

## Teh Tarik

They have tasted it—  
the nationals;  
have been drinking it—  
the working class, professionals;  
shall be drinking it—  
by young, middle-aged, seniors.  
Thirst quencher with thick froth  
with Roti Canai  
for both the Halal consumers and not  
in a stone's throw Kopi-tiam.  
Pulled black tea,  
milk filtered in an aged gauze,  
pouring in downtown  
and athwart each avenue  
of this Malay peninsula.  
And then  
it travels.  
Commercially  
transporting taste  
and indulgence  
with beans, pearls, pudding  
nata de coco, even coffee jelly  
for Manila's bourgeoisie.

—Pauline Mari Hernando