



Mariel Alonzo

Pabitin

In the dream, she
was nailed on over-
lapping crosses

of bamboo slats.
Clothed in colorful
crepe paper strips

like Tubbataha ran
aground by ships. Raised
and lowered, so many

hands grabbing for
her consolation
prizes. They regrow so

fast after being
plucked. She envied
the ransacked clay pot.

Shivered as they sang
happy birthday, cake
blown apart. Cold



POETRY

spaghetti eaten
with bare fingers. Noodle
strands braided in

their mouths, sucked
off-white like a termite
queen's bloated meat

staining the gums
of her children
who have already begun

to teeth, about to lick
her clean. Soon they will
let her go fully

like a girl with
a sprain blooming
in a stampede.



touchingthefloor

Hijacked, Lazarus wakes from the alarm
of a baby monitor. Eyelids like roll up doors
of piracy dens raided the night before.
A djembe beats against her godless temples
drumhead made from the x-ray film of her father's
chest, oil from nail-bitten fingertips building
into brittle clouds that gave his weather and
weathering. Flash and tremble of a carotid,
she watched his phlegm ooze out the speakers'
holes, tiptoeing up the ankles of her wooden bed
like a parade of termites. She ignores this
as her body continues its steady unhardening—
rigor mortis, sleep crust, erection, drool. Stiff
neck where her father hand-carved ten fingers
yet now could barely lift needles, mouthlessly
fed sugar. His gardens of gethsemane uprooted
by plastic tubes, petals once spun mercifully inside
a centrifuge. He speaks in a language only infestations
know, and she could only mishear—*this is my last
warming*. If only she could turn the knob
tune in on every station long enough to steal
the scents of all those bodies afloat in floods,



POETRY

keep it in one nostril. Steal the sounds of lotto receipts crunching and unpressed car horns. Steal the dry and moist of children's tongues buried in collapsed elementary schools, cradling leftover wing bones in a dumpsite. Make a bouillon cube out of it. Steal the world's one degree Celsius jam it here in her crispy girl-cock, if only to feel warmth. Roars of her name, explicit as a coral bleached. *Blessed are those who stay.* She gags her face into the overused blanket, traces its weaving. Her salted knees pull up, legs a stoup where a hitman once washed his hands, asked for forgiveness. She hears the retching the clang of metal the almost-sirens. Listening to seconds pass, her palms pour their batter into her eyes and ears. Maybe without hands to block even time grows nameless. Beside her, a livestream of pixels recreates an old man's face. Tear-streaks like smoke rising from the squatters, a vandalism that could've read *Believe me* if seen. Allow this 3:00 to pray over them—these feet that have forgotten how to stand, may they walk on water.



Igat

(*ee-gaht*)

n. eel, pricke teaser

I outgrew my electricity, shed my *ilaw*
ng tahanan. As if indebted to my
debts, they bribed me with everything
that exists because of their light.

Fed on my blackout like eyes
of children alone in their dark rooms.

They held me hostage with prayers
of thy wombs but my only fruit
is sliced and dipped in shrimp paste
and vinegar. This was enough.

I remember my first, offered by the serpent
but I ate it instead. Hungry for white meat

Bakunawa slithered down and stayed
undigested between my legs. As if
the cliff jumped off my nude heels
and I wet the rain and I hurt earthquakes

with paddings and drowned the Great
Flood with whore-moans, never asking

to be let in on the ark's dirty secret,
they are afraid. Cleavage, navel, thighs

so exposed. Set fire to my petroleum-jellied
mouths please, while I writhe waiting

for my charcoal bed to deflower
completely, rambos fanning it red. Its hiss
and crackle closest thing to consent