

*To Rosario, Dead from Abuse*

Would you were my chickling  
sheltered  
and I were your motherhen  
cackling protest  
against anyone who  
touched you  
Would you were the beehive  
I had gathered  
and I were the bee  
chasing after  
the fleeing  
scoundrels  
Or else lightning  
sending heavy rain  
striking  
deploring  
the swinish foreigner  
But —  
in my blindness  
I saw you not  
while I went back and forth:  
as expert, I didn't read  
about you in documents and books;  
in church, I didn't feel you  
in the scent of candles and incense;  
nor heard your plight in the speeches  
and promises of political leaders.  
Daughter, you are thorn  
that bruised  
the hidden face  
of the starving masses;  
We are Judas

repentant with the rope  
over the dollar payment  
for the vibrator stuck  
in your puerile flesh.

*Ruby Palma-Beltran*

(Translated by Jenny Llaguno from the original “Kay Rosario  
na Namatay sa Isang Pang-aabuso”.)