... the two rivers — Tigris and Euphrates — clasp hands with the Malay Archipelago. We place the final period... to begin a new verse of faithfulness.

Bridge of Stories

From the Land of the Two Rivers ·

To the Shores of Malaysia

I had no prior acquaintance with Kuala Lumpur or Johor, and the maps told me nothing beyond mute borders and a geography drawn in the cold ink of paper. Malaysia existed in my imagination merely as a distant country sleeping under the equatorial sun, separated from me by the roar of oceans and the silence of distances. Yet geography, for all its harshness, crumbles before human emotion — and borders, for all their rigidity, dissolve when faithfulness decides to extend its bridges.

The story begins when my friend Ahmed Dahham travelled with his family to settle in Malaysia's

embrace. He did not travel alone — he carried with him a fragment of Iraq's alleyways and palms. From that day, his phone calls transformed from the usual conversations fed by nostalgia into cosmic windows looking out upon the story of a king, the greatness of a state, and the justice of a man. His words would reach me through the ether like pulses from another world, conveying that the East is not merely a direction from which the sun rises, but a spirit that rises with justice and dignity.

He would tell me — lost in a lover's wonder — of a king who refused to sit behind deaf walls, who would not permit the high palace ramparts to imprison him from the anguish of his people. He described a surreal scene I had never encountered in history books: a king who sows tranquillity in hearts. Through his words I saw him leading the nation forward with the heart of a compassionate

father and the mind of a master judge whose scales are gold. In every call, he poured into my ear the precise details of King Ibrahim's life, until the stranger in my consciousness became kin — and I felt that this king's justice had crossed the oceans and surpassed the dams to knock upon my door in Iraq, and sit with me at the platform of poetry, reminding me that true authority is derived from the love of the people, not from the power of arms or the glitter of crowns.

I have long believed — as a poet, a painter, and a judge who spent his life among letters, brushes, case files, and the platforms of justice — that justice is the earth's scale, and the law its faithful guardian of human dignity. Yet my friend spoke to me of a justice of another kind: a justice that does not content itself with cold texts but is blended with humility and mercy.

He told me how King Ibrahim refuses the suffocating formalities when it comes to meeting his people. How he made the state of Johor a beacon all eyes turn to — a living laboratory for renaissance and development, long before ascending the throne of all Malaysia to become a shelter for everyone.

This strange blend of a leader's sternness and a human being's instinctiveness was what lit within me the fuse of writing. To see a king who understands that true protocol is the satisfaction of the people's conscience — that is a lesson in the philosophy of governance that transcends Malaysia's borders to reach every person of perspicacity.

From here, and from amid the rubble of Iraqi pain and the longed-for hopes of renaissance, the idea was born: to write for him a collection that would immortalise this historic journey. The motivation

was not a desire to offer praise — for praise withers — but the conviction that beauty is contagious, and justice inspires, and faithfulness to my friend Ahmed's words was a debt I owed him, since he had found in that land a second homeland that respects human dignity and sees in the stranger a brother in humanity.

I decided to bend my craft and harness my poetic faculty — shaped by the paths of literature — to sketch in words the features of this king whom I had never seen with my own eyes, nor shaken by the hand. Yet I saw him through the eyes of my friend who does not lie, and through the heart of the poet who sees beyond images, and through the mind of the judge who analyses the evidence to arrive at certain truth: that His Majesty King Ibrahim is an exceptional king in an age of imitation.

I write about him today, conjuring that biography in which the originality of the East merged with the refinement of the West. I write of his childhood, which was no luxury but a preparation for immense responsibilities; of his military bearing, which understood that leadership is not issuing orders, but self-discipline and sacrifice for the collective. I write of his ascent to the throne, which made him only more humble and closer to the soil — as if he were applying the eternal wisdom: that the true summit lies in descending to the people, not in rising above them.

The field taught him that steadfastness before the storm is the virtue of knights; and the law taught him that equity is the spirit of kingship. Thus my poems came to accompany this vital rhythm in his life — between the roar of the motorcycle and the

silence of contemplation, between the commander's resolve and the father's pardon.

This collection, which I have named Crown of the East, is not merely ink flowing upon silent paper. It is a spiritual ascent that binds the towering palm of Iraq — witness to the dawn of civilisations — with the resilient mangrove of Malaysia, witness to the genius of the will. It is the pearl of letters from an Iraqi poet who knows the bitterness of justice's absence and the value of its presence, to a king of Malaysia who practices justice as a daily way of life — not a slogan raised on occasions.

It is an artistic attempt to break the barriers between cultures, and to say that great human values are a universal language that needs no interpreter: when the king governs with justice, the palms of Iraq applaud him as the forests of Johor do.

And now, with all the gravitas of the law, the tenderness of art, and the prime vigour of poetry, I open the pages of my heart to trace the biography of a king who deserves to be immortalised in the memory of poems — and to have his name raised as a crown above the head of the East.

In the biography of His Majesty King Ibrahim, seen through my friend's lens, I came to understand that we stand before a rare model of rulers — those who believe that the throne is no place for rest, but a sanctuary for service. In the history of nations, there are kings who built palaces of marble, and kings who built edifices of dignity. And His Majesty chose the harder kind: he chose to build within the heart of every Malaysian a homeland.

I saw in his biography the embodiment of the ancient judicial maxim: "Justice is the foundation of kingship" — yet he did not confine justice to the

halls of courts alone. He extended its shadow to encompass social justice, equal opportunity, and a technological renaissance that leaves no one behind.

And we see in this approach a profound mastery of what the age demands — where the ruler transforms into a moral and legal guarantor of the nation's progress. For the dreams of His Majesty King Ibrahim, as my friend described them, were never mere wishes — they were living blueprints sketching the contours of Malaysia, so that she might become a beacon for the entire East.

And as a visual artist who sees the world through colour, I found no worthier means of expressing the king's biography than this art: the life of King Ibrahim is itself a breathtakingly surrealist painting — gathering the fragrance of Malaysia's ancient Islamic heritage with the clamour of engines, the

speed of aircraft, and the modernity of artificial intelligence.

This artistic engagement is what I sought to embody in *Crown of the East* — for it reflects the latent power behind visual fractures, which is precisely what the king represents in his ability to transform challenges into launching pads.

When I paint in words the features of His Majesty, I do not convey a photographic image, but the energy that radiates from his decisions, the speed that distinguishes his vision, the precision that governs his judgements. It is an attempt to translate the royal pulse into a language that the generation of technology understands and the generation of tradition values.

Nor can I, as an Iraqi, write about Malaysia without feeling that invisible thread binding Baghdad to Kuala Lumpur. We are children of civilisations that

built history with ink and the sweat of the brow. The palm of Iraq, which witnessed the birth of the world's first law, greets today the mangrove that protects Malaysia's shores — and this emotional connection made me feel that I am not writing about a distant king, but about a leader who represents our Eastern values in their finest form.

Malaysia has always been in the hearts of Iraqis as an example of a renaissance that respects its own identity; and today, under the leadership of King Ibrahim, we see this example transformed into a reality that dazzles the eye.

The collection "Crown of the East" is a message from the land of prophets and scriptures to the land of tolerance and growth — affirming that we, though geography separates us, are united by the human condition and its aspiration toward a tomorrow governed by justice and beauty.

We live in an age when values have been crushed under the weight of materialism, and the need has emerged for symbols that restore our faith in humanity. This collection comes as a cry to cling to beauty and justice — and I have harnessed all I learned in the paths of poetry and law to compose a text that may be read not with the eyes alone, but with inner sight.

He who contemplates the military vigour of His Majesty King Ibrahim understands that the uniform was for him no mere ranks and medals, but a school for refining the spirit and forging the will. The field taught him that leadership is advancing at the front, not issuing orders from offices. Thus we saw him break royal isolation to lead his motorcycle on the annual Johor journey — crossing forests, entering villages, welcomed by the people with open hearts.

And this knight who dwells within the king is what gives the crown its true meaning: the crown that does not prevent its bearer from touching the earth's soil.

My friend told me much of Johor and how it transformed into a model of development that respects the human being.

The justice the king practices is not the adjudication of disputes but the distribution of hope. And when I decided to name my collection "Crown of the East", I understood that this crown is studded with the hopes of millions, and that King Ibrahim is its faithful guardian — the architect of renaissance who knows how to lay the cornerstone of values before the cornerstone of buildings.

This is the secret of immortality. And in my studio in Iraq, I contemplate that magical bond between the palm of Iraq and the mangrove of Malaysia.

Crown of the East is not merely a title but a symbol of the unity of destiny among the nations of the East. The spirit flowing through this collection believes that justice in Johor is the same justice as in Baghdad, and that the human being bows to the ruler who sees in authority a trust.

In closing, I cannot but look with faithful eyes upon my friend Ahmed Dahham — who did not forget his roots but made of his success a bridge of love, a witness who conveyed the truth with his heart before his tongue. The role of the faithful friend in a creatives' life is the role of the inspirer who opens closed doors.

Had those calls not cut through the silence of Baghdad nights to tell me of the king's noble deeds, this epic would never have been born. My friend did not convey to me news — he conveyed a feeling of homeland he found in Malaysia, where he felt no

exile. And this feeling is the greatest praise any ruler can receive: that the stranger in his land feels at home.

Therefore, in Crown of the East, I also immortalise this high human value — the value of hospitality that transformed my friend and his family into ambassadors of love between two great peoples. And I say to him: Thank you for being the bridge across which my feelings crossed to rest in the presence of King Ibrahim. Thank you for being that sincere eye that conveyed to me the light in the darkness of distances. Without your living testimony, this collection would never have seen the light. Crown of the East is the fruit of this meeting — my humble gift from the heart of Iraq to the throne of Malaysia.

O Your Exalted Majesty — receive this poetic pulse and this spiritual ascent, which the feelings of faithfulness fashioned from my poetic gift.

Let us now open the pages of Crown of the East, for the journey to begin — and let poetry pulse in the biography of a king who deserves to be a legend in the age of reality, and a truth in the age of imagination.

I. The Prophecy of Time

Your name was never merely a name
inscribed in the records of palaces;
it was a promise whispered by the palms
through all the groves of Johor — and a dream
that visited King Iskandar's sleep
as he kept vigil at the far horizon,
long before your eyes first opened to the world...

The stars were marshalling the ranks of power;
the sea concealed within its patient shell
the pearl of the Crown yet to come...

You were an Idea born of living fire,

wherein the majesty of kings blended with the
tenderness of jasmine;
forged from the steadfastness of the earth,
and the ambition of the clouds...

Within your being lay the secret of the State,
and you awaited that great hour when dawn should
cleave the darkness
— dawn that gathers up
the scattered light and pours it whole
into the cup of your upturned palms...

Before the hour of birth —
the Earth herself was making ready;
the horses in their stables neighed aloud
for one bright sun, yet to be born;
the forests held their breath,

awaiting the slow steps of Destiny;
and the sea entrusted its depths
into a heart that had not yet begun to beat...

He was no mere child awaiting the cradle,
but a historic decree that Time itself
had chronicled —
to be a bridge, between
an ancient and illustrious past,
and a future that no horizon bounds...

A prophecy from the heart of the Unseen —
You came to affirm that kings
are not born by chance;
but arrive like rains
after long seasons of patient wait...

Like great poems
before the ink leaves the pen —
so were you...
and so you came to be...
the Crown of the East...
the Crown, so long awaited,
now becomes both the beginning and the end...

Before Time traced its very first letters,
the days themselves in Johor were arranging
and re-arranging in expectant wait;
the sea entrusted its depths
into a heart, yet to be born;
the lightning yielded its speed
to veins yet to be formed;
and Earth bestowed her steadfastness
to steps that would tread its soil...

Within the corridors of ancient palaces,
the air was heavy
with incense and gunpowder —
between the soft silk and the tempered shield,
the ancestors were watching the stars,
as if searching for a name
written in the sky —
King Ibrahim, the Coming One,
emerging through the fissures of the Unseen...

And on that day, Johor held her breath...
The trees bowing;
and the sky adorning itself
with an unfamiliar luminance,
as if the stars had abandoned their orbits
to witness the moment of birth...

It was no common waiting for a child,
but for a hidden earthquake
from the secret chambers of the Unseen —
a leader who would at last shatter
the weary sameness of familiar light,
and raise a new, ascendant sun...

Suddenly... the silence of the night
was torn asunder by a cry
that shook the very pillars of the palace,
and thunder answered, saluting the open sky...

Here... Ibrahim was born —
coming forth from the womb of faithfulness,
to bear the destined weight of the Crown
and the deep message of Time itself...

In his voice lay the roaring of the future;
in his eyes, the brightness of a coming dawn;
and in his grip, a covenant
sealed and sworn with the earth and with the
waters...

The sea offered its depths' secrets;
the forest offered the patience of tigers,
and the unbowed silence of ebony...

The wind whispered in his ear:
You shall become the typhoon
that destroys backwardness,
and the gentle breeze that heals
the wounds of your people...

And Time itself beheld him in deep wonder,
knowing at last that in its very hands
it held the man of destinies —
who would lead Johor beyond
the narrow passes of history
into the boundless open of eternity...

Johor erupted
with celebrations and songs,
the farmers left their scythes
and the fishermen raised their sails
and the children drew in their notebooks
a crown, and there beside it, a tiger...

There were no more strangers or kin —
for the entire city had become
one heart —

for the newborn was no mere person —
he was Homeland, come alive...

II. The Sanctuary of the Word

In Johor,
the child walked;
his dreams green and blossoming...

He was no mere boy playing
in the palace gardens,
but a song
that the wind whistled, that he might be set free...

Johor watched his steps;
she wiped the dust of roads from his small feet,
and whispered in dawn's ear:
This boy, come forth from the loins of glory,
from the very lineage of the cloud —

shall be a refuge for the people,
and a pulpit raised...
Then came the hour of taming the first letter:
before a wooden table,
the little king sat,
his gaze fixed on the black inkwell,
as though within it lay an ocean
stretching to the far reaches of the world...

He grasped the pen — it trembled in his hand,
a small bird drenched by sudden rain...

But King Iskandar's fatherly hand
was as a steady dam,
teaching him how to draw the upright "alif",¹

¹ Alif (ا): the first letter of the Arabic alphabet.

that it might stand, a pillar for the right;
and how to curve along the bending nun,²
that it might there embrace the sincerity of speech...

Then on he went — toward the house of knowledge
bearing within his bag
fragments of the Malay wind,
and a heart that was throbbing for the heights...

Between the tomes of history
and the literatures of the West,
he did not forget the rootstock of his palms.
He learned that the letter is a sword,
and that the act of reading is a conquest of
horizons...

² Nun(ن): a letter of the Arabic alphabet.

He read of justice
with the spirit of a judge,
long before he had become
a king upon a throne;
and wrote of patience
with the artist's heart,
that he might sketch, for the coming day,
a canvas of great victory...

O King whose sanctuary my eye has never seen —
yet I have beheld you
in the words of my friend:
that true Iraqi,
who came to speak to me of you...

How you became a father to the needy...
How you, a seeker of knowledge, understood

that the chair of state must one day pass,
and that the letter — it, and it alone —
is Man himself...

reading the pains of the simple,
inscribing the promise with tears of love,
to fashion a purer homeland...

With the water of poetry I have traced
these words for you;
with the light of letters:
one half Arab,
and one half Malay —
meeting together in a single heart...

And on the river-banks of the soul
I have built a bridge,
that the orphans may cross over toward the light...

For crowns were never ornament,
but a sacred trust...

O scion of glory —
how many messages
have you sent to hearts,
that came to them as healing...?

O King who forged from ink a blade,
and from humility a shield —
we see upon your countenance
the truth of ancestors,
and in your two hands, a saving rain...

The West could not make you forget
the goodness of your origins,

nor did the kingship lead you astray...

The word has reached
the Land of the Two Rivers,
bearing its glad tidings;
and your name remains
an echo, ringing on...

III. The Birth of the Crown

On a night among the nights,
Johor was washing her feet —
in the sea-water,
leaning against the Diamond Strait,
arranging her great waves
as a judge arranges his papers;
wiping the brow of the bright coast
with salty mist —
waiting for a cry to cleave
the silence of the ancient palace;
re-ordering the stars once more,
within the Malay sky...

You were born between the pride of earth —

that never once bowed —
and the long lineage of distant mists,
arriving from far behind the seas;
as though you were a bridge
of rare jasmine,
binding the Eastern sun,
blazing with dignity,
to the quiet West,
inhabited by secrets...

Within your eyes, the green of forest-leaves
mingled with the blue of oceans;
and in your voice, the echo of the ancestors,
the sultans, comes to meet
the elegance of this, our present hour,
and the spirit of the age...

Since the cradle, the Crown
was never a mere body of gold;

but a light
watching your dark brow,
searching your features —
will this young boy one day
take up the sacred trust...?

And the answer came —
the child's pure smile,
the small grip of your hand
that caught the edge of fate...

The father gazed upon you,
as one who gazes on a new horizon,
seeing in your first cry
a poem not yet written,

a "diwan" time will immortalise...³

That night
was no passing moment;
but a blend
of surrealist colours...
The most splendid of kings shimmered through
the turquoise of the waters;
and lines of lightning
drawing the path of tomorrow...

The wind whispering to the trees:
Today is born the one who shall steer the nation
forward,
and who shall roam the wilds,

³ Diwan: the Arabic term for a collection of poems authored by a single poet.

searching for his people,
whose heart shall be
a home for every soul,
within the embrace of Johor...

While history itself
opened a new chapter, to write:
Here the dream begins...
here King Ibrahim is born...

IV. The Heartbeat of the Palace

Within the corridors of the ancient palace,
a child was running
after the flying shadow of himself...

He chased the bright-winged butterflies
of his Johor —
as though they were a flight of letters,
which had not yet come down to rest
upon the pages of any book...

He did not know
that his small footsteps
were the slow rhythm of a coming time;
that every laugh of his, so natural, so free,

was a song that the palace walls engraved...

And Johor's very sun
rose first of all from his two eyes;
she spun, out of the golden strands of morning,
a single ray, that he might play
with all the braided hair of time...

While, just beyond the high-set palace windows,
the sea was whispering with its living waves:

O young Sultan —!
You are no common boy who plays with sand;
you are the wave itself,
that shall guard the shores...

In those free days of his, unbound by fetter,

his heart was a blank page,
awaiting tales of faithfulness;
on which the pen had not yet
found its way to the paper...

He saw in his father Iskandar
a mountain holding up the sky on his two
shoulders;
and in the soft embrace of his mother,
a homeland vaster than the world itself...

That childhood was not made of toys,
nor of small puppets wrought of ivory;
it was a silent lesson in the love of the land...
He learned there the language of the wind,
caressing all the palm-trees;
and the voice of rain,

kissing the forests' brows...

He gathered up the shells along the shore,
as though he gathered pearls of future wisdom;

he built castles of sand,
not for the waves to destroy,
but to learn

how castles are built to stand...

O splendid child of Johor —

who has become, today,
a king who lives in hearts...

Within the features of your childhood face,
we have read our own lost innocence,
gone astray amid the press of days...

We saw, when you were chasing butterflies,
the ardour of the king

who never tires of giving...
and in your silence,
before your awe-inspiring father,
the discipline of a commander —
who shall one day teach us
that greatness begins
from the praying mat,
from the purity of childhood,
from the fragrance of home...

Our Arab half writes with tears of longing,
and our English half translates
into a language of love,
so the heart may be completed
in the middle of this book...

That we may know how kings, however high,
their childhood remains:

both the root and the crown...

V. The Dawning of the Dream

Your birth, O Majesty of Dreams,
was not a passing incident of time;
it was the birth of an Idea
breathing out light,
the opening of a renaissance
written in the ink of resolve...

You were born, not as a mere voice
entered in the registers of Time,
but as a dawn that cleft the long-drawn night;
a moon that found its place
in the sky of hope, that never sets again...

Peace upon the day that you appeared,

and peace upon the land
that cradled your first steps —
as though she had been readying herself
to receive Destiny,
in that still hour when stillness itself trembled...

Your cry was not a cry of birth alone;
but a proclamation of a new era;
as if History itself had paused
to write your name
in characters of radiance,
to open wide the door of a great age,
unlike all that came before...

The minarets shook with joy;
the far-off echo rang aloud;
the rain came pouring down, as though to wash

the face of earth with the clean waters of
faithfulness...

On the coasts, the fishermen chanted with joy;
and the palms danced with the wind's tune;
as though the whole wide world
had understood at last
that a new moment had been born...

Johor was never a mere place upon the map;
she was a cradle
that took the great dream close within her arms;
and the waves of Muar washed clean
the first certitude of your first step;
and Mount Ledang, rising up,
lifted in you the meaning of pride...

There, where the sea meets the earth,
the features of the beginning were drawn —
as though all nature had been making ready
for the birth of meaning itself...

The harbours flung their gates wide open;
the rain-forests trembled with joy;
the stillness ceased to be silent —
it became a whispered prayer...

Within the heart of the wide universe,
you were not born to be a passing name
upon the scroll of those who pass and fade;
but to be an Idea treading on the earth,
gathering the strength of justice,
and the tenderness of the dream...

You came to turn the sweat of toil to anthem;
to turn the weariness of man into the road of glory;
to turn the human being
into a worth that time itself cannot break...

The throne was never, for you, a final goal —
it was a sacred trust,
redefining the meaning of the Crown,
that it should be a roof sheltering the weak;
and a launchpad to leap towards the light...

O you who crossed
from the light of beginning,
into the expanse of meaning —
your name shall remain,
a shadow of all glory
when it is called to mind;

a tale recounted to generations,
of a dawn that shall never set...

For no dawn ever set, if you were its sun;
no light was ever quenched, if you were its voice;
but you are the beginning
of a tale that has no end —
that begins again upon each day,
and gives back to the world its old assurance,
that when glory is born,
it breaks the silence of History
as thunder breaks...

Your name, King Ibrahim, is stamped today
as the living pulse of every good and giving deed —
to stand as witness
that true beauty

is that which binds together
the majesty of the king
and the humility of the sage...

A pillar of Time;
an epic of the earth — unbowed...

Today the edifice is made complete:
History is no longer
a past we recall;
but a tomorrow which we build —
a new-written line
in this great tale of ours,
telling the story of a land
that, whenever time moved to break her,
grew back —
a crown encrusted with jewels,

a geography of enchantment,
in the colours of Malaysia...

VI. The River of Ink

At the school desks,
time passed
like a river of ink;
the child who once ran
after butterflies
was taming the letters,
as one tames wild steeds...

His school-bag was no burden on the shoulder:

it was a small homeland,
growing with each day...
and the notebooks were
white spaces awaiting
the inscription of fate...

In the school of letters,
where the mist was courting western windows,
he was no ordinary pupil
filling pages with words;
but a builder in his mind,
of bridges of light...

He learned that “alif” was no mere straight line —⁴
it was the upright stature of the king,
that does not bend;
that “dal” was house itself,
the “Dar” that dwells within the inmost soul;
and that the “ra” was “Rahma” — mercy,
which must come first, before justice...

⁴ Alif (ا), dal (د), nun (ن), ra (ر): individual letters of the Arabic alphabet.

Between the tomes of ancient history
and the accounts of numbers,
he read the chronicle of his forefathers,
the sultans of an older time;
he heard the neighing of their horses
among the folds of the old paper;
he sensed the coldness of their swords
in the ink of his pen...

He was not lured by the great cities' gleam,
nor by the gleaming lights and the great halls'
clamour.

He sat and studied at his book,
and kept his steady eye on Johor still;
he heard her calling in the library's silence,
and smelled the fragrance of her jasmine

rising up from the ink of exile...

O student, who drew the future
with the ink of patience —
the king that we behold today
seated upon the throne
is the same student
who kept vigil through the night,
reading the faces of men
before he read his books...

He learned to break the cipher of responsibility,
and how to write of faithfulness
with tears wrung from diligence,
and how to find the balance
between the knowledge of the West
and the values of the East,

to forge of himself
a balance that would never tip aside...

In those halls of learning,
it was no mere certificate of paper
that he sought —
but rather, wisdom that does not age...

He learned the art of governance
within the silence of great thinkers;
the art of humility,
within the greatness of scholars;
and he understood that knowledge is
the one true crown;
and that wisdom
is the sceptre that does not break...

Those years
that honed your spirit
as a judge hones his verdict
are what made
your name a poem —
narrated by the exiles
from the Land of the Two Rivers;
carried by my pen now as a trust,
to inscribe for you in characters of gold,
within the “diwan” of faithfulness...

We write you forth today
that every child who holds a pen may know:
the road to the throne begins
at the threshold of a simple book;
and that the great kings were those
who bowed before knowledge,

before the heads of men would bow to them
in honour and in reverence...

Here the semicircle of the heart is closed
within the sanctuary of lifelong study;
here the pen waits,
to write of you in the arenas of glory...

VII. The Sultan's Ascent

Behind the oceans,
in the silent halls
with the splendour of erudition,
you were no common passer-by
tracing the well-trodden path of learning;
you were a scholar,
wrapped in the student's cloak,
spending long nights among books
that fling open gates of nations...

You left behind your warm Johor
to face the frost of the West,
with the warmth of belonging;
and in your travel-bag you carried with you

the scales of justice —
before destiny placed them
upon your shoulders...

Between the stately halls of law
and international diplomacy,
you were drawing,
in your imagination,
the boundaries of your homeland —
not with mere maps or ink alone,
but with unyielding justice
that does not bend to the wind's blow...

You studied there the subtle art of the possible,
and all the conflict of contending powers;
but what you sought, in truth, was the art of the
right —

the Word that storms cannot break;
the sovereignty that lives
within the hearts of men,
before it lives
within the pages of law...

O student in whose body
estrangement made its home —
but never reached your soul...
a king whom the great universities refined,
and yet who kept faithful
to the soil of his native land,
whose crown, the highest of all crowns,
was still the Malay land...

You learned how states must be ruled by reason;
how a ruler greets his people

in the language of the age;
how law must be a barrier
that shields the weak before it shields the strong;
a shade under which the exhausted find
rest, from the blazing heat...

In those long nights,
between your research-papers
and drafts of laws,
you contemplated
the lives of the great kings —
and came to understand that greatness
lies not in lofty palaces,
but in the wisdom
dwelling within the slender “nun”⁵ of a fine pen,
opening the locks of souls...

⁵ nun (ن) a letter of the Arabic alphabet.

You did not study to glorify your name;
but to fashion
for Johor and for Malaysia
a new dawn,
written in the ink of light...

O son of King Iskandar,
who combined the commander's sternness
and the thinker's tenderness —
In the university, you were the ambassador
who carried no papers,
but carried the sincerity of the East in your dark
features;
and in your sharp mind,
the intelligence of knights...

You learned that the State is a structure,

and that justice is its foundation;
and that the king who does not read
the pulse of the street
does not deserve
to have history record his name...

We write for you today in a half
that rings out in the music of pure Arabic;
our other half translates your thought
into that very language you were schooled in,
that the heart of this, our book, may be complete
in the middle of the "diwan"...

And that the long journey of your university days
was not some mere excursion
through the gardens of knowledge;
but an ascension

toward the kingly throne...

The throne of hearts,
which you have built
with the wisdom of sages,
the justice of judges,
and the gravitas of sultans...

VIII. The Pledge of Pride

You shed the quiet robes of study,
to wear the colour of the earth,
and the gravitas of the battlefield;
that speckled uniform upon your shoulders
was never merely cloth —
it was a solemn pledge,
embroidered by the threads of pride...

You left behind the benches
of philosophy and law,
to learn the tongue of fire,
and the silence of vigil,
and to write with the rifle's barrel
a new chapter on sovereignty...

Within the training-camps,
between Johor and the far West,
you were the soldier
who never knew sleep —
racing with the first light of the dawn
over rugged hills;
befriending the weapon
as if it were a part of you...

You learned that leadership
is not an order to be obeyed;
it is example that marches at the front;
and that the crown awaiting your brow
will not rest, save
upon a head forged on the field —
and above eyes that will not look away from the
homeland...

Then you ascended
into the very heights of the clouds,
among rising falcons,
where the wind has a terrifying roar;
you stood on the edge of destiny,
with a heart of iron...

You did not fear the fall —
for the one raised in the embrace
of King Iskandar
knows no trembling...

You leapt!
You tore the silence of the expanse
with your wide parachute,
like a shooting star
to illuminate the dark forest;

or like an eagle, testing the perseverance
of its wings in the open air...

In those long moments, suspended
between the sky and the earth beneath,
you touched the very clouds of God,
and felt the grandeur of the High Creator,
shown in the fineness of His creation...

How did you leap
from death into life...?

And how did that uniform seem
to have been fashioned
to suit your tall stature...?

Yes — one who lives in the clouds

and in the training grounds
never breaks in the storms of politics,
nor will he tip his scales
to the whims of men...

In the formal uniform,
with its disciplined collars,
and your medals shining,
shining like a masterful abstract artwork,
we see the features of the commander —
who would not rest content with the throne,
but willed to be himself a living shield,
and in his hand a sword,
against oppressors and tyrants...

In the military, you learned
that time is life;

that every decision is a burden as heavy as
mountains;

and that the judge who resides within you
must safeguard justice
with a warrior's strength...

We write of you today,
painting with our imagination
those bold leaps,
translating your courage into a tongue
known to the little children, and the old alike,
that the whole wide world may know
the King of Malaysia came not from mere void,
but from the neighing of the horses,
the roar of aircraft,
and the sweat of the brow...

In the camps of honour —
here the pulse is complete,
in the heart of the book —
between the sternness of the sword
and the tenderness of jasmine;
between the gravitas of the uniform
and the purity of the soul...

That King Ibrahim remains
a falcon soaring
in the sky of faithfulness...

IX. King of Hearts

The palace drums sounded
in Kuala Lumpur,
and the palm fronds shook
in Johor with joy...

The time has come to reap the years
you sowed with patience,
and the time has come for the crown
to rest upon the brow
the fields have forged...

Your ascent to the throne
was no mere steps
but a crossing through history

from the epics of the ancestors
to the light of the present,
and from the ink of notebooks
to the gold of the throne...

You stood there
in the same formal uniform
that loves elegance
but is today embroidered
with the prayers of the meek
and weighted with the hopes of a nation
that sees in you a refuge and a beacon...

When you placed your hand
on the Noble Quran
you were taking an oath not as king alone
but with the heart

of the judge who resides within you
and the eye of the artist that sees
beauty in justice...

In that moment
the world fell silent
to hear your voice
reshaping the covenant
with the soil and its people...

The crown was not glittering
with gold and diamonds alone
but radiating with the light
of heavy responsibility;
as if it were the jasmine bridge
you crossed as a child
to become now a bridge

across which the dreams
of millions cross toward safety...

The earth rejoiced,
and the stranger in Malaysia
began to feel like a son of the homeland...
the throne had only added to the king
a deeper humility;
and the sceptre in his hand
became an olive branch of peace...

And he who learned to read in the sanctuary
of the Word,
and leapt from the clouds
from the eagle's lair,
will not be distracted by the glamour of power
from touching the people's pain;

nor will the palace hide from him
the cry of the needy...

Upon that great throne sits beside you
a history of discipline,
observing the scales of the state
with the surgeon's precision;
you steer its rudder
with the wisdom of the captain
who does not fear the waves...

The crown is no goal,
but a means to wipe a tear,
to build a homeland,
so Malaysia remains
a painting of progress,
gathering the fragrance of tradition

with the wonder of technology,
with you at its heart,
the centre of the compass...

A king whose throne remained
a pulpit of truth,
a sanctuary of justice,
and his heart a home for all,
as the wind wished on the day of his birth...

The heart is now complete
at the middle of the book —
between a childhood in which Johor smiled,
a university in which
the mind was carved as law,
a military that taught you
that courage is life,

and a throne that crowned you king
of hearts before bodies...

And the king begins his reign,
and shall remain a poem that does not end,
a purple ascent⁶ unto the very sky of immortality...

⁶ Purple ascent: the Arabic *mi' raj*, an ascension or upward journey; specifically echoes the Prophet Muhammad's miraculous Night Journey to the heavens, one of Islam's most sacred events. The colour *urjuwan*, crimson-purple, carries in Arabic poetry the sense of nobility and the highest elevation.

X. The Heartbeat of Malaysia

His love for Malaysia was
no mere crown,
nor borders drawn
by silent maps,
but a pulse flowing
in his veins as water flows
in the river...

He loved her... with the heart of the lover
who ran in Johor's rainy forests,
and the eye of the artist that sees
in the diversity of her peoples
a surrealist painting
painted by the Creator

in colours of unity and harmony...

Malaysia in his heart
is no mere homeland
but the poem he writes
every day, by deed before word...

He loved her scent —
the soil after the rain,
and the roar of the ocean when it embraces
the golden shores...

He was not content
to sit in Kuala Lumpur's high towers
but descended to the villages,
wiping the dust

from the brow of the toilers,
and drinking from the cups of the people
the taste of faithfulness...

He saw in every Malaysian face
the features of a brother or son,
so his love for her became
a religion practiced by deed,
and a prayer performed
in the “mihrab” of progress...⁷

A king who is immersed
in the fine details of his country,
leading the locomotive of progress with one hand
and carrying the burdens of the poor

⁷ Mihrab: the prayer niche in a mosque indicating the direction towards the Kaaba.

with the other...
as if Malaysia
were a piece of his heart,
fashioned from her clay...

He loved his land
with the sincerity of the judge,
and guarded it with the vigour of the warrior...

He sees in governance
nothing but service to the people,
and in the throne
nothing but a pulpit
to elevate the homeland's standing...

He loved in Malaysia
the harmony of religions and colours,
as if they were strings playing

the melody of coexistence...

He defended her identity
in the forums of West and East,
and continued to take pride in his deep Malay roots
even as his mind raced
toward the summits of technology...

His love for Malaysia
is what made the stranger
feel safe in her embrace,
and made the one estranged from home
like my friend Ahmed
see in her a second home,
because the king breathed his love
into the spirit of the earth,
and the earth bore fruit —

dignity for all who tread her soil...

O king who loves his land
to the point of intoxication...
we in the land of the Two Rivers
share this passion with you,
for you have become in our eyes
an icon of belonging,
and you taught us that great kings
are those who dwell
in the soil of their homelands
before their palaces...
And who make of love
an unwritten law...

So the whole world may know
that King Ibrahim

and Malaysia are one heart,
whose pulse is justice
and whose title is glory...

XI. The Passing of the Mountain

The winds of Johor grew still
on that sorrowful evening,
and the ocean's waves stopped
their weaving of tales...

The mountain that used to
hold up the sky on his shoulders has gone;
the knight Iskandar departed
from Time's saddle...

In that moment
you were not weeping
for a king who left his throne
but for the father
who taught you your first letters,

and the teacher who honed within you
the importance of discipline,
and the chest that was your harbour
whenever the storms of estrangement blew against
you...

You stood in your military uniform,
disciplined; but the heart within
was trembling like a jasmine branch,
trying to hold firm as a leader
who cries out in the silence of departure.

You saw the crown orphaned
on the silk cushion,
and the swords bowing their heads
in the ancient palace...

And you understood that greatness,

however high it rises,
bows in reverence
before the Creator's will,
and that death is God's decree
whose judgement cannot be revoked...

The king carries his father's bier,
walking with the dignity of mountains,
yet with the fracture of orphanhood in his eyes —
as if all Malaysia
was being borne in mourning
within the heart of King Ibrahim...

And the tears of kings
are not like the tears of men —
they are drops of dignity
and a silken sash of solemnity,

and the vow the son made to his father...

that the legacy shall remain,

and justice shall endure...

In that final farewell...

you were touching

the cold hand of King Iskandar,

recalling the memories

of childhood, school, and university.

You recalled how he would tighten

his grip on your small hand

to teach you to draw the “alif”...

and how he would watch your leaps

from the aircraft with silent pride...

The body departed,

but the soul remained

guarding your steps;
and his voice became an echo
that has taken up its home in your decisions...
enjoining you to the people,
enjoining you to the earth,
and reminding you that governance is a trust,
and justice a worship...

O son of the king...
who inherited glory
and grief together,
we in the land of the Two Rivers
know the taste of loss,
and understand that the passing of the father
is the extinguishing of the first
sun in the soul...

But you rose
from amid the ashes,
carrying his banner,
completing his path,
and made of your sorrow
a determination to build,
and of your tears an ink
to write of the coming age...

Here is the half-heart made entire
that aches with parting,
so the world may know that behind
the throne's majesty is a human heart
that knows how to love...
and how to grieve...
and how to be faithful...

And that the memory of King Iskandar
will remain alive in you,
as the fragrance remains
in the flower
after the dew departs...

XII. The Withering Branch

In the silence of the long nights,
when pain seeps
through palace walls,
the father king stood
before inexorable fate...

It was no battle
against an enemy seen by the eye,
but a struggle with the absence
that steals the light...

Abdul Jalil departed —
the branch that budded
from your soul,

and the hope you watched
growing beneath your shadow
became in a moment
a tale of grief,
and a story of patience
that crumbles the flint rock...

With what heart did you stand
to accompany a piece of your being?

You who crossed into battles
and leapt from the clouds,
now stood before a bier,
your stature still unbent,
but with two eyes hiding
a sea of sobbing...

You shed the sultan's majesty

to practice the rite of sorrowful fatherhood,
carrying your grief surreally,
and writing in the pages of loss
the greatest lessons of steadfastness...

When kings grieve
their grief transforms
into a lighthouse for the patient
in every land...

A king buries his child,
wipes with his hands upon the grave's soil
as if rocking a child to sleep,
then rises like a mountain
to console a people
weeping at his weeping,
and proclaiming that God's will

is the just decree
that cannot be rejected...

A king who lived
in the sanctuary of the Word
grasped the secret of mortality;
he knows that children are a trust,
and the earth a repository,
and that Abdul Jalil did not depart
but became a bird
soaring in Malaysia's sky,
guarding his father's heart...

In the corners of the palace
his voice once filled the room...
You left for him an empty chair
where longing has taken up its home —

and made of his memory
a foundation for good
whose spring runs on, and never fails...

Your grief was no
shattering of the spirit,
but a rebirth of a wider mercy
and greater giving...

In every sick person you saw
a child of your own,
and in every needy person, Abdul Jalil
calling to you from afar;
and loss became fuel
for your great heart,
and grief a sash
of nobility adorning your station...

O king who taught us
that strength lies in the sincere tear,
and greatness in surrender
to the Judge of all judges...

We in Iraq,
land of pains and yearnings,
take your hand with a poet's heart
that understands the meaning of loss,
and an artist's eye that paints grief
in colours of purity and radiance...

Abdul Jalil has today become a son
to every home in the Malay lands,
and your patience a hymn
recited by the bereaved...

So the world may know
that King Ibrahim
is a king when he judges,
and a father when he loses,
and a human being when he consoles...

The half of the heart is complete here,
burned by the farewell,
between the silence of the graves
and the gravitas of the palaces,
between a father's tear
and the sultan's solemnity...

So the memory of Abdul Jalil remains
a jasmine that never withers
in the living sky...

XIII. The Clamour of the Wind

Behind the visor
of the silent helmet,
two eyes gleam
that know no fear;
and behind the handlebars
of the enormous motorcycle
sits the king
who has tamed the impossible...

Those journeys were
no mere hobby for a traveller,
but a daily ascension
toward the hearts of the people;
tearing apart the silence of roads

with the engine's roar,
to write on the map of his country
a love-tale that has no end...

You loved the wind
when it caresses your face
in the highlands;
and you loved speed,
not as a race against time,
but to arrive
at the tear of one oppressed
before the tear has dried...
and to beat the dawn
in looking after your people...

We saw you leading
the train of progress with one hand,

and gripping the handlebars of adventure

with the other...

as if telling us that stagnation

is not among the virtues of kings,

and that motion is the blessing of justice

in the land of the Malays...

A king on his annual journey,

traversing the villages

on his motorcycle as if

he were one of the people...

greeting the young

and jesting with the old

and eating from the poor man's provisions —

and then at last you come to understand

that the true throne is this long open road,

and that the crown does not prevent him

from touching the earth's soil...

He flew aircraft
in the sky of estrangement as a student,
and leapt with parachutes
in the arenas of glory as a warrior...
He sees in speed a language of the age,
and in adventure a renewal of the spirit...

In racing cars
and among the bends of the circuits,
we see the leader
who knows when to press
on the trigger
and when to slow the speed
to navigate the bend with wisdom...

You learned from the engines
that power needs
a mind to manage it,
and that resolve without discipline
is fire without fuel...

Your hobbies were no luxury
but a school that taught you the summit is reached
only by him who has the long, long breath;
and that the king who races the wind
is most able to lead his people
toward the sun of the future...

O king who made
of a hobby a bridge of communion with your people
we write of you today
with a vision blending

the colours of exhaust smoke
with the colours of jasmine,
and the sound of the engine
with the chirping of Johor's sparrows...

You who transformed
the royal journey into an annual epic
in which the people await you
on the roadsides,
not to see a king
in a magnificent procession,
but to see King Ibrahim —
the friend...
the father...
the companion...

The heartbeat completes here

in the lines of faithfulness,
between the sternness of governance
and the soul's freedom,
between the gravitas of the throne
and the road's liberty...

So Malaysia's king remains
a falcon in the air,
a lion on the ground,
and a love dwelling
in every bend of the road...

XIV. The Scale of Justice

Upon the platform of justice
the scale does not tip,
and the word is a verdict,
and justice is the path...

I see in you the king,
and I beheld in your features
the sternness of the text
and the tenderness of the soul...

I saw in your decisions
the spirit of the law
that does not age...

You were not in my eyes

merely a sultan upon a throne
but a symbol
in the sanctuary of justice,
understanding that governance is a trust
and that injustice is layers of darkness...

I spent a lifetime
in the weighing of truth,
knowing that greatness
lies not in the studded crown
but in the conscience that keeps vigil
while the eyes sleep...

I saw you in Malaysia
ruling among the people by justice,
not distinguishing
between stranger and kin,

nor rich from poor,
as if you drew your judgement
from the overflow of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib's
justice,
and from the sternness of Hammurabi
in his code...
to forge a homeland
where justice is the air,
the water, and the palm-tree...

A king under whose rule
no one is wronged,
and whose door is open
to everyone whose right is violated...

A king of noble lineage
who graduated from the school of law,

and learned that diplomacy
is the tongue of the mind,
and that power without justice
is a forest without law...
So his scale in Johor
became our scale between Tigris and Euphrates...

I painted your justice in words.
I saw in your steadfastness before crises
the judges' steadfastness...
and in your pardon at the moment of power,
the virtues of great kings...

You built in Malaysia a monument
of integrity and solemnity,
and made of the judiciary
a fence protecting rights.

So you were the governor
feared by the wrongdoer for his power,
and loved by the wronged for his mercy
and his enduring justice...
O king whose justice echoes to the horizons...
we write of you today
to teach coming generations
that the king endures
as long as justice endures within him,
and that the crown fades...
while the righteous deed remains
a lighthouse and a guide.
For you are the sultan of hearts,
the judge of justice,
and the pride of the age...

XV. Sultan of Faithfulness

His voice reached me from across the distance,
filling the separation with intimacy and certainty;
my faithful friend Ahmed Dahham,
the one who carried Iraq
in his heart and departed
to find in your shadow,
O king of the Malays,
a homeland that never closes its doors...

He was not telling me
of a king who dwells in palaces
but of a human being who lives in the conscience,
and of a sultan
who made faithfulness a constitution,

and simplicity
a crown that does not fade...

Ahmed said to me,
sincerity dripping from his words:

Look at this king —
how does he console the stranger
with a touch of tenderness?
and how does he build the nation
with the mind of a scholar
and the will of knights?

He is King Ibrahim,
whom we saw
in adversity: a mountain;
and in prosperity: a cloud
that scatters goodness...

And I loved him... as I loved
Tigris and Euphrates;
and I saw in his justice a return
to the age of the great and the notables...

I asked him with the tongue of certainty:
Is he truly as you describe?
Or has longing exhausted you, my friend?
And he answered me with a tear of faithfulness:

By Him who fashioned the heavens,
he is loftier than what
the poets write in their "diwans".
He is the king who does not sleep
while his people cry in pain;
he is the falcon who
guards the sanctuary
from the plots and schemes...

Then I... gripped
my brush with the artist's heart,
and tuned the strings of words
to be the witness
to the sincerity of the letter...

O my friend Ahmed...
O messenger of faithfulness...
between the two summits
you were the bridge across which
my words travelled,
and the light that illumined for me
the features of this great ascent...

Thanks to you... I learned
that kings come in kinds,
and that King Ibrahim

is a rare kind in this age,
combining the gravitas of the sword
and the tenderness of jasmine,
the sternness of governance
and the mercy of the compassionate father...

For faithfulness needs no passport,
and love knows no distances,
nor is it bounded by fate...

Between Tigris and Euphrates,
where the first letter was born
and the ancient stele set forth⁸
the scales of justice for mankind...
and between Johor and Kuala Lumpur,

⁸ Stele: the stele of Hammurabi, a black basalt pillar inscribed with 282 laws and discovered in ancient Mesopotamia.

where jasmine blooms
under the shadows of the royal crown,
the crimson ascension is complete...

It was no mere biography
 versified in rhymes,
but a poetic testimony
 that saw justice
in the features of a king,
and the vision of an artist
wherein all meanings have taken flesh
 in the form of a man...

And that distances
melt before the sincerity of one's convictions —
and the majesty of the throne
is made complete only

by the tenderness of the heart
and the humility of the great...

What my friend transmitted to me
was no mere news
but a living pulse,
a reality my spirit touched before my eyes.
So I saw in the majesty
of King Ibrahim
an embodiment of the leader
uniting the sternness
of the military uniform
and the wisdom of the bench;
and between the prime vigour of adventure
and the mercy of the compassionate father...

XVI. The Ascent of the Dream

On the carpet of the wind
and between the clouds of imagination
I drew myself a path
that impossibility cannot bound...

A dream that visits my brush
upon each evening;
in it I fold up all the distances,
and cross the oceans wide,
to rest in the land
of the green Malays,
where the jasmine of Johor
embraces the sky
and the majesty of King Ibrahim

effaces all weariness...

I dream of standing
with the dignity of judges
before your Throne in all its state —
not to ask a favour,
but to see the truth up close...

I wish to shake the hand
that tamed the falcons of the sky,
and the heart that encompassed
the pain of the people with tenderness...

I dream that I may see
within your eyes the gleam
of King Iskandar;

that I may read, within your features,
the chapters of glory and virtue,
to tell you face to face
in the very tongue of Tigris and Euphrates
that you have become in Iraq
an icon of faithfulness and steadfastness...

I shall carry with me
in the pouch of my soul: a love
from a poet who weighs love
on the scales of gold,
and as an artist who sees
in the lives of kings
the finest of literature's epics...

O King, who has become for my poems
the very sun of the future that shall dawn...

my dream is to sit
in your sanctuary and contemplate
how a land is governed by reason...
and how it is built by love...
and how the sultan becomes a father
at home on every road...

I shall paint there
in the shade of your towering palm trees
a surrealist canvas immortalising
this meeting of dreams —
whose colours shall be mingled
with the colours of the Malay lands —
so the world may know
that faithfulness is bound by no geography...

I shall continue to paint

this dream with the ink of hope,
and build its bridges with words
and the longing that never tires.

For he who wrote of you
with the sincerity of the judge
and the eye of the artist —
destiny must someday unite him
with the king of this age...

Until that hour,
I shall keep walking through my “diwan”
as if in Johor I live,
waiting for the moment
when the chapters are made whole
by the handshake
of the king —

to be the beginning...

and the end...

XVII. Orbits of Light

In your eyes, the new dawn
of Malaysia flourishes,
and you draw that vision
not with ink,
but with progress and light...

Your reign was
no mere sitting upon a throne
but a launch
toward the galaxies of our age...
you plant in every inch of land
an idea,
and made of intelligence
a sceptre that guards the nation...

You saw in technology
a language of sovereignty,
and in progress
a sanctuary of worship;
so you tamed the machine
as you tamed the sword —
that it may be the servant of your people...

The king's vision
is not in reading the maps
but in outpacing time
with a courageous heart —
You wanted Malaysia to be
a digital canvas
where threads interweave
with wires of light,

playing the melody of the laboratories...

You taught us that authenticity
does not fear modernity,
and that roots deepen
when they embrace the clouds.

So you built the smart cities
with the spirit of the sultans,
and made of Kuala Lumpur
the beating heart of the East...

A king who sees what others do not —
building for the future bridges
of knowledge and certainty,
and making the name of Malaysia
a formidable force on the world stage...

He understands that survival is for the shrewd,
for the strong, and for the most faithful of all;
it is the vision of King Ibrahim
that the farmer may yet stand within his field
and yet have hold of the whole world
upon a little glowing screen...
And that the judge may yet remain
within his sanctuary of law,
rendering his judgements with a deep integrity,
empowered by the revolution of the mind...

O king who embroiders the future
with threads of gold and digital code,
we see in your vision a surrealism
of a rare kind,
where the ancient mosque stands beside
the tower of progress,

and history shakes hands
with tomorrow in your palms...

The vision was not a set of promises
made public in the newspapers alone,
but was a reality to be touched
within the advancing of the services,
and in the pride of Malaysian youth
in their modern identity,
as they steer the helm of change
under your royal banner...

We write today about your vision
from here within our Iraq;
we watch this ascent of technology
with admiration and respect,
and we are learning from you

how modernity may be
a handmaid unto man,
and how the king shall yet remain
the guarantor of this delicate balance...

You have made of Malaysia at last
a technological poem
to be read in every living tongue,
to be understood in every living mind —
that the vision of King Ibrahim
may remain the compass which conducts
the ship unto the quiet
harbours of immortality...

XVIII. Galaxies of Vision

In the stillness of the night,
when the world closes its eyes,
dreams that never sleep
awaken in the king's heart...

Your dreams,
O scion of the noble,
were no mere wishes
but maps of a time to come,
inked with light,
and poems of glory
built by hands, not words alone...

You dreamed of seeing Malaysia

standing proud upon the face of the universe,
a beacon of knowledge...
a haven for justice...
an oasis of the law...
where minds race
as horses race in the circuits...
and from among her palm trees
the sun of sovereignty rises...

You dreamed that the bridge
binding hearts
would be stronger than steel
and more lasting than the passing of sorrows...

In your vision you saw Johor
shaking hands with the stars,
and Kuala Lumpur washing her face

of the dust of woes
with a technological revolution
that makes of the Malay lands
a formidable force,
and of their youth: falcons soaring
in the sky of creativity with joy...

Your dream was no palace
built of gold,
but a home for every poor man
who finds safety within it,
and justice that flows
in the veins like rivers,
and a voice of justice resounding
in the east and west...

The glint of the dream in your eyes:

a king who dreams for his people
what a person cannot dream for himself.

He wants to outrun the age
and plant in every home
a tree of hope...

and make of Malaysia
a mark of quality
and dedication and labour...

For he who embraced the clouds
leaping from parachutes,
and who studied in the halls
of law with the thinkers,
will settle for nothing less
than the summit as a place for his dreams,
and accept nothing but the miraculous

as the title of his coming days...

Your dreams, O king,
are a surreal artwork of accomplishment;
impossible is a word that you have struck
out of your lexicon, with mastery...

You dream of a homeland where no one goes
hungry
and no one is wronged,
and of a future written
in golden water,
not in the ink of present and past...

We see your dreams
and paint them in our poetry

as jasmine blooms
wafting through our garden...
and we know that King Ibrahim,
when he dreams... he achieves;
when he promises... he fulfils;
when he leads... he astounds...

The ascent of the dream is made complete
in the pages of faithfulness...
so the world may know
that great kings
are the makers of radiance,
and that the dreams of King Ibrahim
are the compass and the hymn
toward a Malaysian dawn
born anew with each day...

XIX. The Radiance of the Crown

In the name of Truth that laid
the scales of justice upon the earth,
and in the name of beauty
that fashioned the spirit
from clay and light,
I open the gates of my poem
and fling wide the windows of my heart
toward Johor
that gave birth to a falcon,
and toward Malaysia
that was crowned with pride...

A king who lives
in the pulse of letters

before the eyes beheld him
in palaces and ranks of state...

I come to you from the land of the Two Rivers
laden with the fragrance of the palm,
to inscribe with my right hand an ascension
of crimson
worthy of your high station,
O sultan of the age...

O son of King Iskandar...
O heir of glory and solemnity,
O you who made
of justice a sun
that knows no sunset,
and of the law: a sword
protecting the kin and the stranger...

I saw you as a unique melody
uniting the gravitas of the commander
and the hymn's tenderness.

I am an artist who paints you
at every hour,
in poems that are not ink upon paper
but sighs of longing
and cries of the heart...

I have written of you with an Iraqi heart
which knows no word for "impossible,"
that my voice should reach to you
across the seas and the mountains...

At the opening of this letter
we greet in you the spirit —
and behold in you the human being

before we behold the homeland...

You are the one who made
of the throne a “mihrab” of giving —
and of the crown a charge, not a glory...

So let the whole world open
the pages of this collection
to read the story of a king
who fashioned the impossible into gratitude.

And let everyone know
that you are the protagonist
in the book of glory...

And you are the meaning
that cannot be erased

from the memory of time...

And you are the radiance
that disperses in our dark night the gloom...

O you in whose dream
the cities turned green,
and the harbours awoke
as if the sea itself
rises to receive you...

O jewel of the state
when you reveal yourself —
O shadow of wisdom
when you extend
across the maps of the East...

We walk toward you in our letters
as if they were caravans of light
from a distant land,
carrying on their shoulders
the prayers of the poor
and the smiles of the meek,
and the dream of children
who have not yet learned
the meaning of the impossible...

In you: silence meets speech
and majesty meets simplicity,
so the throne appears
as a seat of a great heart
receiving the world without
barriers or walls...

O king, when justice is named
you are named with it;
and when glory is named
you are its first line.

We write of you
not because you are a ruler
but because you are
the story of a homeland...

XX. The Splendour of the Throne

Down the road he rides —
the roar of renaissance,
devouring the distance on the saddle,
tearing the silence of the fields
with the living roar of engines —
not a king who passes
like a phantom behind the glass —
he is King Ibrahim...

Racing the wind
to beat the dawn to his people,
each single turning of the engine
is a heartbeat for the homeland;
and every road he takes

is an artery binding
the palace to the hut...

Between his hands the handlebar —
a scale of justice;
and his two eyes
read the dreams of the toilers...

Distances do not weary a knight,
nor do the roads narrow
before a king who presses on...
The asphalt under his wheels
writes the story of a new nation,
and the wind has become
a soldier in his camp,
opening for him the gates of the horizon
one by one...

In every bend
a city of light is born,
and in every hill
a dream rises that was sleeping
in the people's hearts...

O this road...!
how it transforms
from a line scored in the earth
to a line inscribed in the memory of a nation...?

And how does the roar of the engines
become a hymn recited
on the lips of distances...?

He does not cross the earth alone,

but with him cross
the hearts of those who wait
in the distant villages
and in the cities that still lean
on an ancient hope...

Every window he passes
opens like the eye of a child
seeing the dream for the first time;
and every shadow behind him
transforms into a promise of more...

King Ibrahim goes not to be seen
but to make the vision clearer...

Not to have his voice heard
but to have the echo of the homeland
heard in his voice...

As if the handlebar between his two hands
were a pen writing the history of passage —
the road before him
a book of generations
recasting the beginning —
nothing can stop
this splendour,
the splendour of the throne...

When authority itself becomes motion
and transforms
into a journey among the people —
not among the walls —
he passes, and the passing becomes an event;
he rides on, and the riding itself
becomes the meaning...

He leaves behind him
an earth more sure of itself,
and a horizon more vast —
even the cloud,
when it sees him,
slows down to watch;
and the trees listen,
trembling green...

And at the road's end
there is no ending
but another beginning...
waiting for someone to restart the dream.

And so... the voice remains —
the voice of the engines
when they meet destiny,

and the voice of a homeland
moving on the wheels of its renaissance
toward an eternal dawn...

XXI. The Night Journey of the Eagle⁹

He leaves the earth
to the earthbound,
and ascends toward the clouds
where the eagles dwell...

He guides the lightning with his right hand
and makes of the cockpit
a "mihrab" for meditation,
where there are no borders; only the horizon...

He sees Malaysia as a surrealist painting
of green and water,

⁹ The Night Journey (al-Isra'): the miraculous nocturnal journey of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem and thence through the heavens, described in the Quran (17:1).

as if it came
from the heart of a legend,
not from maps...

As though her mountains stand there in their
prayer,
and the rivers write their stories
upon the cheek of Time...

He sees the wholeness of the truth —
for he who soars the wind
above the clouds
knows how
to tame the storms
when they sweep the homelands...

His aircraft's wing: a shadow
extending over Johor...

The shadow here
is no absence of light
but an extension of a presence
watching the small details,
where the houses
seem like letters
in an open book,
and the palms are punctuation marks
preserving the rhythm of the place...

His heart is in the sky,
and his eyes guard the earth;
while the earth beneath him
is seen not as distance
but as a trust to be read

from above in reverent silence...

And there... at the highest point of the orbit —

silence transforms into meaning,

and the wind into a message,

and the light into a covenant

not written in ink

but inscribed in the memory of flight...

He passes over the rainy forests

as if they were an endless green sea,

and over islands scattering

like pearls strewn

by the hand of the Creator...

He sees in the diversity of the earth

the diversity of souls,
and in the difference of colours
the unity of destiny...

O you who ascend yet are not severed;
O you who see the earth
from above, yet are not distant —
but draw closer to its pain and its splendour...

As if the sky were no place for escape
but a mirror for seeing the truth.
There... where the air is purer
and the vision is wider,
and the borders dissolve away
as illusions dissolve,
a new meaning of leadership is born...

Not in domination

but in deep listening
to the pulse of the lands...

At every turning of the engine-cycle
a new pulse is born for the homeland;
and in every ascent
the story of a sleepless guardian is written —
because if his eye closes,
a thousand awakenings stir in his heart...

He passes above the clouds
as if he were an endless question;
as if the sky itself asks:
“Who is this, who turns
altitude into nearness,
distance into promise,
and flight itself into pure strength?”

His wing does not scratch the air
but plays upon it
the melody of sovereignty...

And the cities beneath him are not
points on a map
but the memory of a people
reread from above...

In Johor,
when the last shadow of his aircraft passes,
the earth breathes in as if she knows him;
and the forests smile
as if they behold him
a returning son of theirs —
not as some stranger
who has merely flown above...

Then he returns — not as one
descended from the sky
but as one who carried the sky
with him down to earth...

And so between the two,
he became a bridge of light —
seen only by those who know
that the homeland
is not only a place
but a vision that soars...

XXII. The Leap of Heritage

From the noise of metal
he returns to the pulse of the roots;
to the horses, to the primal tongue
of all the early knights...

King Ibrahim,
who grew up among the wheat ears,
rides the saddled cloud
with the hide of faithfulness,
he strikes the earth to reshape
the form of history...

King Ibrahim's horsemanship is not
in displayed ranks,

but in the character of the knight
who bows before the weak
and erupts like a volcano
in the face of falsehood...

Between him and the horse: a secret pact —
that the summit belongs to one who endures,
and honour to one who rises above petty things...

He delves into the deep —
when he dives into the blue of the ocean
he leaves behind the world's noise
to breathe the quiet of truth...

The king who does not fear the wave
knows that pearls
dwell in the depths,
not on the shores...

The captain of the ship, unswayed
by fierce gales,
dives into the sea of responsibility
with the heart of a skilled diver,
extracting solutions
from the floor of challenges,
and making of the salt
a taste of victory...

The sea for King Ibrahim
is the school of patience,
and diving: the judge's journey
into the heart of the cases he must weigh...

O wonder of this Crown —
how it does not forbid its bearer
to stand before the fire of the hearth!

He grips the ladle
with the same strength
he grips the sceptre...

He cooks for his people,
pouring his love
into every dish he makes —
this gesture is the quiet justice:
that the hungry be fed
from the ruler's own hand...

And the people understand
that their king
is the companion of their salt and of their bread...

Here the distinctions melt away

and greatness is revealed —
for the ruler who feeds
the people with his heart
can never wrong them
in days to come...

You gathered glory from every quarter:
from earth, sky, and sea —
the heartbeat of an engine...
the flutter of a wing...
the neigh of a horse...
and the taste of faithfulness...

From us to you: the salute of the Two Rivers,
O you who made
of your life a moving poem
and of your kingship

a masterclass in beauty and humanity...

And a scroll of knowledge
between the sternness of the helmet
and the wisdom of diplomacy...

In military study
he did not go as a sultan
seeking adornment,
but as a warrior carving
his meaning in the rock...

He learned that the crown is heavy,
carried only by a neck
accustomed to discipline;
and that command is not

a rank placed on the shoulder
but a spirit
that advances at the front...

In the scorching of the field
he absorbed the fragrance of the military,
so his walk became law
and his silence: gravitas,
and his leap toward glory: a certainty...

In the school of will —
across the ocean to sands
that test the mettle of men —
between the cries of the infantry
and the sweat of hard training,
King Ibrahim was taming the impossible...

The wings he earned
were not merely the badge of paratroopers —
they were a declaration
that this king does not fear the fall,
because he learned to soar
in the eye of the storm...

The commando became part of his being —
he sees in every challenge an opportunity,
and in hardship, a road to victory...

The king removed the war helmet
to wear the cloak of wisdom
and the vision of the seasoned statesman —
amid the dossiers of maritime law
and the corridors of international relations,
King Ibrahim was drawing for Malaysia

the map of presence...

He learned that the world
is not governed by force alone,
but by the word that weighs mountains,
and by the diplomacy
that opens sealed hearts...

He became a judge
in the “mihrab” of politics —
knowing how to protect sovereignty
with the intelligence of the philosopher
and the strength of the warrior...

XXIII. Knowledge and the Crown

How wondrous this rare blend...!

how did it all gather
in the mind of one king —
all this immensity...?

As if the minds within him,
when they come together,
do not jostle for space
but fall into harmony...

As if knowledge, when it enters
his presence, is not asking permission
but being honoured and raised
to its highest station...

His Majesty the Sultan
does not govern by inheritance alone
but governs with seven languages
of knowledge and experience —
languages not written
on paper only,
but read in the details of the decision,
the precision of the scales,
the fairness of his stances,
and in a vision that sees the future...

His diploma is no paper
hung upon walls;
it is Malaysia
as we see it today...

A state rising
from among its diversity
as an idea rises
from among patience...

A state protected by an army
that sees him as a model in discipline,
and run by a mind the world sees
as an authority on equity...
And inhabited by a people who found
in his leadership a meaning —
that the state may be
a home, not a battlefield...

O you whose highness is of the mind —
your credentials are not
hung up on walls,
not gleams of a title,

but two wings lifting your crown
above the reach of time...

One protects
the right from being lost —
and the other builds civilisation
on a foundation of justice
that does not crack...

We record this ascension
not as a passing speech of praise,
but as a lesson
in the meaning of leadership
when it becomes a thought
before it becomes an exercise of power...

And the palace becomes
an extension of a long lecture-hall;
and the throne becomes
a charge, not a glory —
a responsibility, not a privilege...

So the world may know
that the great king
is he who sat long
upon the benches of study —
until the lesson, in his two hands,
became a state...
and knowledge, in his vision,
became a system...
and understanding, in his decisions,
became a path that does not deviate —
all of it alive

in the thought of the king...

The homeland, as he sees it, is not
a mere border sketched on the map of the
geographer,
but is a mosaic of souls,
of schools of faith,
of languages...
where hearts converse
as colours converse
in one canvas,
not negating each other
but completing each other's splendour...

He sees in diversity
strength, not fragmentation;
and in difference: a melody

playing the symphony of survival;

and in multiplicity: a meaning...

that the nation

is vaster than a single idea,

and deeper than a single definition,

and greater than the bounds

of a narrow vision...

His thought knows no closure,

but opens windows to the sun

and makes of the air an idea,

and of the idea a project of life,

and of life a path that does not halt...

He believes that tolerance

is not a banner lifted up at conferences,

nor a word to be spoken when the hour demands,

but is the very scales
of a just judge —
granting every rightful person their right
without diminishment;
and setting every difference
in its natural place
without exclusion;
turning contrasts into a system of balance,
and not into a conflict that wearies existence...

In the shade of this understanding,
Malaysia becomes a great home —
not for the breadth of her geography,
but for the breadth of her meaning;
vast enough for all, without being narrow for any;
defending all, without distinguishing between any;
granting every person his rightful portion

in the very telling of the common tale...

O you who sees leadership through the mind
and reads the state through the heart —
your presence is a meaning that transcends protocol
and reaches into the very essence
of the idea from which nations are built...

For when justice
settles at the summit,
its light falls on the base —
and when wisdom
makes its home at the head of the pyramid,
all the pillars straighten with it...

And so this ascent abides, a witness —

not to a king alone,
but to an idea that establishes
that rule may indeed be knowledge;
that power may indeed be mercy;
that a homeland may indeed be the project for
people,
before it is ever the project of a State...

XXIV. Outpacing Time

His Majesty King Ibrahim
does not look at the clock
to know the time...
but to see
how far nations have outpaced us...!
toward intelligence and innovation.

In his thought... technology
is no luxury
but a weapon
toward prosperity;
and it is the state's vision
into the age of light and data...

He wants Johor
to be a smart city,
racing the wind...
and he wants his people
to ride the saddle of digitisation
with the awareness of the wise...

His thought sees the future
in the heart of the present,
and transforms reality into a wondrous
system of progress...

Amid the dossiers of complex statecraft
the king's thought shines
with a single unwavering principle:
the dignity of the human being...

He believes that an economy
that does not feed the hungry
is a set of dead numbers...
and that the renaissance
that does not wipe
the orphan's tear
is a renaissance that limps...

His mind always turned to the field —
far from the quiet offices
and the polished reports...

His thought believes
in a justice that delivers —
reaching the people
before they ask for it,
protecting the dignity of the worker

as it protects the dignity of the throne...

The philosophy of the decision.

In King Ibrahim's thought
sovereignty is the compass of light;
he does not gamble when the nation is at stake
to the mood of storms,
but steers the ship
with the captain's deliberation
and the warrior's fortitude...

He believes that Malaysia's strength
lies in the independence of her opinion,
and her ability
to be a bridge
between East and West
without losing the Malay touch

or the nobility of Islam...

His thought builds up;
he believes that diplomacy
is the art of transforming
adversaries into partners
under the umbrella of
mutual respect
and higher interests...

His Majesty sees that the school
is the factory
of true kings,
and that investment
in the mind of the youth
is the investment that never goes stale...

His thought demands an education
that liberates the will
and produces a generation carrying
the computer in one hand
and the Quran in the heart —
a generation proud of its past,
unafraid of the future.

This is the ascent of knowledge
drawn in Crown of the East...
that knowledge be the conductor
of the nation's onward train...

XXV. Crown of the East

O man of thought...
you do not govern
with the crown alone
but you govern by vision;
and the vision of kings
is the fate of peoples...

Luminous ideas
that remain a lighthouse for generations,
telling them that the great king
is he who plants an idea
in the conscience of his people,
and it grows into a homeland
that embraces the clouds...

At the edge of the page
and the final horizon
the circle we drew is complete
with the ink of faithfulness and meaning...

We began from a palm in Iraq
and extended the bridges
between the spirit and the distance,
until we sheltered in a crown
not governed by force
but governed by love and certainty...

O Your Majesty...
King Ibrahim who is within us,
you were in the poetry

no mere narration of rhymes,
but a mimesis of beauty,
and a triumph of the spirit,
and a testimony of the letters,
and a vision of an artist,
and a pulse from a poet...

You are the king
who restored to the East
its lost dignity —
not by speeches alone,
but by the deeds that restored
to meaning its rightful place...

And here we are today
at the last letter
and the first meaning,

understanding that what we began
was no mere text
but an ascending journey of awareness
from the roots of the Two Rivers
to the light breaking through in the Malay lands...

from the pulse of the earth
unto the horizon of the Idea —
until the Crown became
not a symbol of loftiness
but a mirror of vision...

And so... the letters bow
at the shore of meaning —
not because they are finished

but because they understood
that what was said
was the beginning of the road,
not its end...

For speech, however high its ascent,
shall yet remain the shadow of a greater idea;
and an idea, however bright its blaze,
shall yet be but a flickering spark
before the radiant light of him who has believed
that governance is not a seat upon a throne,
but rather the grave responsibility of a vision...

O Your Majesty...

O you who made of the crown
a window, not a wall,
and of authority

a bridge, not a chain...

Here are the words returning
to their first silence —
a silence filled with certainty
that nations are not built
by the loud voice
but by the vision that sees
what lies beyond the horizon...

We have walked with you
from the palms of the land of the Two Rivers
to the shadow of a homeland
writing itself anew...

And we saw how an idea transforms

into a destiny...
and how a dream becomes
an unwritten constitution...
signed by hearts before homelands write it down...

And here... at the edge of the completed circle,
we understand that the ending
is no closure
but an opening upon
a new age...
an age wherein vision becomes law,
and love becomes policy,
and the human being becomes
the purpose and the direction...

So peace upon the one
who carried the idea

as a sword of light...

And peace upon the one who made
of the dream a state
walking on two feet...

And peace upon this arc
that began from a palm and a letter
and ended at an unbounded horizon...

The text ends
but it does not end...
for when the vision is born
in the conscience
it knows no absence...