

**Singapore HeritageFest 2009**  
**“Arte (factually) Speaking” Story-Writing Competition**  
**Shortlisted Entry (Lower Secondary Category)**



Contest ID: 2  
Name: Tan Lien Ler Shawn  
Gender: Male  
Age: 14-year-old  
NRIC: SXXXX178H  
Nationality: Singaporean  
School: Raffles Institution

Artefact: View of a Tiger in a Cage  
Museum: National Museum of Singapore

Through the eyes of the last tiger

It was not good. The hunters were after me. No matter how I ran, no matter how I stretched every muscle in me, I just could not escape the view of these bloodthirsty hunters. They had ravaged my home, killed every single of my kind. When would they ever stop? I remembered the times before the white man landed on this island, it was just the laws of the jungle, and nothing else ever threatened our existence. Reminiscing about such good times stirred up anger in me and the more I thought about it, the more my thirst for human blood grew. I heard the babble of the hunters, the clang of their weapons, they were near, I had to run - again.

All of a sudden, an uncanny silence replaced the racket. Something was wrong; I treaded carefully, taking unseen traps into consideration. Seeing that things seemed normal, I let down my guard, assuming that everything would be fine. True enough, nothing much happened. Step by step I advanced, in search of prey, for I had not fed for almost a week. I stalked clearings, over hills, but there was no sign of any food. In a desperate attempt, I sniffed the air, picking up the scent of numerous beings - humans. To fill my growling stomach, every step I took was a crucial step. The gambier plantations would be the best place to hunt, as any experienced tiger would testify for. These plantations were an abundant place full of humans, they picked these plants and they would be paid with shiny metal. These round pieces seemed to motivate these humans, and these also seemed to determine these human's authority. The more they had the more authority they had. I could not understand for the only thing in my mind was food.

The right time had come and I prepared to pounce. But I was too late. A net fell on me, capturing me, I knew it, it was all part of the hunters' plan. Two pairs of gleaming eyes stared at me while I struggled around. Their eyes lit up as they saw me, as if I were a great treasure. They put me in a cage. I knew my fate was sealed. Then I was exchanged with those shiny pieces. Only till then I realised my true price. I was equivalent to useless pieces of metal. What a shame! For I was just another hindrance to these human ambitions. I was just to be heritage and these humans' descendants would remember their forefather's tales of great courage in which they slew beasts - in other words, me. For I would be part of their heritage, their history. But I would be exalted too as the last tiger on Singapore island and I remembered. Nothing more, nothing less, for this is the new law of the concrete jungle.

(481 words)