

1. **PRAYER/OFFERING TO THE BABAYLAN* AND
THE BINUKOT****

*Babaylan. Priestess.
She worships with ritual,
rhythm in her feet,
voice soaring to the heavens.*

*Binukot. Storyteller.
Once chosen,
she is shielded from the sun,
her soles forbidden to touch
the ground.
Yet when she speaks,
all listen to the story
she tells.*

*I start my journey with you,
with wisdom and strength
for even as women fight for words their own
a thousand stories shall be told.*

Joi Barrios

* *babaylan* — priestess in pre-colonial Philippines.
***binukot* — storyteller from pre-colonial Philippines; chosen at an early age, she is not allowed to go out of the house or to walk on the ground.

2. **THE ILUSTRADO'S SISTER**

*She stayed at home.
The ilustrado, the enlightened
left for Spain, for Europe, for the world.*

*She stayed at home.
The ilustrado, the enlightened
had secret meetings, wrote brilliant essays.
They had the La Solidaridad.*

*She stayed at home.
For who has ever heard
of a woman going abroad
to study medicine or law?*

*She stayed at home.
Perhaps she did embroidery,
using her own hair as thread.
Perhaps she hovered over the stove,
cooking cow's tripe and pig's blood.*

*She stayed at home.
And yet perhaps,
when they asked her to join the revolution
she cut her arm and signed her name
a deep, deep red.*

Joi Barrios

3. **DAMAS DE NOCHE**

Damas de Noche
Women of the Night.
Mujer indigena. Puta.
When one is branded as such,
one goes to the prison boxes of the guardia civil.

But then came the revolution.
And the Americans.
Whorehouses became official;
for officers, of course,
neon signs,
running lights forming rectangle shapes
new prison boxes
for the women of the night.

Joi Barrios