



out on the floor, Yatim perches close by, simply observing, unmoved by the carnage. This act of violence seems wholly natural, in order to make room for other puppets, other crows, other beings.

In the midst of dissonant rumbling strings and the engulfing shadowy costumes – designed by MAX.TAN – the darkness of *Peepbird* is inescapable. In another review of *Peepbird* written by Nabilah Said for ArtsEquator, she confesses a desire for [celebration and colour](#), something effervescent to mark the (tentative) return of live performance. A part of me shares her desire, but another part of me is grateful for *Peepbird*'s honest reflection of this murky period, how it materialises the tangle of thoughts and emotions we have collectively felt for months as livelihoods and plans decay right in front of our eyes, as we are helpless to do anything to stop it. The image of decay is deeply embedded in *Peepbird*, though it is not as simple as dust to dust — it is inextricable from metamorphosis. Kwek's own metamorphosis mirrors how my body reactivates and reorients itself as I come to be in the presence of live performance again. I find myself craning closer to the stage to be nearer to the electric energy of living bodies moving other bodies.

At the end of the play, Toh emerges from the backstage now draped in white feathers. It is a stark contrast to her previous self, which was covered entirely in black. Unlike Kwek's transformation, I am not privy to Toh's process; it seems almost like magic the way she disappears only to reappear completely changed. The only constant throughout the second half of the play is the crow-puppet, previously eviscerated by Toh, swept under the gunny sacks.

There is something both hopeful and devastating in what I witnessed. In *Peepbird*, the process of transformation is necessarily violent. A previous reality has to be ruptured in order to make room for a new one. I think of words conjured by Rebecca Solnit in *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*: "The early stages of change or cure may mimic deterioration. Cut a chrysalis open, and you will find a rotting caterpillar... the process of transformation consists almost entirely of decay". *Peepbird* cuts right into the chrysalis of whatever this current time is, and made a space for me to confront this strange new world as it swivels, in all its decays and joys.