

Ngoi Hui Chien

Fallen

Can there be a proper spot
that can accommodate a dying statue
in this society which advocates human rights
to commemorate the twenty-four lives
fading on the brink of amnesia
upon a series of deafening gunshots
fallen into a misty rubber plantation
fallen into a myth
a phantasmatic full stop in the legal record
leaving behind waves of vague echoes

The echoes seeping through the time tunnel
wriggling like maggots on the corpses
penetrating muscles and skins
penetrating faces with eyes wide open
penetrating the statue that should be erected
—the petrified regime
against the creeping Communism after the Occupation
against the yellow-skinned beings
all their identities are compressed into bullets
shot through the struggling hearts
torn open the pleading eyes
a pile of rigidifying bodies
which deserves the right to occupy a space
in this country obsessed with statues

Let the buildings constructed with rules of law
disguise their trembling with the civilised cold weather
let the gentlemen in suits put on their shades
trampling on sprawling wails on the enduring lands
let the ladies raise their eyelashes under their hats
scrutinising the stiffened postures on their high heels
let the air of liberty stink up the rotting statue
throttling the blaring throats that yell for freedom of speech

Scream O scream
the vagrant souls on the equator
shout out the silence swallowed
before the gavel of truth falls into the dark abyss
before the history melts into the impending storm
that devours the flickering justice
soar O soar
you who fall to this splintering world
the souls of freedom

Author's Note:

I was shocked to learn about the Batang Kali massacre which occurred on 12 December 1948. Justice still has not been served after so many years. I was exposed to the details pertaining to the massacre by Dr Ng Yean Leng and lawyer Quek Ngee Meng in a virtual talk hosted by Chan Yong Sin, the Chief Editor of *Unilifesity*, on 20 June 2020. This is the link to the recorded talk:

<https://www.facebook.com/unilifesity/videos/975702896194937/>.