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## Bukan

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Emha Ainunn Nadjib · *Indonesia*

BUKAN\*

I prefer the shining darkness  
To the dark shine.

As I truly remember my life,  
I know I was born in the island of bukan,  
becoming a citizen of the country of bukan,  
raised by Mom and Dad of bukan.  
At last I left,  
running from bukan to bukan;  
arriving painfully in the forest,  
I pressed my soul for bukan  
and stepped on countless roads for bukan.  
I guessed yes, but bukan,  
I guessed bukan, but bukan,  
I jumped away— avoiding bukan,  
caught by the mouth of bukan.  
Then I prayed to my bukan,  
for finally cursed by bukan,  
I found pieces of my body scattered in the mud  
when I tried to love.  
So just me and bukan, bukan and  
bukan, a blue union of sky and ocean.  
Anxiously, in the center of bukan I pray:

I don't want to want  
I know I long for bukan  
I don't want to govern  
To govern is to be governed  
I don't want to own  
To own is to be owned

I long for the One. I surrender in His grasp,  
hated or maimed or destroyed.

*translated by the poet and Harriet Levin*

\*In Indonesian *bukan* is a particle, used to express no, not, not ever.