

Singapore men's Bible study

by [Steven Peterson](#) in the [July 17, 2019](#) issue

We take our shoes off, leave them by the door,  
And sit in batik shirts and khaki shorts  
In Paul's colonial house in Singapore.

These bungalows, called "black and whites"—the sorts  
In travel ads: black timbered, whitewashed walled—  
Raise ghosts of Empire dealing imports/exports.

Tonight we expat businessmen sit sprawled  
In wicker chairs along Paul's wicker bar  
Because a Bible verse left us appalled.

It's this: "Tomorrow you will travel far  
To buy and sell and count your business gains  
But soon you'll vanish like a falling star."

Outside Paul's house the pelting tropic rains  
Return to bring the heavy jungle scent  
Of flowers rotting down to their remains

Repeating, with our beers, what that verse meant.