

Noel Christian A. Moratilla*

Ode to Self as Passenger

Without your knowing,
the world stares at you
as the jeepney tries to weave its
way through the maze.

 Outside,
the circuitous evening
Is pummeled hard by rain

You glance at your watch,
wanting to know how far
you've rewound the day as
the old driver twiddles thumbs
while dreaming of
a green light
 or the next stop.

And as you alight
upon reaching your end of the trek
everyone's heart eagerly,
 rather painfully,
ambles away with you.

In Medias Res

Ghosts fade behind the waves
Languishing in the realm
Of runic twilight,
Raising forgotten martyrs
Inhuned once in that abyss.
Arcane skulls & whatnot are
Removed from innominate graves.
Everywhere, bullets dart like
Spears launched
Into kingdoms above to fell
God & beast, ruler & rogue as
Noon heat whets the heart's unyielding thirst.

(This poem was written in the wake of the "Hello Garci" scandal, 2005.)

Solitude

Night hoisted upon fingers and roots.

- Neruda

"The Heights of Macchu Picchu"

Like shadows, stars
indwell this evening
by their lonesome. Eyes
doting on a candle flame
mirror a lost love's
semiotic achings.

The wind retraces
this room's claustral sadness.
The years past, lurking
behind its threadbare curtains.

Beer bottles & woodenware,
cockled photographs
pose plaintively on
the veneered table.
On the window sill,
passions scrawled & half-lit.

Desires bleed into nowhere
like the tides nearby—
 angry livid pulsing—
and fester in receding light
while strains of distant fowls
gather into the womb
of this most eager nighttime.
Already, each other's name

palls upon us like
some old, insipid tale: the logic too
oblique:

soon eliding our tongues.

***Noel Christian A. Moratilla** is Assistant Professor at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines-Diliman. He also serves as the Asian Center Coordinator for the PhD Philippine Studies Tri-College Program. His current research interests include social movements, critical humanities, and critical pedagogy. His papers have been published in national and international journals, and some his poems have appeared in Asian Studies Journal and Voice & Verse Poetry Magazine.