

PAOLO MANALO
University of the Philippines-Diliman
jctoledo@up.edu.ph

It Really Hurts

1. It Really Hurts But Make It Thomas Hardy

Your body mine, its sounds and smells
While your heart belongs to someone else.
Accept: no “we”, no “us”, no “ours”
But live *we* do in stolen hours.
 To love like this, the heart asserts,
 Is true, yet why? it really hurts.

2. It Really Hurts But Make It Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop Kabet—
She kindly stopped for me—
But my Kumander caught Ourselves
And said “Makakati!”

**Philip Larkin Watches
Asianovelas from Hull**

for Louie Jon Sanchez

Shippers move from world to world
Say those BrightWin stans that were once Kimerald.
Their latest report on fandom weather:
Ships will sail to continue the search
Whether The Two of Us or 2gether,
The key is in the merch.

Sana All

At twelve he was his father's Oracle of Delphi
While beaten senseless and thought he would die

Would say things like *It is certain*, a Magic 8-Ball
Whose truth is shaken from alcohol and dye,

And in this state *Signs point to yes* he cannot lie
Although from time to time would whisper *Sana all*.

* * *

He knew he was a witch trapped in a man's body,
Which might explain the broom but not the hoodie
He always wore. Where was the pointy hat, the cowl
For cosplay? His black cat was moody

And left. For a familiar: the stuffed chickadee
Souvenir from Maine with a note from Dad: *Sana owl*.

* * *

If Karma delivers via Grab or Uber
(Send fastfood to our oppressors to say *Game Over*
"For fried food comes before the fall...")
As unbribable riders you can't outmaneuver,
Bulletproof in battle-ready hauberks,
Let our response be: *Sana all*.

* * *

Trapped with you in the sudden downpour
Made worse by a bad rendition of "Versace on the Floor"
That left a sound-stain on my soul.
"You can't go back to how it was before,
That kiss was just a kiss and nothing more,"
Quoth the Raven, *Sanaol*.

**From *The Practical*
*Barlaam and Josaphat***

The travelling pain in your body
Like a ball in a pachinko.
The voice under the bodhi:
“Use Salonpas and Katinko.”

PAOLO MANALO is the author of the poetry collections: *Happily Ever Ek-ek* (Gacha Press, 2019) and *Jolography Retconned* (University of the Philippines Press, 2020). He is featured in Agnes Lam’s critical study *Becoming Poets: The Asian English Experience* (2014). He teaches English, literature, and creative writing at the University of the Philippines, Diliman