

# 44

A young woman's journey in seeking meaning,  
disguised in the word 'home'.



A POETRY COMPILATION BY  
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44

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# Foreword

Thank you for buying this simple book with your hard-earned money and help a budding artist like me. Thank you for helping me continue writing and experiencing what life has more to offer. I hope what I am writing in this book can resonate with you, and in some ways, inspire you to live better, to live life to the fullest, to be true to yourself.

## Preface

This collection of poetry is arranged chronologically from the life of Eliana, a young woman whose natural affinity to seek a home brings her into many inner conflicts. She is longing for a home where truth and honesty reside. But, finding that home has never been easy. For most of her life, she has been homeless. This book aims to help people like Eliana to feel like they are at home, where truth and honesty reside.



# 1

## Childhood

### **1. The beginning**

The stage was set in the most ordinary manner  
No fancy lights nor 'welcome to the world' banner  
Just the warmth of a mother's blood  
And her tangled pubic hair

Amidst the painful cold of January's air  
Deep inside the jungle of Sumatra  
That was all that I needed to begin the grand opera

### **2. Childhood**

Blossom in the bosom of my roots  
I thrived like grassroots above the fertile ground  
I was green, and I was growing  
Sustained by love  
Entertained by adventures  
Nurtured by a home

## My life as a kid

### 3. Heaven

Golden fishes in the pond  
Waiting to be chased and fawned

In trade of laughter and affection  
Would offer their body as a love testament

They consider it not an affliction  
And never did I give them malediction

### 4. Nap

Once upon a time, I took a nap  
I laid my body down by the side  
My ear kissed the floor  
As the air drifted in from the door  
It touched my skin gently  
Oh, co chilling

Alas, I couldn't sleep  
My eyes wide open

There were many ants on the floor  
Walking around and giving kisses to each other  
When I was sure that no ant was kiss deprived  
I closed my eyes  
That is when I heard the sound of a breathing

## CHILDHOOD

It was so clear beside my ear  
My body froze so I could concentrate

What is it?  
What is breathing so close to my ear?

Then I opened my eyes in bewilderment  
The ants were walking around beside my ears  
Still giving kisses to each other  
It is them, I concluded

### **5. Upon the old bridge on the way to school**

Schoolchildren walking on the bridge  
Sustained by tiny ropes  
Big old rocks on the bottom  
Yet no fear of the chasm

### **6. Tuesday mornings**

It is the day that we've waited with such anticipation  
More than Sunday mornings or Saturday evenings

It is market time!  
Rather than the same old faces, its time to see some new faces  
With fairer skin, prettier clothes

It is market time!  
Rather than muddy dirt on our bare feet

It is time to wear some sandals and walk on the smooth asphalt  
road

It is market time!

Rather than eating rice with some cassava leaves soup  
It is time to eat some *miso*, the most delicious food in the world

It is market time!

Rather than putting oxygen out of my lung  
I breathe in as much time to my lungs

### **7. From under the wooden table**

On that wooden table and chair  
I remember seeing a woman sitting alone  
She was one with the air  
A mixture of coldness from the morning dew  
And of warmth from the cigarette smoke

She couldn't be bothered  
She was having a serious conversation  
In her mind  
With herself

Her back straight and tall as the eucalyptus tree  
Her right hand on the table  
Her left hand holding fast to the cigarette

Her face a canvas of contradictions  
Of a woman's tenderness and life's tragedies

CHILDHOOD

Dear woman, I wish I understood  
But I was just a child  
Hiding under the table  
Across your ankle  
Waiting to steal the remaining of your cigarette butt

**8. Inside the villain's drawer**

Shh  
Come in quietly  
Tip your toe gently

Close the door  
I will show you  
Inside the villain's drawer

Now come closer to this wooden table  
Open the drawer quietly  
It is unlocked

Do you see there in the middle?  
Beside the aviator reading glasses  
No, no, don't try it on

Focus on the thing I'm about to show you  
Look!  
A vintage lavender hair gel

On the package, The painting of a Victorian lady  
With a glamorous red dress  
A sign that it is made for villains

Now open the tin container  
It might be a bit sturdy  
You'll need to apply some strength

Can you do it?

Okay

Now, scoop your finger into the turquoise gel  
Then put that finger close to your nose

Smell it

Don't defend yourself against the lavender scent  
Let it enter with your breath  
Through your nose, to the fibers of your being

Now, as the scent nested in your heart  
Be careful to make a resolve  
Of what the scent represents

Affection or contempt  
Friends or enemy  
Colourlessness or nuance

Have you decided?

Okay

Now clean your hand with the tissue on the table

Shh

Go out quietly  
Tip your toe gently

CHILDHOOD

Close the door

**9. On one new year's eve**

On one New Year's Eve

Which year my memory no longer conceives  
I bereave

Mom got sick

Dad got drunk

I got spanked

**10. On one Sunday afternoon**

Like a skilled bird by the riverside

Prying on a little fish by the side

I was playing by the house

Trying to catch some mouse

Unlike a skilled bird by the riverside

I am not as skilled

I did not know what would be killed

It is the fish and not the bird

But is it going to be the mouse or myself?

Meanwhile, in the house

There are so many people

With a hymn book in their hands

They chant and chant in terror

As if to welcome an unwanted guest  
 And she lay on the deathbed  
 In helpless dread

As the evening goes deeper into the night  
 A visitor knocked on the door

It is her  
 Chosen by the unwanted guest  
 It is me  
 Killed by the mouse

### **11. My red Christmas dress**

Unlike the rest of the kids  
 I never waited for Christmas eve  
 I was never excited to get a new dress  
 Or to memorize a new bible verse

My red Christmas dress  
 Was the last token of my friendship with Christmas eve  
 Bought by my aunt on my fifth Christmas eve  
 A few months after mom was eaten by the grave

### **12. A white Pentecostal church on the hill**

In the village where I grew up  
 There were two church buildings  
 One was a Lutheran, and the other was a Pentecostal

My family belongs to the Pentecostal church  
 It was a simple wooden church

CHILDHOOD

Painted all in white so bright  
Built on a high hill shining under the moonlight

In front of the church, a wooden porch  
And some pine trees so alive as a fire torch  
How lovely was the view

But a longing it ensues  
To a heart like mine  
Who longs for a home  
Some honeycomb for the gloom

**13. Plucked out**

If the universe is like a big banyan tree  
And children are the roots hanging on the branch  
The branch I used to hang on was cut off

Some decayed by age  
Some defeated by sickness  
Some too tired to hang on

My universe cut off  
I fell down  
Slowly and steadily

To the ground, I grow  
Year by year to come  
Never became a branch  
Rootless all along

Above the ground

#### **14. Growing up**

As we grew up

There's more air in our lungs than we can breathe

Though sometimes there can be less air

And it can be suffocating

More salt in the food than we can tolerate

Less sugar in the drinks than we desire

As we grew older year by year

We grew to be sadder

More questions rather than answers

More longings rather than calm

More roads rather than lakes

Everyone grows up sad

Yet some are sadder than the other

2

## Faith

### **15. Divine romance**

Gentle wind on my skin  
Fallen leaves on the road  
Little rain drops from the trees  
Butterflies on my knees

Divine romance  
Transcended  
Oh  
The numinous

### **16. A moon**

I saw a moon today  
Sometimes bright, other times dark

When it is dark, she stops hanging in the night sky  
Her toes slightly touch the land

Heading towards the beach

Then dive deep into the bottom  
 As fast as she can  
 Transforming herself  
 Into something  
 As useless as a candle in the ocean floor

### **17. Somewhere**

In a place where the wind sings to a melody  
 Where the wave dances like a ballerina  
 Where the sun sets gracefully on the greens  
 A little girl is bending her knees  
 Wiping her tears

Mom and Dad is nowhere to be found

Such beauty and pain  
 They mingle at the same place  
 Is this meant to be like this?  
 Does beauty have to hold hands with pain?

What's the world made of?  
 What's our heart made of?  
 Is suffering our default?  
 Would someone show me the way?  
 Somewhere as an escape

**18. Things as they are**

You may see it smiling  
But can't you see it frowning too  
I am talking about the universe  
It's a place where the strong devours the weak

I may see you dancing and smiling and laughing  
But I can see through the façade  
Because I've been there too  
Did you take your medicine?

You and I, as we are, we are broken and ruined  
When will we stop pretending?  
Pretending that we are okay  
Pretending that we can make  
The earth a better place

My bone is sick of all the lies  
All we need is an escape

**19. Home**

You're the only reason worth living  
For my wake up in the morning  
For my labor in the day  
For my laying down in the night

You're a friend worth dying for  
You know my heart more than anyone else  
When others mistook my intention