

Oberlin Shansi

Annual Report

2018–2019



OBERLIN SHANSI



Returned Fellow Louise Edwards with Visiting Scholars Vrushaa Subramanian, Faisal Mustafa, and Fan Yue at Niagara Falls.

OUR VISION

Deepening mutual respect and understanding through exchange between Asia and the United States.

OUR MISSION

Shansi facilitates experiential learning and nurtures mutually beneficial exchanges between Oberlin College & Conservatory and partners in Asia. Shansi's programs have a transformative impact, empowering individuals, institutions, and communities to be leaders in cross-cultural engagement.

Dear Shansi Friends and Supporters,

2020 has been a tumultuous year so far, with Shansi Fellows and Visiting Scholars evacuated and Oberlin College students at home in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic. By comparison, 2019 was far more stable, and I hope the stories and reports you find in this Annual Report will help you find some light and fun in these challenging times.

I want to highlight Jingyi “Laura” Li, who completed her first year as Shansi’s first Independent Fellow. Laura joined Taktopia, an educational social enterprise in Japan which focuses on expanding the horizons of Japanese high school students through programs on global engagement and entrepreneurship. Head to our YouTube channel to see the dynamic video diary that Laura crafted.

Here on the home front, 2019 was a year of transition. First, Ted Samuel joined the Shansi family as Deputy Director, taking over from Elaine Vukov. Ted’s background in international student exchange and in South India and his dynamism and passion for facilitating student experiences abroad make him a perfect addition to the Shansi team. Then, when Evelyn Wilkins retired in January 2019 after more than 15 years of dedicated service, we were thrilled to welcome Jessica Cotter as Shansi’s new Administrative Assistant. I hope all of the Shansi community will join me in welcoming Ted and Jessica, and in thanking Elaine and Evelyn.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Shansi’s alumni and friends for your generous support this year. You helped in so many ways, from the impressive 50+ percent response rate to our alumni survey to providing donations that allowed us to build new programs like the Hiroshima and Independent Fellowships. As we face more challenges in the coming year, we will count on you to help Shansi continue to build bridges and join worlds.

I hope you enjoy this report, and I encourage you to engage with us online through our website (shansi.org), our YouTube channel, and on Facebook and Instagram.

Sincerely,



Gavin Tritt
Executive Director

NEW STAFF



Ted Samuel



Jessica Cotter

SHANSI FELLOWSHIPS

Shansi Fellowships offer recent Oberlin graduates life-changing opportunities to live and work in China, India, Indonesia, and Japan for up to two years. They work with Shansi's university and nongovernmental organization partners, while studying languages, learning local arts, volunteering, and finding other ways to engage in local communities. If you want to learn more about their experiences as Fellows, take a look at their annual narratives at www.shansi.org.

CHINA

Shansi has two partners in China. At Beijing Normal University (BNU), Shansi Fellows spend one year teaching graduate students as well as undertaking intensive Chinese language studies. Concurrently, a Chinese graduate student comes to Oberlin to serve as a teaching assistant for the Chinese language program. At Shanxi Agricultural University in Taigu, Shansi's historical partner, Fellows teach undergraduate English majors and graduate students.

Beijing Normal University

Outside of his teaching duties at Beijing Normal University, ANDREW BOOR '18 focused on interning at a contemporary art gallery in Beijing's Caochangdi Art District and learning about China's rapidly transforming political economy. Through his studies and his work at the gallery, Andrew was able to gain a clearer understanding of the rapid transformation of artistic and cultural norms in China's urban spaces. During his second semester, Andrew created and coached the Chinese Language and Culture Department's first ever British Parliamentary Debate Club. Students in the club would debate several topics including women's rights, LGBT rights, and the ethical economic development of rural China. Upon the completion of his Fellowship, Andrew signed on to teach English at Beijing Normal University for a second year.



Andrew Boor with a group of his students

Shanxi Agricultural University

RADIA LAHLOU '18 spent her free-time as a first-year Shansi Fellow studying Chinese, making art, and backpacking through China and Southeast Asia. At work, her background in linguistics and interest in language pedagogy led her to design diverse curricula that could cater to the needs of her undergraduate and graduate students at SXAU and the primary school students she tutored in her free time. Additionally, she explored her love for writing by authoring children's stories. Outside of the classroom, Radia created digital art and took pottery classes. In the early winter of 2019, Radia, along with BNU Fellow Andrew Boor, backpacked through South China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand.



Radia Lahlou at the Jindao Gorge in Chongqing

BRENDAN NUSE '17 spent his second year in Taigu refining his skills as a teacher and deepening his Chinese language fluency. He took advantage of the opportunity to audit classes at SXAU in translation, interpretation, Japanese, and grassland science. In his free time, Brendan listened to Chinese podcasts, did freelance translation and editing work, and embraced his love for walking with a step tracking feature through the WeChat app. The knowledge and experience that he gained as a Shansi

Fellow has proven useful after he returned to the U.S., as he is currently studying translation and interpretation at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies.

INDIA

Shansi's two partners in India allow Fellows to experience India's incredible linguistic and cultural diversity. At Lady Doak College in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, the Shansi Fellow serves as the Director of the International Study Centre (ISC), where she designs global engagement programs and supports international service learning projects. At Jagori Grameen, a nongovernmental organization in northern Himachal Pradesh, Fellows work with rural Knowledge Centers and help organize programs that fight gender-based violence, promote access to justice for women, and advance sustainable agriculture.

Lady Doak College

In her second year, OLIVIA HAY '17 expanded several programs that she launched during her first year as Director of the International Study Centre, such as the Passport Club and the Model United Nations. She actively sought opportunities for her students to participate in events off-campus and supervised trips to a Youth Leadership Conference in Coimbatore, a Model United Nations Conference in Chennai, and a youth speech contest in Trichy. Olivia continued to support student programming at the ISC and supervised student-led educational programs that highlighted topics in the social sciences and humanities. Olivia hopes to build upon her experience by pursuing a career in public diplomacy and international education, and returned to the U.S. to embark on a Master of Global Policy Studies degree at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at UT Austin.



Olivia Hay on her motorbike

Jagori Grameen

AUSTIN COPE '15 spent the past year at Jagori Grameen building relationships with co-workers and community members, exploring the area around Dharamshala, and learning about social and environmental issues in Himachal Pradesh. He has cultivated these relationships by working with Jagori staff on multimedia projects; attending trainings on gender, feminism, and agriculture; and drinking chai with his colleagues during their daily breaks. In the upcoming year, he is looking forward to taking a more active role in Jagori's projects while examining his own voice and identity as a writer, storyteller, and American.



Aliya Tuzhilin at the gorge alongside the Manuni river at the foothills of the Dhauladhar Mountains

During her time at Jagori Grameen, ALIYA TUZHILIN '17 often pondered the role of nature in the context of the rapidly changing community she inhabited. Over time, she came to know the fields, farms, and background of Rakkar, and worked to find her place in this environment. By the end of her second year, she observed that "if you really want to live and work here, you have to find a way to honestly live amongst people who you will never quite be like. However, you can always find ways to connect with people on a deeper level through mutual respect and acceptance of each other's pace...Learning how to do that is the most rewarding thing about my time living here in the beautiful and perplexing village of Rakkar."

INDONESIA

At Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Fellows work as teaching assistants or independent instructors at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences and the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies. At Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh, Shansi Fellows teach English reading, writing, and speaking as well as occasional specialized courses to undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. At the same time, Syiah Kuala University faculty visit Oberlin College as Visiting Scholars to explore new teaching pedagogies and co-curricular programs.

Gajah Mada University

In February 2019, NIKAIO THOMASHOW '19 began their Fellowship in Yogyakarta. After two months of intensive language study, they observed classes, met with students, and assisted faculty in providing feedback for final projects. With a better sense of the needs of the students, they worked to create syllabi for the main courses the Fellows are responsible for teaching. Nikaio also became immersed with the arts scene in Yogyakarta. They joined a local hip hop crew, Freakingz, and participated in frequent performances and competitions. For the summer, Nikaio took the opportunity to go to the Philippines for the first time and connect with their family.



Nikaio Thomashow (bottom row, middle) with their hip hop dance crew Freakingz

Syiah Kuala University

SYDNEY GARVIS '18 spent her first year in Aceh engaging local friends and environmental activists to co-found Aceh Zero Plastic - a community-based organization dedicated to the reduction of plastic waste. Aceh Zero Plastic used their Instagram page to build awareness among local communities and to build coalitions among young people who were similarly concerned about the amount of trash they saw everyday. They organized several "Eco-Picnics and Park Clean Ups", encouraging people to bring their own lunches in reusable containers or biodegradable banana leaves (common in Indonesia), to show that it's easy and realistic to eat together without creating any waste.



Sydney Garvis with Aceh Zero Plastic after a park clean up

During the second year of his Fellowship, PETER D'AURIA '14 worked on a number of personal and community-based projects, including the creation of an anthology of student writing, which he co-edited with co-Fellow Sydney Garvis '18. To generate material, he gave his students a number of creative writing exercises. In one, students wrote an "I am from" poem, modeled after a poem by George Ella Lyon. To do this, students list detailed memories from their childhoods, such as waking up to a breakfast of fried rice or having their parents remind them to pray five times daily. Peter and Sydney crowd-funded the project and produced two editions of the anthology, titled "Dear English" and "I am from Fried Rice" They produced hard copies of the publications for the student authors, the Pusat Bahasa Language Center, and Oberlin Shansi.

JAPAN

Shansi Fellows at J.F. Oberlin University teach first-year students in the English Language Program, provide one-on-one tutoring through the department's Writing Center, and support a wide range of extracurricular activities. In Hiroshima, the Shansi Fellow works with three different partners: UNITAR, a United Nations agency that provides training to support sustainable development and mitigate conflict; and ANT-Hiroshima and Green Legacy, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that share Hiroshima's story and message of peace through educational programs.

J.F. Oberlin University



Incoming Fellow Emily Eisenstein with current Fellows Leah Wood, Franklin Sussman, Kayla Johnston-Mitchell, and previous Fellows

KAYLA JOHNSTON-MITCHELL '17 further refined her teaching technique, finding a balance between strictness and flexibility to provide students a safe but stimulating environment. In class, she stressed the importance of encouraging students to try their best for 15 minutes at a time, with the understanding that mistakes are bound to happen, and that they are a necessary part of the learning process. Outside of the classroom, Kayla continued to push her comfort zone through various forms of community engagement, including artistic pole dance classes. After intensive training for over three months, Kayla participated in a rain-themed group performance with other students in her studio.

FRANKLIN SUSSMAN '17 continued to volunteer at community center akta with the Delivery Boys program. They delivered free condoms every Friday night to many of the LGBT bars and establishments in Shinjuku Nichome, the gay area of Tokyo. In addition to this weekly volunteer activity, they worked at the akta booth during Tokyo Rainbow Pride, performed at a quarterly event reciting written narratives of people living with AIDS and singing karaoke, and spoke about their volunteer experiences both in Japan and in Seattle at public events sponsored by akta. Franklin hopes to use this experience and knowledge to continue engaging in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts back home in Seattle.

LEAH AKI WOOD '16 focused on adjusting to life on the outskirts of Tokyo. Aside from teaching at J.F. Oberlin University, she tried various activities such as learning *koto* (Japanese zither), playing *taiko*, English tutoring, and volunteering at an elder care center. Currently, she participates in an English children's book reading event series to encourage and increase confidence in parents and children in learning a second language together. Leah also took an online class in mental health to test her interest in the possibility of pursuing psychology after she completes her Fellowship.

Hiroshima

XIN "JENNY" LUAN '18 spent much of her first year organizing logistics for the Women's Leadership Programme for Afghanistan at UNITAR, translating texts and pamphlets from Japanese to Chinese at ANT-Hiroshima, and leading field trips to the Hibaku-Jumoku, or atomic bomb survivor trees, for Green Legacy-Hiroshima. In her work with Green Legacy, Jenny refined her interpretation of the trees' meanings for an international audience. The comments and questions she fielded from international visitors encouraged her to expand her understanding of the Hibaku-Jumoku and see them through a global lens. They should serve as a reminder to the world that we must make moral decisions when developing new technology. Jenny plans to further develop her understanding of peacekeeping and international coalition building during her second year in Hiroshima.



Jenny Luan with previous Fellow Annelise Giseburt at a goodbye lunch for one of their UNITAR colleagues

INDEPENDENT FELLOWSHIP

Oberlin Shansi's new Independent Fellowship allows graduating seniors and recent alumni to design their own two-year experience with an NGO, social enterprise, or educational institution. This allows highly motivated applicants the chance to propose innovative projects and partnerships in regions and sectors outside of Shansi's typical purview.



Laura Li with Taktopia staff and management after one of her workshops

Our first Independent Fellow, JINGYI "LAURA" LI '18, is working at Taktopia, an education-based social enterprise in Tokyo. Through a range of domestic and international workshops (or "camps") for high school students, Taktopia seeks to encourage creativity, critical thinking, and entrepreneurship among Japanese youth. Laura has utilized the skills she gained as a Cinema Studies major to produce multimedia content, including a series of short marketing videos. She has also helped build an art-based teaching curriculum with the goal of introducing it to schools in Japan. Outside of work, Laura has taken classes in tango dancing, drawing, abstract painting, digital art, and jazz singing. She has performed and presented in a number of venues, including a group-exhibition of projection mapping animation, a jazz concert, and her first Milonga (tango dancing gathering).

SHANSI PRIZE

The 2019 Shansi Prize was awarded to Milin Zhou '19 for her paper "Returns on Chinese 20th Century Art 2008-2017." Zhou explores the rising global significance of the Chinese art market using auction data to look at changes in rates of return, and suggests how future research might examine non-Western art markets.

CAMPUS PROGRAMS

VISITING SCHOLARS

Faculty and staff from Shansi partner institutions have the opportunity to experience Oberlin College and the local community for a semester or a full academic year as Visiting Scholars. They focus on scholarship and teaching pedagogy, learn about student life and support networks at Oberlin, and can present their research to students and faculty. Outside of the classroom, they have the opportunity to volunteer with local organizations, participate in academic conferences, and travel throughout the United States.

SRI "TINA" AGUSTINA
Lecturer, Faculty of Marine Science, Syiah Kuala University,
Banda Aceh, Indonesia

"ARIS" ARISMAWAN
Lecturer, Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Syiah Kuala
University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

FAISAL MUSTAFA
Lecturer, Faculty of English Language Teaching, Syiah Kuala
University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

HAWRAA SANAA
Fulbright Arabic Language Teaching Assistant from Kuwait

VRUSHAA SUBRAMANIAN
Assistant Professor, Faculty of English Literature, Lady Doak
College, Madurai, India

FAN YUE
Visiting Instructor of Chinese, Oberlin College, and graduate
student at Beijing Normal University



Vrushaa Subramanian on a Lake Erie beach

An avid lover of books, VRUSHAA SUBRAMANIAN spent a lot of her time at the Oberlin College Library. She was excited by the easy access to online and print resources. Her Oberlin experience helped shape her Ph.D. dissertation research, which focuses on American women's non-fiction narratives of breast cancer. By auditing courses in the Sociology and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies departments, she also explored interdisciplinary approaches to her work. Prior to returning to Madurai, Vrushaa noted, "My four-month stay in Oberlin...has helped me find what I want to do in my research, and has provided me the clarity that always eluded me".

ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

Throughout the year, Shansi collaborates with academic departments and student organizations to develop and support programs on Asia on the Oberlin campus. These include symposia, visiting speakers, and student organization events such as taiko performances and the Asian Night Market.

A highlight came in March 2019 when Shansi's Jacobson-Cocco Distinguished Lecture Series supported the participation of the Chinese documentary filmmaker Wu Wenguang in a symposium on "Public Intellectuals in a Changing World" organized by the Oberlin Center for Languages and Cultures.

Wu is considered the founder of modern Chinese documentary filmmaking, and he continues to be a strong voice for artistic freedom. His lecture included a multi-media performance with dancer Zhang Mengqi, and focused on his "Memory Project," which collects oral accounts of the Mao era from rural Chinese communities. The symposium also screened his groundbreaking first documentary from 1990, "Bumming in Beijing: The Last Dreamers" and his most recent film "Investigating my Father", as well as films by documentarians Zhang Ci and Zhang Mengqi.



Zhang Mengqi, Zhang Ci, and Wu Wenguang at a lunch discussion with Oberlin students at Shansi House

IN-ASIA GRANTS

Shansi's In-Asia Grants promote individual and creative engagement in Asia during summer and Winter Term for Oberlin students with great ideas and entrepreneurial instincts.

Kenneth Kitahata '20

Microlending in Cambodia

Kenneth volunteered at HelpAge Cambodia, an NGO in Battambang, Cambodia, to learn about microlending and its impact on local communities. Kenneth was responsible for making brochures for HelpAge's income security programs, specifically the Cow Bank, Rice Bank, and Revolving Fund.



Kenneth with a recipient of a HelpAge microloan

Sheng Kao '20 & Jennifer Lin '20

Blooming Bridges: International LGBTQ Activism and Art in Taiwan

Sheng and Jen partnered with New Bloom, a multilingual political news outlet, to study LGBTQ youth activism in Taiwan. They produced a digital zine from interviews, pictures, videos, audio, and original written content with the purpose of promoting cross-cultural understanding between Taiwanese and American students.

Neko Cortez '20

Finding my Unique Voice through Musical Syncretism

In the summer of 2019, Neko traveled to Quezon City, Philippines to research traditional instruments and styles as well as pedagogical techniques that share music intergenerationally. He did this by taking lessons from local Kulintang performers and exploring the local music scene by attending performances, interviewing musicians, and capturing recordings.

Leina Fieleke '21

Anti-Nuclear Activism in the Context of the Maruki Gallery

Leina worked as a curatorial intern at the Maruki Gallery for the Hiroshima Panels in Saitama, Japan. The Maruki Gallery was established by two artists who, after seeing the devastation of the bombing, were inspired to create the panels. Leina investigated what made the panels unique as anti-nuclear art and their contemporary importance locally and globally.

Julia Pindaro '20

Disease Research in India

Julia shadowed a local doctor and her team in Hyderabad, India and analyzed the differences between three healthcare facilities. She observed an NGO which offered free treatment, a private hospital for higher income patients, and a medical school that provided low cost health care. She focused on how each institution navigated demand and funding.

Yuan "Charles" Cui '20

Nightclubs for Literature: Bookstore Culture in Taiwan

Charles investigated the boom in local bookstore culture in Taiwan, including the challenges independent bookstores are facing, and how they are adapting their business models in an increasingly digital marketplace. He visited nearly twenty independent bookstores, retail book stores, and public libraries to interview their owners and employees.

Kara Nepomuceno '20

Traditional Gestures, Contemporary Identities: Exploring Dances of the Philippines

Kara studied Pangalay dance in Manila, Philippines with artists from AlunAlun Dance Circle (ADC), an organization which practices and shares Pangalay through open classes, research, and performance. Kara took weekly lessons and interviewed local Lumad leaders to understand the connections between the dance, local indigenous and Muslim communities, and the largely Catholic population.



Kara teaching a workshop on Pangalay dance upon her return to Oberlin

Lea Watkins-Chow '22

Growing in Taiwan: Between Generations and Agriculture

Lea worked with Tian Shan Ling Organic Farm in central Taiwan. She explored sustainable environmental management through planting and cultivating crops and being exposed to different cultural and generational relationships to food systems. She also had the opportunity to work at a local farmer's market.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES for the year ended June 30, 2019

	2019		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating Revenues			
Appropriation from endowment	\$ 78,226	\$ 398,293	\$ 476,519
Contributions	76,191	117,941	194,132
Net assets released from restrictions	457,826	(457,826)	-
Total operating revenues	<u>612,243</u>	<u>58,408</u>	<u>670,651</u>
Operating Expenses			
Program			
China	77,507		77,507
Indonesia	119,663		119,663
India	95,916		95,916
Japan	102,299		102,299
Oberlin campus	128,990		128,990
Administrative and general	70,683		70,683
Fundraising	56,938		56,938
Total operating expenses	<u>651,996</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>651,996</u>
Change in net assets from operating activities	<u>(39,753)</u>	<u>58,408</u>	<u>18,655</u>
Non-operating Activities			
Investment return, net of fees and amounts transferred to operations	7,562	13,217	20,779
Contributions	-	4,246	4,246
Reclassification of net assets	(51,760)	51,760	-
Change in net assets	<u>(83,951)</u>	<u>127,631</u>	<u>43,680</u>
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>2,594,859</u>	<u>9,869,051</u>	<u>12,463,910</u>
Net assets at end of year	<u>\$ 2,510,908</u>	<u>\$ 9,996,682</u>	<u>\$ 12,507,590</u>

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION as of June 30, 2019 and 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 40,764	\$ 66,134
Accounts receivable	1,280	1,755
Deposits and prepaid expenses	40,118	3,598
Total current assets	<u>82,162</u>	<u>71,487</u>
Long-Term Investments		
	<u>12,212,100</u>	<u>12,160,212</u>
Property, Plant and Equipment		
Land	56,000	56,000
Buildings	225,427	225,427
Building improvements and renovations	309,497	309,497
Furniture and equipment	109,109	109,109
	<u>700,033</u>	<u>700,033</u>
Less: accumulated depreciation	(462,554)	(439,012)
Net property, plant and equipment	<u>237,479</u>	<u>261,021</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 12,531,741</u>	<u>\$ 12,492,720</u>
<u>LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS</u>		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ 24,151	\$ 28,810
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions -		
Current operations	183,243	258,468
Invested in plant facilities	237,479	261,021
Board designated funds - endowment	1,965,450	1,955,527
Board designated funds - plant facilities	124,736	119,843
With donor restrictions -		
Donor restricted funds for specific purpose	110,168	-
Endowment funds	2,811,136	2,806,890
Cumulative investment earnings - endowment funds	7,075,378	7,062,161
Total net assets	<u>12,507,590</u>	<u>12,463,910</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS	<u>\$ 12,531,741</u>	<u>\$ 12,492,720</u>

OBERLIN SHANSI DONORS

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The 2019 Fellows at the Shansi Breakfast (top row L to R Emily Peterson, Mackenzie Lew, Le'Priya White, picture of Nikaio Thomashow, Sara Chang, and Sydney Allen; bottom row Kate Little, Emily Eisenstein, and picture of Kiran Melnyk.)

THE 2019 FELLOWS

SYDNEY ALLEN '19, English, *Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

SARA CHANG '19, Neuroscience, *J.F. Oberlin University, Machida, Japan*

EMILY EISENSTEIN '19, Psychology, *J.F. Oberlin University, Machida, Japan*

MACKENZIE LEW '19, History and Comparative American Studies, *Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China*

KATE LITTLE '19, English and Environmental Studies, *Lady Doak College, Madurai, India*

KIRAN MELNYK '17, Environmental Studies, *Jagori Grameen, Rakkar, India*

EMILY PETERSON '19, English and Environmental Studies, *Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia*

NIKAIO "NIKO" THOMASHOW '19, Dance, *Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

LE'PRIYA WHITE '19, Sociology, *Shanxi Agricultural University, Taigu, China*

ACEH ANTHOLOGY

POETRY ABOUT THE DAILY LIFE OF STUDENTS AT SYIAH KUALA UNIVERSITY

DEAR ENGLISH



AN ANTHOLOGY OF STUDENT WRITING FROM SYIAH KUALA UNIVERSITY'S
LANGUAGE CENTER



EDITED BY SYDNEY GARVIS AND PETER D'AURIA



I Am From
By Tyas Dwi Rahayu

I am from fried rice, my father's cooking
From a big family
From the sight of someone going to school with an old bicycle
From frog sounds in our backyard
From the smell of cooking food from my neighborhood
From mother saying "go to bed" at night
On Sunday, from mother saying "please buy salt or sugar in
the market"
From waking up at 6:00 a.m. every morning
I am from my grandmother who loves and carries me
From my lovely sister and spoiled brother
From the family who are always grateful
From the family who carries, loves, supports each other

Excerpt from "I Am From Fried Rice", cover featured to the right

Aceh Fellows Peter D'Auria and Sydney Garvis tasked students with creative writing assignments that they later compiled and published as two volumes. Peter told us "The poems turned out to be fascinating windows into day-to-day life in Aceh, revealing the minutiae of experience in a way that news or travel cannot." And understanding that others lead wildly different lives that are still as densely and richly textured as one's own, he believes, has been an antidote to the unfortunate habit of universalizing his experiences.

I Am From Fried Rice

An Anthology of Student
Writing from Syiah
Kuala University's
Language Program



July 2019



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