

Lawrence Lacambra Ypil \In The Time It Takes

In the Time It Takes

In the time it takes for the shadow of the world
to reach the shadow of the knee
of the woman sitting in the park under a tree

a photograph is developed.

Drip, drip, splash.

Then alright.

Then a dry mount

against the *wet, wet* grass.

When the city's architects asked what could be done with the past,
they didn't anticipate glass. They believed the ocean
with its endless shimmer of always would make the dame denizens
of the city sick from squinting at the sea.

What reprieve the streets could be,

what rain falling endlessly from the eaves of shophouses

as a line of trees

becomes that token gesture nature makes to signify an elsewhere here
where a woman slowly rises to become the shadow of a shadow of me.

The Nature of a City

The nature of a city is that it is built for someone else. Otherwise, a covenant. Otherwise, a show. A script was written for the hero but only on the premise that after a long bout of illness, he would be willing to cut the cost and be someone else. Four men did not equal four men unless the last one standing was laughing. As on a church ceiling, five devils flicked their tails snickering against the sun while a god sat on his throne and by the gesture of his right hand extolled the virtues of humanity's diminishment. Outside, the bazaars gave and gave but there was not enough space for: hemp, rope, basket, stone, fruit, market, screw, driver, cabinet, glow. There were toys peddled on the streets where you pulled and pulled that monkey off the self, and it climbed without reaching anywhere other than itself.

The History of Towns Is Always the History of Looking Back

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The history of looking back

Where is the bell tower?
There is a tree and it still stands.

A family is only as good as the father
who is gone. A brother

with a son. A daughter who is only
as good as a vase of roses

which meant *very* good.

I never lived to see—
which did not mean that I had died

before the city had a train
that would have allowed me

to cross the length of an island
and stare at the sea

but there, there I stood.