

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **New Book Explores Life, Heritage, and Humanity in Verse**

James S. L. Yong's "Rhyme & Reflection in the Rainforest: A Poetry Collection inspired by Life in Sarawak, Malaysia" offers a lyrical journey through Sarawak's Heart and Soul.

KUCHING, SARAWAK – 16 June 2025 – Sarawak-born writer, poet, heritage advocate, and former business consultant James S. L. Yong has released his latest book, "Rhyme & Reflection in the Rainforest" - a vibrant and personal anthology of poems and short reflections that invites readers to rediscover the sights, sounds, stories, and sensibilities of life in Sarawak and beyond.

Grouped under five themes - Kuching Then & Now, Sarawak History & Heritage, Food & Festivals, Worldviews, and Personal Reflections - this richly illustrated collection blends humour, nostalgia, cultural insight, and philosophical pondering into an accessible and engaging read. Most of the artwork is by local artist Gabrielle Lim. From memories of 1960s cinema halls and kopitiam breakfasts to reflections on fake news, kindness, and the nature of truth, Yong's poetry speaks both to his own generation and to younger readers seeking meaning and connection in a fast-changing world.

"I've always loved how poetry can distill complex ideas and emotions into just a few lines," says Yong. "This collection was born from memory, observation, and occasional mischief — but also from a deep sense of place and purpose. Sarawak is both my rainforest and my metaphor."

Yong's writing draws on a lifetime of experiences: a childhood in multicultural Kuching, Sarawak, late teenage years in England, a career spanning technology, management and public sector consulting in Asia, and a passionate commitment to heritage conservation. His influences range from nursery rhymes and Malay pantun to Shakespeare, Seuss and contemporary poets like Pam Ayres and Brian Bilston.

Although this is his first solo poetry collection, Yong is no stranger to authorship. He previously published "E-Government in Asia" (2003 & 2005), co-authored three genealogical monographs, and more recently, "Padungan: History and Humanity in a Heritage Precinct of Kuching, Sarawak" (2023).

"Rhyme & Reflection in the Rainforest" is available now in select outlets in Sarawak and Singapore, and its launch is timed to coincide with the upcoming 'Rainforest World Music

Festival 2025' and other cultural events. A number of private companies, NGOs and individuals have supported the creation of this book.

### **About the Author**

James S. L. Yong is a Kuching-born writer, poet, business consultant, and heritage advocate. Educated in Sarawak and the UK, he has spent over 30 years in the public and private sectors across ASEAN. He served as President of the Sarawak Heritage Society (2020–2022) and currently sits on the Sarawak Heritage Council. He is also the founder of the popular Facebook group 'Kuching – Then and Now' (now with about 120,000 followers).

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