

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.