

The Return of My Dreams by Yulia Endang
Performed as part of the [Slam Poetry Festival Singapore \(2021\)](#).
Time code [1:12:44] — [1:14:50]

1. In your opinion, what is this poem about?

I think it's about the speaker's dream to pursue further education. This dream has sparked again, despite being set aside for some time because of circumstances. She doesn't say what these these circumstances are but I think it is related to finances and having to work, maybe to support her family or her dreams of further education.

2. What do you think the speaker is feeling? What emotions did you hear in the speaker's voice?

She sounds confident and bold, as if she has made up her mind. It doesn't matter that people tell her she'll "end up in the kitchen." It doesn't matter that there are all these barriers. She will achieve her dream.

3. Listen to the poem again. Were there any phrases or lines that caught your attention because of the way they sounded?

"You will end up in the kitchen," you said. / But I want to chase my dream," I said. / Your time will be wasted, you needn't all that," you said. / Sorry, but I'm a stubborn person, I have to say. " This part caught my attention because it sounded like a conversation between the speaker and someone else. I wonder who the second voice belongs to?

4. If you were to visualise this poem, what images come to mind?

The speaker's gestures as she performs the poem comes to mind. How she mimics holding a book up in one hand while cooking with the other.

5. Is there a dream (or interest, or hobby) that you once had, that you hope you can return to at this point in your life?

The university I went to had a woodshop where students could come in and just work on independent projects. I particularly enjoyed carving bowls on the lathe. Alas, it's too expensive a hobby too keep up in Singapore!

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6. Have you had to sacrifice something important to you? What influenced your decision to make that sacrifice?

I think we all make small sacrifices everyday. Sometimes I sacrifice a bit of alone time to care for a loved one; a bit of extra cash for extra rest; a bit of play to take care of my health. All of these things are important to me, but I think it's helpful to allow my priorities to shift everyday, depending on what I need or what I can give.

7. At the end of the piece, Yulia Endang writes: "I will keep on fighting / Because I know / It is not just about me and my dreams / But about them and their dreams too." Whose dreams do you think Yulia Endang is referring to in the last line? Why do you think their dreams inspire her to keep fighting?

I think she is referring to other women who want to pursue further education but face financial, social, or other circumstantial barriers. I think she is referring to women specifically because the opposing voice in the beginning of the poem says "you'll end up in the kitchen," which is a very gendered statement.

8. Think of your own hopes and dreams – what keeps them alive, and who are they for?

Maybe it's selfish, but my hopes and dreams are just for myself. And I would be very unwilling to lay my hopes and dreams for someone/something else. I think celebrating the mini-milestones along the way makes a big dream feel more achievable.