Broken Plates
(from A. Samad Said’s “Pinggan Retak”)

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Her love changed between the rows
of rubber trees, along the fringes
of mushroom caps,
only to be revived by the thorns
of the touch-me-not
and evening rain.

Happily she ran with the geese,
catching the blue-crowned parrot
unaware at the edge of the anthill—
then uplifted, with the scattering of wings,
she gazes at the beauty
of the horizon at dawn.

*Bunga telur* and anklets
remain below the mosquito-net
which seems to move and even blink:
between two small islands
his boat overturned
in the swell of the scaly, green sea.

After love’s failure, she asks:
wave-scented coves,
lace-bordered cushions,
where have my hair-pins gone?
Surely many things remain unknowable
to the oblivious heart,

but to not understand oneself
results in this (a forlorn silence

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strangles oneself). Chastise yourself
and then only hope:
broken plates still remain,
now serve your memories on them.
AK Ramanujan

His words walk tightrope
above a lake, transparent to its depths,

and with just a glint of sunlight
shadows fall on frosted glass.