

Singapore HeritageFest 2009
“Arte (factually) Speaking” Story Writing Competition
3rd Prize Winner (Upper Primary Category)



Contest ID: 20
Name: Gan Chin Lin
Gender: Female
Age: 10-year-old
NRIC: SXXXX907A
Nationality: Singaporean
School: Pei Hwa Presbyterian Primary School

Artefact: Headless Rider on a Winged Horse Figurine
Museum: National Museum of Singapore

Grandpa's Horse

I stood by the rippling and shining surface of the vast river. A pebble was nestled in my palm. I was sitting by the riverbank, my bare legs dangling in the water. In one fluid movement, I sent the pebble skipping across the surface, making miniature splashes in the water.

The top subject in my mind was my grandfather. He had passed away the day before. His life had evaporated as quickly as the pebble sinking below the surface of the river- without any warning.

Grandfather had taught me many things, which were all about our ancestral homeland-Java.

"We must be proud of our true homeland, Suhato!" He had told me.

"You must keep the Javanese traditions alive. Impart them to your children, just as I am imparting them to you."

I had mastered the art of *Batik*, the *Keris* dagger and horse-riding through him. But he had taught me another special thing-how to make Javanese style figurines.

That was the subject he took the most of his time teaching me. It was tiring and required a lot of patience, and I often grumbled and moaned. But soon, I could deftly arrange a few lumps of clay and shape them into a little figurine.

I took out a figurine of a rider on a winged horse from my grass bag. I had made it myself as a gift to grandpa's spirit. The rider was exactly like him-it was dressed like him, looked like him, and even doing what he loved most, horse-riding. The wings on the horse expressed my hope that grandpa will 'ride' to heaven.

Using my hands, I dug a little hole in the dirt and put in the figure. I buried it and cried out to the heavens, "Grandpa, this is my good-bye present to you. May you have a good life in heaven."

I bowed to the little mound of earth and strained my ears to hear grandpa's hoarse voice, chuckling, replying to me...
(310 words)