

**Alfred A. Yuson** \Swag and Other Poems

# Swag

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Swag. That's what she had.  
Spunk as well. And funk.  
When she deigned to enter  
the haunted mansion, those  
were what she glad-handed.  
It was enough for all spooks  
to cower in nervous laughter.  
And hurl the spoiled foie gras  
on her bodice, cum cleavage.  
That didn't make her lose  
her swag, rather ratchet  
it higher than the usual.  
Meant that no hatchet man  
would ever have her sign  
up for any me-too list.  
Submission wasn't her brag.  
Whatever ogres offered  
as perks for higher couture,  
she declined with rag and bone  
of resolve. Rapture was all her own,  
accented by charming vocal fry.  
And when she whirled about  
in peripheral comeuppance,  
the scythes of grim tailors  
descended in resignation.

The nation was never at fault,  
even when it was in drag.  
Ghouls of gender sensitivity  
howled at covert democracy,  
if pejorative of human rights.  
“Civilize ’em with a Krag!”  
Tchotchkes her body dragged  
turned wardrobe malfunction  
into nudity with salted egg.  
Chemical warfare sans sanctions  
meant she stayed morally fit  
while the house burned down—  
the flames fascistic as to choice  
of timber, post or lintel, floors  
for incineration. And she smiled  
as a witch of no rancor, serving  
the prompt for a generation’s rose  
to bloom beyond the selfie, doufie,  
jump shot and wacky group pose.  
In brief, with her do-good swag.  
As lover, embers of her sainthood  
red-flagged today’s absurdities  
with the ease of prayer wheels  
circling along the shag of forever.

# Quasi-rap

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The synopsis is all about hypnosis,  
a sick series of ellipses, and what elapses  
fries our synapses, shithole country collapses,  
amidst so many corpses, cuz dungface decrees  
that what he erases  
are all perils from the shapes  
of syringes. Yet no one cringes.

No one, no one, as I imagine.  
In truth, the villains' engine  
revs and ratchets up inclines  
of propaganda a la Fata Morgana,  
fat and sanguine, forsooth, forsooth,  
the djinns and juju are spoiled rotten.  
Only begotten daughter now forsaken.  
So craven the truth of sins, sins, sins.

Original, venial, mortal, and fake.  
Rock 'n roll, rattle and shake.  
A clambake of mandrake  
roots, woot woot, toot the horn  
and wake the woken, spoken  
in England Shakespearian—  
O lady of the lake, fake, fake!  
Cross-dressing in liquid, limpid,  
but with no thirst to slake. Forlorn.  
Lovelorn. Damp pages all torn.

# “I Will Slap Her!”

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Duterte to Callamard: “If you investigate me, I will slap you.”

President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to slap United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur Agnes Callamard if she would investigate him for the alleged extrajudicial killings in the country.

—Headline and lead, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 10, 2017

God put me here.  
I was elected by a nation.  
My people like me tough.  
I'm a brave man  
who won't allow any woman,  
much less a white one  
who looks undernourished  
to come visit and ask  
about all the killings  
I've ordered and cheered on.  
By God, I will slap her.  
Thank goodness my soldiers  
will only shoot our own  
women in their vaginas  
when they pretend to be warriors.  
But a white woman  
who tries to shame me?  
Why, I will slap her.  
so her face gains nourishment.  
And all my countrymen  
who have been fooled by me

or are fools like me  
will cheer me on.  
They can be sure  
that I'm a brave man  
when I smack my palm  
on the white woman's  
undernourished face.  
That is how to be tough  
and great as a president.  
After all, the act is familiar  
to everyone who sees  
bad women slapping  
good women on TV  
and movies, and good women  
also slapping bad women.  
Mothers slap daughters,  
and sometimes fathers  
also slap bad daughters.  
While good daughters

are also slapped by rapists,  
mayors, priests, drug lords.  
It all makes for good drama.  
So everyone will enjoy  
seeing a great president,  
a tough and brave president,  
slapping a bad white woman.  
It will be unique as soap opera.  
Oh, I will slap her, slap her hard  
on national TV. And later  
they'll make a movie  
and many monuments  
of me as the tough hero,  
the great president  
who urged on the deaths  
of many young boys  
that their mothers could do  
no more than weep—  
unless they wanted

to pretend to be warriors,  
in which case, my soldiers  
will shoot them in their vaginas.  
But whether she's a mother  
or a daughter or sister  
or white or black woman,  
if she tries to shame me,  
why, I will slap her.  
I'm a tough, brave man.  
By God I will slap her.  
I will even slap her so hard  
in her undernourished vagina.  
That's how I'll get my kinky kicks  
as a tough, brave president  
that the whole world can cheer  
as a real man.