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# PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(HEALTH AND CULTURE), AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE MINISTRY  
OF CULTURE'S NATIONAL POETRY WRITING COMPETITION IN THE  
INFORMATION DIVISION CONFERENCE ROOM ON FRIDAY  
15 JUNE 1984 AT 3.00 PM

The National Poetry Writing Competition, organised by the Ministry of Culture in the four language streams, has two objectives. Firstly, it celebrates Singapore's 25 years of nation building, and secondly, it serves to enkindle interest in this form of creative writing in the overall context of the Ministry's efforts to promote literature in Singapore.

The Republic's 25th Anniversary is an event of great rejoicing for all Singaporeans. It celebrates our success in nation building and the forging of a cohesive multi-racial society which shares a common destiny. It reminds us that our achievements and progress in all fields of our national endeavours are earned in a hard way and made possible only through the collective efforts of all Singaporeans.

While we rejoice and celebrate the occasion, we should not forget the trials and tribulations that we have gone through in building a nation against seemingly insurmountable odds. It is a time which we should use to pause and reflect on our conditions of living over the past 25 years of self-government, and to relive the vivid memories of our struggles and hardships that precede our progress and prosperity during this short but important period of our history.

Poetry is an artistic but no less potent medium for the expression of ideas and feelings, apart from the pure entertainment and pleasure it gives. Local poets through the beauty of their poetic expressions could help to capture the emotions and feelings of Singaporeans who experience and witness our 25 years of growth or share their experiences, exhilaration and joy in celebrating our 25th Anniversary. The National Poetry Writing Competition provides a good opportunity for Singaporeans to express and record these thoughts and feelings.

Poetry writing has always had a small but devoted following in Singapore. The better known have their own independent published works to their credit while the budding poets and the aspiring find avenue for their occasional poetic efforts in the few local literary journals available. It is hoped that the organising of this Competition would add to the collection of poems reflecting our local environment and stimulate interest in this form of creative writing to make our local literary scene more vibrant and exciting.

On this note, I look forward with keen anticipation to a good response to the Competition, and at the end of it, a good collection of memorable works for Singaporeans to read and enjoy.

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