

The Bot. Series

VADO (*Vahid Payman*)

The following comes from the catalogue for Vahid Payman's first exhibition, at Melbourne's Botanical Gardens in December 1999.

In the major cities of this big brown body of land, Botanical Gardens have played a crucial civic and spiritual role. As a green oasis in the midst of steel structures, as a sanctuary far from the madding crowd, as a haven in which to contemplate, 'the Bot.' (as it is affectionately known) is unsurpassed.

I first became aware of the Bots' delights in my final year of school when, as senior students, we were granted permission by our headmaster to enter its grounds during lunchtime. Within its walls, my harassed soul often found calm and comfort. A few precious moments allowed me to discard the soiled garment of my psyche for a fragrantly fresh new attire. The Bot's spring and autumn colours would reawaken my parched and frozen senses. It was here that I fell in love and found my True Beloved.

Like the garden of our hearts, the Bot is a place of love - love of God, love of spouse and family, love of humanity and of nature.

Ever since that time, I have always returned to the Bot. During dark nights of the soul, or early mornings of gladness, I have returned to refill my cup and to "attain that share of the flood of grace which God poureth forth" for me.

We have to cherish and adore our Bot. For close to its precincts are ominous symbols of an unhappy civilization. Shrines of death, towers of greed, and coliseums of violence lie on the margins of its happy landscape, forever intruding upon its otherwise serene centre. Like the eye of a cyclone, the Bot. is a point of stillness in an unceasing revolution of joggers, cars, and careers.

Let us make sure that the gardens of our hearts turn not into Gethsemanes of betrayal, but rather into Edens of purity and Ridvans of kindness and radiance, that therein, hyacinths and myrtles of wisdom continually spring forth fresh and green, and nightingales of holiness eternally sing their sweet melodies.

Far right : VADO, "Marvellous Bot".

