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**WE'RE BOTH CRAZY, SO YOU'RE NOT RIDICULOUS**

Noons are like dried fish frying in the flat below.  
Love I learned from frying.  
Drifting up, vinegar and chili on a woman's lips,  
the laundry pile, the smell of sausages.  
In the coldness of the kitchen sink, a plea:  
the bottoms of the pans are black.

Noon is the kiss of bottled spice sitting it out on a rack alone,  
a kiss Miguel did not steal at Bhima's in Ubud last month.  
You blew that kiss.  
In the room, the plants potted, in a row, in need of water;  
the TV, a cable; the phone, a call.  
Your kiss is x x x because you're tall and lean  
and away with the arts.

'We're both crazy, so you're not ridiculous,' was all  
we could muster as words of endearment.  
The stony garuda of happiness, still exquisite,  
mute, is poised along the airport road  
where the garden of sweet nothings swelters in the heat.

Nothing is forbidden, the sign says.

We flew to cover the distance between us.  
In separate time zones we fell.  
Poor love. You shatter in the south;

but the noon will pass into night, the frying  
cease, and plastic stars out of storage will shimmer again.

Oh, yes, because you have to have her in your arms to know  
it's me. Sayang, kasih sayang.

The music of the moment sighs to a stop.

Stuck since noon, the goldfish quivers for you.

TO A MUSE

Robber of cloudless sleep,  
order the moon beyond these windows  
hold hostage the night entrapped  
in thoughts of you.  
Be rude; do not reason with them;  
they panic like words that flee the endless  
junctures of containment and release. In your hands,  
not so much the weapon but the threat of love,  
elusive, brief, a leap across  
the narrow ledge of my expectancy.  
Yield, identify yourself;  
no stolen presence here to hold,  
only the waking of time, of place,  
naming a loss that never was.

IN CUBAO

Ukay lang, okay na.

Like you,  
I settle for discards,  
living off the glory of someone's  
yesterday. Who can  
resist the racks  
of clothes, of shoes, of bags?  
Since when did the present matter?  
Enough is plenty here; besides,  
the fun's in the find.  
Open the boxes. I lose  
Poise among the new arrival. No, you say,  
enjoy the old stock that's on sale, first hand.

## AMERICAN DREAM, 1960s

As soon as the American neighbors left, we were at the pit inspecting:

we poked at open tins of Spam  
and Spilled V-8s; what was a neat supply  
of Coke and Whitman's mints; there was  
a drinking glass, a jar  
still full of fruit preserves;  
we tried the bunch  
of keys on locks, the leather purse  
for bills; we checked the shoes for size,  
the clothes, the smell  
of washing powder;  
we left untouched the remnant  
of a doctor set, the blonde head  
of a doll; but saved the line of comic books  
from Marvel and the DC superstars.

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