

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved school shirt and dark shorts, is sitting cross-legged on a white sack. He is intently reading an open book held in his hands. The sack he sits on has some faint, partially legible text, including the word "Reso" and "Ret". The background is a narrow alleyway with a wall on the right that has peeling blue and white paint. To the left, there is a doorway or window with a red frame and some red fabric hanging nearby. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights, suggesting an outdoor or semi-outdoor setting.

The Connoisseur of Alleys

Eileen R. Tabios

THE CONNOISSEUR OF ALLEYS

BY EILEEN R. TABIOS

POETRY

After The Egyptians Determined The Shape of the World is a Circle, 1996
Beyond Life Sentences, 1998
The Empty Flagpole (CD with guest artist Mei-mei Berssenbrugge), 2000
Ecstatic Mutations, 2001 (with short stories and essays)
Reproductions of The Empty Flagpole, 2002
Enheduanna in the 21st Century, 2002
There, Where the Pages Would End, 2003
Menage a Trois With the 21st Century, 2004
Crucial Bliss Epilogues, 2004
The Estrus Gaze(s), 2005
SONGS OF THE COLON, 2005
POST BLING BLING, 2005
I Take Thee, English, For My Beloved, 2005
The Secret Lives of Punctuations, Vol. I, 2006
Dredging for Atlantis, 2006
It's Curtains, 2006
SILENCES: The Autobiography of Loss, 2007
The Singer and Others: Flamenco Hay(na)ku, 2007
The Light Sang As It Left Your Eyes: Our Autobiography, 2007
NOTA BENE EISWEIN, 2009
Footnotes to Algebra: Uncollected Poems 1995-2009, 2009
Roman Holiday, 2010
THE THORN ROSARY: Selected Prose Poems and New 1998-2010, 2010
the relational elations of ORPHANED ALGEBRA (with *j/j hastain*), 2012
5 Shades of Gray, 2012
THE AWAKENING: A Long Poem Triptych & A Poetics Fragment, 2013
147 MILLION ORPHANS (MMXI-MML), 2014
44 RESURRECTIONS, 2014
SUN STIGMATA (Sculpture Poems), 2014
I FORGOT LIGHT BURNS, 2015
DUENDE IN THE ALLEYS, 2015
INVENT(ST)ORY: SELECTED CATALOG POEMS & NEW (1996-2015), 2015
THE CONNOISSEUR OF ALLEYS, 2016
Among the Princes of Wall Street, the Persistence of Winter, 2016
The Gilded Age of Kickstarters, 2016
THE OPPOSITE OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA: Prime's Anti-Autobiography, 2016
AMNESIA: Somebody's Memoir, 2016

FICTION

Behind The Blue Canvas, 2004
SILK EGG: Collected Novels 2009-2009, 2011

PROSE COLLECTIONS

Black Lightning, 1998 (poetry essays/interviews)
My Romance, 2002 (art essays with poems)
The Blind Chatelaine's Keys, 2008 (biography with haybun)
AGAINST MISANTHROPY: A Life in Poetry (2015-2005), 2015



THE CONNOISSEUR OF ALLEYS

Eileen R. Tabios

Marsh Hawk Press, 2016



Copyright © 2016 by Eileen R. Tabios

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including printing, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Marsh Hawk Press books are published by Poetry Mailing List, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation under section 501 (c) 3 United States Internal Revenue Code.

Book Design: Michelle Bautista
Front Cover Photograph and Back Cover Painting by Advaita Patel
Text set in Arial/10pt; Century Gothic/14pt

Publication of this book was supported by Oenophiles For Poetry. Additional support was provided through a grant from the Community of Literary Magazines through the New York State Council on the Arts.

ISBN: 9780996427517

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Tabios, Eileen, author.

Title: The connoisseur of alleys / Eileen R. Tabios.

Description: East Rockaway : Marsh Hawk Press, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015041005 | ISBN 9780996427517 (pbk.)

Classification: LCC PS3570.A234 A6 2016 | DDC 811/.54--dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015041005>



Marsh Hawk Press
P.O. Box 206
East Rockaway, NY 11518-0206
www.marshhawkpress.org

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

By Vince Gotera 9

POEMS THROUGH THE POEMS

After The Egyptians Determined The Shape of the World is a Circle 15

Beyond Life Sentences 19

Ecstatic Mutations 22

Reproductions of The Empty Flagpole 24

Enheduanna in the 21st Century 27

There, Where the Pages Would End 31

Ménage à trois With the 21st Century 33

Crucial Bliss Epilogues 36

Songs of the Colon / The Estrus Gaze(s) 38

Post Bling Bling 40

I Take Thee, English, For My Beloved 43

The Secret Lives of Punctuations 45

Dredging for Atlantis 47

It's Curtains 49

Silences: The Autobiography of Loss 51

The Singer and Others: Flamenco! 53

The Light Sang As It Left Your Eyes 55

Nota Bene Eiswein 58

Footnotes to Algebra 61

Roman Holiday 64

The Thorn Rosary 67

the relational elations of ORPHANED ALGEBRA 70

5 Shades of Gray 73

The Awakening 77

147 Million Orphans 80

Sun Stigmata 83

PROCESS AND POETICS

Murder, Death and Resurrections: A Poetry Generator 89

Acknowledgements 94

About the Poet 95

For Poets Who Serve(d) as Poet-Editors

including but not limited to

Gemino Abad, William Allegrezza, Alan Baker, Anny Ballardini, Tom Beckett, Hugh Behm-Steinberg, Lynn Behrendt, Anselm Berrigan, John Bloomberg-Rissman, Allen Bramhall, Kristy Bowen, Michael Broder, Regie Cabico, Garrett Caples, Nick Carbo, Tina Chang, Billie Chernicoff, Brian Clements, Shanna Compton, Del Ray Cross, Rachelle Cruz, Faye Cura, Catherine Daly, Peter Davis, Michelle Detorie, Ruel S. de Vera, Janine Dimaranan, Elaine Equi, Raymond Farr, Thomas Fink, Luis Francia, Tony Frazer, Joanna Furhman, Eric Gamalinda, Peter Ganick, Susana Gardner, Geoffrey Gatza, Tim Gaze, Jesse Glass, Anne Gorrick, Vince Gotera, Reme Grefalda, Michael Gullickson, Jessica Hagedorn, Pamela Hart, Crag Hill, Aileen Ibardaloza, Luisa A. Igloria, Roseli Ilano, Halvard Johnson, Andrew Joron, Birgitta Jonsdottir, Marilyn Kallett, Vincent Katz, Jukka-Pekka Kervinen, Burt Kimmelman, Amy King, Mark Lamoreaux, Mandy Laughtland, Aaron Lee, Janice Lee, Michael Leong, Susan Lewis, Reb Livingston, Dana Teen Lomax, Edwin Lozada, Joey Madia, D Hideo Maruyama, Sandy McIntosh, rob mclennan, Didi Menendez, Edric Mesmer, Robert Murphy, Sheila Murphy, Alec Newman, lars palm, Alvin Pang, Tamas Panitz, Cati Porter, Ernesto Priego, Caleb Puckett, Sam Rasnake, Barbara Jane Reyes, Mg Roberts, Rena Rosenwasser, Bino A. Realuyo, Marthe Reed, Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino, Nadine Sarreal, Susan Schultz, Jared Schickling, Zvi Sesling, Lolan Buhain Sevilla, Ravi Shankar, Jerrold Shiroma, Melissa Sipin, Jessica Smith, Felino A. Soriano, Leny Strobel, Ramon C. Sunico, Todd Swift, Elizabeth Treadwell, Jean Vengua, Dan Waber, M.L. Weber, Ian Whistle, Mark Young, Stephanie Young, Timothy Yu, and Alfred A. Yuson



Foreword

I forgot

That phrase appears over and over like a litany in *The Connoisseur of Alleys*, beginning every sentence in this bravura collection by Eileen R. Tabios.

I forgot
I forgot
I forgot

To forget, extinction of memory, coupled with the first person pronoun. It is the self that forgets. The speaker forgets. Mind, body, and soul. The entire being forgets. A fact of life, a law of the universe, the inevitability of entropy.

After saying "I forgot," to name what one forgot is immediately a contradiction. A lie. But an artistic one. An artful one. A lie in art, and thus a truth. Because art by its very nature is always a contradiction. A lie but nonetheless Truth with a big T.

As Walt Whitman wrote, "Do I *contradict* myself? Very well, then I *contradict* myself, I *am large*, I contain multitudes." The possibility of order contained within the self, the opposite of entropy.

Here is an excerpt from the poetry in this book, chosen at random, literally picked out by riffling through the pages and pointing with my finger.

I forgot a plea to be buried under a canopy of red roses.... I forgot
Pygmalion sculpted himself into an embrace, and used stone
in hopes the hold would never break.... I forgot the brutality of
cracked skies captured by ancient warriors with "lightning marks"
as long grooves along the wooden shafts of their arrows....

Such vaunted forgettings are a beautiful ordering and re-ordering in the face of, despite, entropy and death. They remind us ineffably of what it means to be alive, to be human.



Eileen R. Tabios is arguably the most prolific and inventive experimental writer in the U.S. The debut of the online poetry journal *h&* <handandpoetry.blogspot.com> in April 2015 featured Tabios's radical visual poem, "I Forgot Forgetting My Skin Was Ruin." (*Look: double forgetting!*) It's revealing that this auspicious debut of an experimental magazine is heralded by a Tabios piece. And the *h&* bio on this occasion

underlines the richness and breadth of her work:

Eileen R. Tabios has released more than 20 print, five electronic and one CD poetry collections; an art essay collection; a “collected novels” book; a poetry essay/interview anthology; a short story collection; and two experimental biographies. Her 2015 books include the experimental autobiography *AGAINST MISANTHROPY: A LIFE IN POETRY* and the poetry collection *I FORGOT LIGHT BURNS*.

In July 2015 another *h&* bio that accompanied a visual piece “written” with Tabios’s own hair provides more detail about her avant-garde accomplishments:

Eileen R. Tabios loves books and has released about 30 collections of poetry, essays, fiction and experimental biographies from publishers in nine countries and cyberspace. Her poems have been translated into seven languages as well as computer-generated hybrid languages, Paintings, Video, Drawings, Visual Poetry, Mixed Media Collages, Kali Martial Arts, Music, Modern Dance and Sculpture. These images comprise her series “The Outsider’s Dilemma” and are asemics she’s written with her white hair; she describes their conceptualization in her essay, “The Mortality Asemics” for *Queen Mob’s Teahouse*. Forthcoming this year will be *INVENT(ST)ORY*, a Selected List Poem covering 1996-2015.

To cite a select few more projects among her many, Tabios is the founder, publisher, and editor of Meritage Press. Among the fine books that have issued from this press is *Verses Typhoon Yolanda: A Storm of Filipino Poets*, an anthology she compiled and edited to raise emergency funds for the Filipino survivors of Typhoon Haiyan (called Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines). Tabios is also the founder and editor of the poetry journal *Galatea Resurrects* as well as her newly established online venue, *The Halo-Halo Review*, which aggregates reviews of and other writings about Filipino authors on the internet, and its outlet *The Mangozine*, which publishes new reviews, author interviews, and reader testimonials about Filipino literature in English.



One of Eileen Tabios’s most fascinating projects is *The MDR Poetry Generator*, which “wrote” the poems in *The Connoisseur of Alleys*. (For more on this, see Tabios’s afterword to this collection.) When she first told me of the poetry generator, I was immediately reminded of the computer program Racter, which “wrote” the 1984 book *The Policeman’s Beard is*

Half Constructed: Computer Prose and Poetry. This computer program created text by concatenating strings of words according to syntactic algorithms, producing text that was often whimsical and sprightly. Over the three decades since Racter's heyday, poet-scientists have invented increasingly sophisticated computational poetry engines or robots, perhaps moving closer and closer to passing a poetic Turing test: can we tell if a poem was written by a human or a machine?

Racter and its/her/his descendants are machine versions of the Surrealist game *Exquisite Corpse*, a Mad Libs-style game in which words are plugged into parts-of-speech blanks in a prearranged sentence skeleton. The first sentence produced in the game was "Le cadavre exquis boira le vin nouveau" or "The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine," using the pattern *noun + adjective + verb + noun + adjective* in French. This sentence also produced the name of the game.

Other poetry-writing heuristics that came from France were originated by Oulipo, a group of writers and mathematicians who created ways to compose by constraining what could be written through preconceived rules (e.g., using only one vowel or avoiding given letters in a writing). The word "oulipo" is an abbreviation for "Ouvroir de littérature potentielle," roughly translated as "workshop for potential literature." One of the more popular oulipo "games" is N+7, where all nouns in a pre-existing sentence are replaced by the 7th subsequent noun in a dictionary. This could be played as N+13 or V+5 (for verbs), and so on. The Surrealist ur-sentence "the exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine" could then be re-rendered via N+10 and V+10 and even A+10 (adjectives) as "the exsensed corpuscle shall drizzle the newborn winepress."

The MDR Poetry Generator doesn't randomize based on a dictionary or lexicon but rather assembles text specific to Tabios's established body of poetry, through selection and replacement like the heuristics described above. In essence, creating new poems from old poems. In *The Connoisseur of Alleys*, Tabios applies the poetry generator to arrange and rearrange text related to 27 previously published poetry collections. To do this she re-read these collections and, immersed in the emotions of those re-readings, created—re-created—lines based on her earlier poems, populating a database of verse from which the poetry generator could "write."

The resulting poems are ineluctably beautiful and dizzying, in all the best possible senses. In fascinating ways, they interact with and rethink and "re-feel" the previous poems, thus commenting on both the earlier texts and also the earlier Tabios, the younger author who wrote the original poems now being mined and reconstructed. At the same time, new and radical emotion comes from the current poems being constructed and newly construed.



A phrase from Comte de Lautréamont's prose poem *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1869) has been used by many as a definition of surrealism: "the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella." Such fanciful and bizarre juxtaposition is one of the many sources of beauty and the sublime in *The Connoisseur of Alleys*. Sentences and lines resurrected from the earlier works resonate and reverberate with each other in a preordained fashion so that each poem ebbs and flows, builds to a crescendo, echoing each of the other poems' ebbs, flows, and crescendos. There is certainly "chance meeting" in the way Tabios's text collides with itself but there is nothing chance about the delicacy and beauty that comes from those collisions.

These poems are, to borrow from Whitman again, "large and contain multitudes." They are a striking tribute to art and to poetry—both Tabios's own earlier work and, really, all poetry—underlining and emphasizing for ourselves our own humanity and grace. Again, a random quotation (page-riffled and finger-pointed):

I forgot the damp eyes were mine.... I forgot that if you call an island "Isla Mujeres," half of the population will be anguished....
I forgot to be human is to be forgiven.... I forgot the taste of your mouth was song of licorice....

I forgot. And in forgetting, I remembered. Excruciatingly and exquisitely. May we all forget and remember so eloquently and elegantly. Eileen Tabios, thank you. Salamat.

—Vince Gotera

Vince Gotera serves as Editor of the *North American Review* and Professor of English at the University of Northern Iowa. His poetry collections include *Dragonfly*, *Ghost Wars*, *Fighting Kite*, and the forthcoming *Pacific Crossing*.

Poems Through The Poems

*I forgot
the thick books
of glass pages—
each line etched
by a silver paw
—from “Post Cave”*



After the Egyptians Determined The Shape of the World is a Circle

[1]

I forgot I became a connoisseur of alleys.... I forgot I knew the back alleys of this neighborhood, where beggars made their beds, whose cats stole their food, which doorways provided for or grabbed the fragile into a hold of cruelty.... I forgot how quickly civilization can disappear, as swiftly as the shoreline from an oil spill birthed from a twist of the wrist by a drunk vomiting over the helm.... I forgot one can choose always to face the horizon.... It was a different time. I forgot there is always a different time, even within the span of an hour (or less).... I forgot grabbing at my fading dreams only to recall a vision of skyscrapers crumbling from the slaps of iron balls.... I forgot I'd learned to recognize the sound of my bones becoming brittle, and how much I despised the goldfish swimming meekly in its small bowl.... I forgot myself as a child clutching a silver-flaked purple marble in a sweating fist, shielding my treasured toy from the school bully who most assuredly would steal it before running back to the indifference that bred him.... I forgot memory's fragments which deserve to be the ones in the forefront of my attention.... I forgot his friend wore a baseball cap and held a bouquet of orange lilies as a shield between us.... I forgot how I smiled at the waxy blooms, fragrant and opulent amidst courtiers of gnarled branches and grass—how they preened like tall models in leopard coats!

[2]

I forgot I became a connoisseur of alleys.... I forgot how quickly civilization can disappear, as swiftly as the shoreline from an oil spill birthed from a twist of the wrist by a drunk vomiting over the helm.... I forgot I'd learned to recognize the sound of my bones becoming brittle, and how much I despised the goldfish swimming meekly in its small bowl.... I forgot the definition of childhood is ineffable.... I forgot myself as a child clutching a silver-flaked purple marble in a sweating fist, shielding my treasured toy from the school bully who most assuredly would steal it before running back to the indifference that bred him.... I forgot a narrow elevator I once shared with John Donne who always reminds, "Every man's death diminishes me".... I forgot his friend wore a baseball cap and held a bouquet of orange lilies as a shield between us.... I forgot him lowering the flowers' unshakeable beauty to suggest, "They are luminous, aren't they?"... I forgot how perfume cannot obliterate.

[3]

I forgot the glint from the fang of a wild boar as he lurked behind shadows in a land where it only takes one domino to fall.... All around the border

of that place, the desert was a forever. I forgot how no mountains, no trees, no tomb markers—nor memories perfumed by jasmine—interrupted the horizon.... I forgot one can choose always to face the horizon.... I forgot any reason for you to hold my hand as a day unfolded.... I forgot the years when I wore uniforms of darkened wool shaped by machines, lined by grey.... I forgot a narrow elevator I once shared with John Donne who always reminds, “Every man’s death diminishes me”.... I forgot his friend wore a baseball cap and held a bouquet of orange lilies as a shield between us.... I forgot how I smiled at the waxy blooms, fragrant and opulent amidst courtiers of gnarled branches and grass—how they preened like tall models in leopard coats!,,, I forgot him lowering the flowers’ unshakeable beauty to suggest, “They are luminous, aren’t they?”

[4]

I forgot any reason for you to hold my hand as a day unfolded.... I forgot the years when I wore uniforms of darkened wool shaped by machines, lined by grey.... I forgot I’d learned to recognize the sound of my bones becoming brittle, and how much I despised the goldfish swimming meekly in its small bowl.... I forgot the definition of childhood is ineffable.... I forgot there are no guarantees, not even in math where “1 + 1” may not be “2” but, as a visual artist insisted, “1 1” or, as a philosopher insisted, “a turning towards the other”.... I forgot myself as a child clutching a silver-flaked purple marble in a sweating fist, shielding my treasured toy from the school bully who most assuredly would steal it before running back to the indifference that bred him.... I forgot memory’s fragments which deserve to be the ones in the forefront of my attention.... I forgot how I smiled at the waxy blooms, fragrant and opulent amidst courtiers of gnarled branches and grass—how they preened like tall models in leopard coats!... I forgot him lowering the flowers’ unshakeable beauty to suggest, “They are luminous, aren’t they?”

[5]

I forgot I became a connoisseur of alleys.... I forgot I knew the back alleys of this neighborhood, where beggars made their beds, whose cats stole their food, which doorways provided for or grabbed the fragile into a hold of cruelty.... I forgot the glint from the fang of a wild boar as he lurked behind shadows in a land where it only takes one domino to fall.... I forgot how quickly civilization can disappear, as swiftly as the shoreline from an oil spill birthed from a twist of the wrist by a drunk vomiting over the helm.... I forgot the horizon is far, is near, is what you wish but always in front of you.... I forgot one can choose always to face the horizon.... It was a different time. I forgot there is always a different time, even within the span of an hour (or less).... I forgot how your eyes always reached for me when I passed the threshold into the home we carefully shared.... I

forgot grabbing at my fading dreams only to recall a vision of skyscrapers crumbling from the slaps of iron balls.... I forgot I'd learned to recognize the sound of my bones becoming brittle, and how much I despised the goldfish swimming meekly in its small bowl.

[6]

I forgot why lovers destroy children to parse the philosophy of separation.... I forgot the glint from the fang of a wild boar as he lurked behind shadows in a land where it only takes one domino to fall.... I forgot how quickly civilization can disappear, as swiftly as the shoreline from an oil spill birthed from a twist of the wrist by a drunk vomiting over the helm.... All around the border of that place, the desert was a forever. I forgot how no mountains, no trees, no tomb markers—nor memories perfumed by jasmine—interrupted the horizon.... I forgot any reason for you to hold my hand as a day unfolded.... I forgot how your eyes always reached for me when I passed the threshold into the home we carefully shared.... I forgot grabbing at my fading dreams only to recall a vision of skyscrapers crumbling from the slaps of iron balls.... I forgot our hair had whitened.

[7]

I forgot I knew the back alleys of this neighborhood, where beggars made their beds, whose cats stole their food, which doorways provided for or grabbed the fragile into a hold of cruelty.... I forgot the glint from the fang of a wild boar as he lurked behind shadows in a land where it only takes one domino to fall.... All around the border of that place, the desert was a forever. I forgot how no mountains, no trees, no tomb markers—nor memories perfumed by jasmine—interrupted the horizon.... I forgot the horizon is far, is near, is what you wish but always in front of you.... It was a different time. I forgot there is always a different time, even within the span of an hour (or less).... I forgot grabbing at my fading dreams only to recall a vision of skyscrapers crumbling from the slaps of iron balls.... I forgot there are no guarantees, not even in math where “1 + 1” may not be “2” but, as a visual artist insisted, “1 1” or, as a philosopher insisted, “a turning towards the other”.... 4/ I forgot a narrow elevator I once shared with John Donne who always reminds, “Every man’s death diminishes me”.... I forgot his friend wore a baseball cap and held a bouquet of orange lilies as a shield between us.... I forgot how, like a cabdriver with his first ride after hours of scouring emptied streets, he needed to speak.

[8]

I forgot I knew the back alleys of this neighborhood, where beggars made their beds, whose cats stole their food, which doorways provided for or

grabbed the fragile into a hold of cruelty.... I forgot any reason for you to hold my hand as a day unfolded.... It was a different time. I forgot there is always a different time, even within the span of an hour (or less).... I forgot how your eyes always reached for me when I passed the threshold into the home we carefully shared.... I forgot our hair had whitened.... I forgot I'd learned to recognize the sound of my bones becoming brittle, and how much I despised the goldfish swimming meekly in its small bowl.... I forgot memory's fragments which deserve to be the ones in the forefront of my attention.... I forgot his friend wore a baseball cap and held a bouquet of orange lilies as a shield between us.

Beyond Life Sentences

[1]

I forgot the grandfather who willingly faced a fire, fist trembling at the indifferent sky.... I forgot the grandfather who stood before the fire rushing through a legacy untouched by 300 years of Spanish colonialism.... I forgot an uncle's water buffalo who provided a lumbering tour of my kingdom whose borders my six-year-old eyes could not see.... I forgot a house, solid and stolid as a boulder on a ground ever-shifting from nature's tantrums, gentle but persistent rain, occupying soldiers ... I forgot the mud in monsoon season.... I forgot the mud like the skin of my grandmother, her gum-teethed cronies and other wiry residents of a patient village beaten by the sun.... I forgot mangos, eaten before they ripened—they were savored with much salt and first soaked in vinegar.... I forgot the light burned and we never shaded our eyes.... I forgot children softening harsh wool with thin fingers in exchange for broken kernels of rice.... I forgot a neighbor who stole my pet pig and ate the evidence.... I forgot fevers refusing to abate even when drenched with seawater.

[2]

I forgot the grandfather who willingly faced a fire, fist trembling at the indifferent sky.... I forgot an uncle's water buffalo who provided a lumbering tour of my kingdom whose borders my six-year-old eyes could not see.... I forgot fingertips smoothed to black velvet from constantly rolling leaves of tobacco.... I forgot mangos, eaten before they ripened—they were savored with much salt and first soaked in vinegar.... I forgot the light burned and we never shaded our eyes.... I forgot children learning to trick hunger with cups of weak tea.... I forgot a neighbor who stole my pet pig and ate the evidence.... I forgot narrowing the focus always reveals something else.... I forgot it need not take more than one person to bring the world to ruin—for my mother, that person was me.

[3]

I forgot a country somewhere, always at the opposite of where I stand on this earth.... I forgot the grandmother who always grinned at me, unashamed her gums held no teeth.... I forgot abandoning misery until it became mere concept, then poem.... I forgot the mud in monsoon season.... I forgot the mud, goeey and bearing the complexion of rotten bananas.... I forgot children learning to trick hunger with cups of weak tea.... I forgot a neighbor who stole my pet pig and ate the evidence.... I forgot fevers refusing to abate even when drenched with seawater.... I forgot narrowing the focus always reveals something else.

[4]

I forgot abandoning misery until it became mere concept, then poem.... I forgot the mud, gooey and bearing the complexion of rotten bananas.... I forgot mangos, eaten before they ripened—they were savored with much salt and first soaked in vinegar.... I forgot a brother.... I forgot the brother who gave me a rainbow trapped within enamel.... I forgot the light burned and we never shaded our eyes.... I forgot children softening harsh wool with thin fingers in exchange for broken kernels of rice.... I forgot children learning to trick hunger with cups of weak tea.... I forgot a neighbor who stole my pet pig and ate the evidence.... I forgot fevers refusing to abate even when drenched with seawater.... I forgot narrowing the focus always reveals something else.

[5]

I forgot the grandfather who willingly faced a fire, fist trembling at the indifferent sky.... I forgot the grandfather who stood before the fire rushing through a legacy untouched by 300 years of Spanish colonialism.... I forgot a country somewhere, always at the opposite of where I stand on this earth.... I forgot an archipelago where spaces between what are visible are as real as your body whose hands had raised my wedding veil.... I forgot the grandmother who always grinned at me, unashamed her gums held no teeth.... I forgot a house, solid and stolid as a boulder on a ground ever-shifting from nature's tantrums, gentle but persistent rain, occupying soldiers ... I forgot the mud, a placid surface but camouflaging sharply-edged stones.... I forgot a country somewhere, always at the opposite of where I stand on this earth.... I forgot the mud like the skin of my grandmother, her gum-teethed cronies and other wiry residents of a patient village beaten by the sun... I forgot mangos, eaten before they ripened—they were savored with much salt and first soaked in vinegar.

[6]

I forgot the elders, shoulders sagged to ruin, dropping gazes like debris and treasuring trees for their shade that exacts no price.... I forgot a country somewhere, always at the opposite of where I stand on this earth.... I forgot an uncle's water buffalo who provided a lumbering tour of my kingdom whose borders my six-year-old eyes could not see.... I forgot an archipelago where spaces between what are visible are as real as your body whose hands had raised my wedding veil.... I forgot abandoning misery until it became mere concept, then poem.... I forgot the mud, a placid surface but camouflaging sharply-edged stones.... I forgot the mud like the skin of my grandmother, her gum-teethed cronies and other wiry residents of a patient village beaten by the sun.... I forgot fingertips smoothed to black velvet from constantly rolling leaves of tobacco.... I

forgot the brother who gave me a rainbow trapped within enamel.... I forgot the light burned and we never shaded our eyes.... I forgot a neighbor who stole my pet pig and ate the evidence.

[7]

I forgot the grandfather who stood before the fire rushing through a legacy untouched by 300 years of Spanish colonialism.... I forgot a country somewhere, always at the opposite of where I stand on this earth.... I forgot an archipelago where spaces between what are visible are as real as your body whose hands had raised my wedding veil.... I forgot the grandmother who always grinned at me, unashamed her gums held no teeth.... I forgot the mud in monsoon season.... I forgot the mud like the skin of my grandmother, her gum-teethed cronies and other wiry residents of a patient village beaten by the sun.... I forgot the brother who gave me a rainbow trapped within enamel.... I forgot children learning to trick hunger with cups of weak tea.... I forgot a neighbor who stole my pet pig and ate the evidence.... I forgot lowering the flag of a country I despised. I forgot lowering the flag of a country I loved.

[8]

I forgot the grandfather who stood before the fire rushing through a legacy untouched by 300 years of Spanish colonialism.... I forgot abandoning misery until it became mere concept, then poem.... I forgot the mud in monsoon season.... I forgot the mud, a placid surface but camouflaging sharply-edged stones.... I forgot fingertips smoothed to black velvet from constantly rolling leaves of tobacco.... I forgot mangos, eaten before they ripened—they were savored with much salt and first soaked in vinegar.... I forgot children softening harsh wool with thin fingers in exchange for broken kernels of rice.... I forgot a neighbor who stole my pet pig and ate the evidence.

Ecstatic Mutations

[1]

I forgot love is always haggled.... I forgot truth is disembodied.... I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds.... I forgot green calyx emphasizing the burden of generously watered corollas.... I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.... I forgot the rice cooker flirting with its lid.... I forgot love is always haggled.... I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.... I forgot green calyx emphasizing the burden of generously watered corollas.

[2]

I forgot love is always haggled.... I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds.... I forgot I began drowning in air.... I forgot love is always haggled.... I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot entrancement with the layered auras of decay.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.... I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.... I forgot the stance of cliffs meeting water.

[3]

I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot entrancement with the layered auras of decay.... I forgot green calyx emphasizing the burden of generously watered corollas.... I forgot discovering the limited utility of calm seas.... I forgot camouflaging my body into a Christmas tree.... I forgot entrancement with the layered auras of decay.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.... I forgot green calyx emphasizing the burden of generously watered corollas.... I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.

[4]

I forgot discovering the limited utility of calm seas.... I forgot camouflaging my body into a Christmas tree.... I forgot love is always haggled.... I forgot truth is disembodied.... I forgot mahogany dining tables whose royal lengths still failed to include me.... I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds.... I forgot green calyx emphasizing the burden of generously watered corollas.... I forgot discovering the limited utility of calm seas.... I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.

[5]

I forgot love is always haggled.... I forgot truth is disembodied.... I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.... I forgot green calyx emphasizing the burden of generously watered corollas.... I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.... I forgot the stance of cliffs meeting water.... I forgot the rice cooker flirting with its lid.... I forgot love is always haggled.

[6]

I forgot mahogany dining tables whose royal lengths still failed to include me.... I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds.... I forgot entrancement with the layered auras of decay.... I forgot discovering the limited utility of calm seas.... I forgot the stance of cliffs meeting water.... I forgot the rice cooker flirting with its lid.... I forgot I began drowning in air.... I forgot mahogany dining tables whose royal lengths still failed to include me.... I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.

[7]

I forgot truth is disembodied.... I forgot tipping Bing cherries into a blue bowl until I lost the sky to a crimson moon's overflow.... I forgot entrancement with the layered auras of decay.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.... I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.... I forgot the rice cooker flirting with its lid.... I forgot mahogany dining tables whose royal lengths still failed to include me.... I forgot entrancement with the layered auras of decay.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.... I forgot discovering the limited utility of calm seas.

[8]

I forgot truth is disembodied.... I forgot discovering the limited utility of calm seas.... I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.... I forgot the stance of cliffs meeting water.... I forgot I began drowning in air.... I forgot love is always haggled.... I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds.... I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.

Reproductions of the Empty Flagpole

[1]

I forgot you were the altar that made me stay.... I forgot the spine bent willingly for a stranger's whip.... I forgot how an erasure captures the threshold of consciousness.... I forgot even a boor can pause before a Rembrandt portrait.... I forgot one can use color to prevent encounters from degenerating into lies.... I forgot learning to appreciate rust, and how it taught me bats operate through radar.... I forgot the bald girl whose neck increasingly thinned until I could count the ropes stretched along her throat.... I forgot the bliss deep within an ascetic's eyes as he wandered with a beggar's bowl.... I forgot your betrayal that forever marks me like a heart's tattoo blossoming painfully against an inner thigh.... I forgot how detachment includes. I forgot how detachment enabled a white rattlesnake to penetrate my dreams.... I forgot the protection of his diamonds.

[2]

I forgot you were the altar that made me stay.... I forgot how an erasure captures the threshold of consciousness.... I forgot the plainest of bread can clear an oenophile's palate.... I forgot the bald girl whose neck increasingly thinned until I could count the ropes stretched along her throat.... I forgot the bliss deep within an ascetic's eyes as he wandered with a beggar's bowl.... I forgot death without forgetting my mortality.... I forgot how detachment includes. I forgot how detachment enabled a white rattlesnake to penetrate my dreams.... I forgot chafing at eating food earned by someone else, each swallow bequeathing an *ineffable* with the demeanor of ice.... I forgot your favorite color was water.

[3]

I forgot the night was unanimous.... I forgot how one begins marking time from a lover's utterance of *Farewell*.... I forgot even a boor can pause before a Rembrandt portrait.... I forgot Mom beginning to age when she started looking at the world through heartbreaking resignation.... I forgot I was not an immigrant; I was simply myself who lacked control at how the world formed outside the "Other" of me.... I forgot death without forgetting my mortality.... I forgot how detachment includes. I forgot how detachment enabled a white rattlesnake to penetrate my dreams.... I forgot the protection of his diamonds.... I forgot chafing at eating food earned by someone else, each swallow bequeathing an *ineffable* with the demeanor of ice.

[4]

I forgot Mom beginning to age when she started looking at the world through heartbreaking resignation.... I forgot I was not an immigrant; I was simply myself who lacked control at how the world formed outside the "Other" of me.... I forgot the bald girl whose neck increasingly thinned until I could count the ropes stretched along her throat.... I forgot admiring women who refuse to paint their lips.... I forgot dust motes trapped in a tango after the sun lashed out a ray.... I forgot the bliss deep within an ascetic's eyes as he wandered with a beggar's bowl.... I forgot your betrayal that forever marks me like a heart's

tattoo blossoming painfully against an inner thigh.... I forgot the protection of his diamonds.... I forgot chafing at eating food earned by someone else, each swallow bequeathing an *ineffable* with the demeanor of ice.

[5]

I forgot you were the altar that made me stay.... I forgot the spine bent willingly for a stranger's whip.... I forgot the night was unanimous.... I forgot how an erasure captures the threshold of consciousness.... I forgot jasmine insisted it was the scent of gold.... I forgot even a boor can pause before a Rembrandt portrait.... I forgot one can use color to prevent encounters from degenerating into lies.... I forgot dancing furious flamenco with vultures under a menopausal sun.... I forgot learning to appreciate rust, and how it taught me bats operate through radar.... I forgot the bald girl whose neck increasingly thinned until I could count the ropes stretched along her throat.

[6]

I forgot clutching the wet mane of a panicked horse.... I forgot the night was unanimous.... I forgot how an erasure captures the threshold of consciousness.... I forgot how one begins marking time from a lover's utterance of *Farewell*.... I forgot Mom beginning to age when she started looking at the world through heartbreaking resignation.... I forgot dancing furious flamenco with vultures under a menopausal sun.... I forgot learning to appreciate rust, and how it taught me bats operate through radar.... I forgot the plainest of bread can clear an oenophile's palate.... I forgot dust motes trapped in a tango after the sun lashed out a ray.... I forgot the bliss deep within an ascetic's eyes as he wandered with a beggar's bowl.... I forgot how detachment includes. I forgot how detachment enabled a white rattlesnake to penetrate my dreams.

[7]

I forgot the spine bent willingly for a stranger's whip.... I forgot the night was unanimous.... I forgot how one begins marking time from a lover's utterance of *Farewell*.... I forgot jasmine insisted it was the scent of gold.... I forgot one can use color to prevent encounters from degenerating into lies.... I forgot learning to appreciate rust, and how it taught me bats operate through radar.... I forgot dust motes trapped in a tango after the sun lashed out a ray.... I forgot death without forgetting my mortality.... I forgot how detachment includes. I forgot how detachment enabled a white rattlesnake to penetrate my dreams.... I forgot the colors of a scream: the regret of crimson, the futility of pink, the astonishment of brown.

[8]

I forgot the spine bent willingly for a stranger's whip.... I forgot Mom beginning to age when she started looking at the world through heartbreaking resignation.... I forgot one can use color to prevent encounters from degenerating into lies.... I forgot dancing furious flamenco with vultures under a menopausal sun.... I forgot the plainest of bread can clear an oenophile's palate.... I forgot the bald girl whose neck increasingly thinned until I could count the ropes stretched along

her throat.... I forgot your betrayal that forever marks me like a heart's tattoo
blossoming painfully against an inner thigh.... I forgot how detachment includes.
I forgot how detachment enabled a white rattlesnake to penetrate my dreams.

Enheduanna in the 21st Century

[1]

I forgot you wanted to see her seeing herself... I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... ~~I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair...~~ I forgot you saw a bottle of Apollonio Riserva 1997, and recalled how the wine's jammy presence puckered my lips to your huge but hidden delight. I floated in your orbit then, though I looked elsewhere, ignorant of gravity's logic.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: "a bouquet of slate and roses, a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples".... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem...* I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot the signs surrounding the man with curdling milk in his eyes—signs signifying nothing relevant to an embattled world or self: *Macamundo, Push, Hoyo de Monterrey, Cohiba, Partagas, Excalibur, Davidoff, Zino*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... I forgot a tapestry fabric called *Marley* from whose complex greenery small red blooms occasionally and always tastefully burst.

[2]

I forgot you wanted to see her seeing herself... ~~I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair...~~ I forgot a man revealing a pristine white cuff as he raised his wrist to check a steel Movado watch.... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem...* I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot England with its glazed chintzes bearing sprays of rose, peony, hydrangea and gladiola—names evoking country houses: *Bowood, Amberley, Sissinghurst, Sutherland*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... I forgot the definition of optimism: "when sky turns blue, it becomes as physical as an organ".... I forgot waking from a dream of white heat to see sun-washed walls forming a room where silk and lace sculpted a milk puddle on terra cotta floors.

[3]

I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... I forgot we once stood unknowingly in the same room of this city of numerous rooms—did you frequent its space without knowing ~~until now~~ why you always looked intently at each face? I forgot you saw a bottle of Apollonio Riserva 1997, and recalled how the wine's jammy presence puckered my lips to your huge

but hidden delight. I floated in your orbit then, though I looked elsewhere, ignorant of gravity's logic.... I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot how pronouns confused me. I forgot the “She” evolving into an “I” then back again, flustered before your gaze. I forgot England with its glazed chintzes bearing sprays of rose, peony, hydrangea and gladiola—names evoking country houses: *Bowood, Amberley, Sissinghurst, Sutherland*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... I forgot a tapestry fabric called *Marley* from whose complex greenery small red blooms occasionally and always tastefully burst.... I forgot the definition of optimism: “when sky turns blue, it becomes as physical as an organ.”

[4]

I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot how pronouns confused me. I forgot the “She” evolving into an “I” then back again, flustered before your gaze.... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem*... I forgot you startled the girl whose poetry elicits dragon scales from empathetic muscles.... I forgot a fabric named *Solace* and its availability in celery, parchment, black pearl, crème brulee, persimmon and sage.... I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot the signs surrounding the man with curdling milk in his eyes—signs signifying nothing relevant to an embattled world or self: *Macamundo, Push, Hoyo de Monterrey, Cohiba, Partagas, Excalibur, Davidoff, Zino*.... I forgot a tapestry fabric called *Marley* from whose complex greenery small red blooms occasionally and always tastefully burst.... I forgot the definition of optimism: “when sky turns blue, it becomes as physical as an organ.”

[5]

I forgot you wanted to see her seeing herself... I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... ~~I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair~~... I forgot that when you turned a corner and felt the joy of Baudelaire's “infinite expanse” at the sight of sky thinned by two parallel skyscrapers, you thought of me latching a star on a gold chain so that its shimmer would lower your gaze towards my breasts.... I forgot you saw a bottle of Apollonio Riserva 1997, and recalled how the wine's jammy presence puckered my lips to your huge but hidden delight. I floated in your orbit then, though I looked elsewhere, ignorant of gravity's logic.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot the empty chair that awaited us, its expanse the totality of a planet still unexplored.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: “a bouquet of slate and roses,

a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples”.... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem...*

[6]

~~Surely you walked through the spaces I hollowed from air and left behind in anticipation of you.... I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair... I forgot we once stood unknowingly in the same room of this city of numerous rooms—did you frequent its space without knowing until now why you always looked intently at each face? I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot the empty chair that awaited us, its expanse the totality of a planet still unexplored.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: “a bouquet of slate and roses, a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples”.... I forgot a man revealing a pristine white cuff as he raised his wrist to check a steel Movado watch.... I forgot a fabric named *Solace* and its availability in celery, parchment, black pearl, crème brulee, persimmon and sage.... I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.~~

[7]

I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... I forgot we once stood unknowingly in the same room of this city of numerous rooms—did you frequent its space without knowing until now why you always looked intently at each face? I forgot that when you turned a corner and felt the joy of Baudelaire’s “infinite expanse” at the sight of sky thinned by two parallel skyscrapers, you thought of me latching a star on a gold chain so that its shimmer would lower your gaze towards my breasts.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: “a bouquet of slate and roses, a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples”.... I forgot a fabric named *Solace* and its availability in celery, parchment, black pearl, crème brulee, persimmon and sage. I forgot England with its glazed chintzes bearing sprays of rose, peony, hydrangea and gladiola—names evoking country houses: *Bowood, Amberley, Sissinghurst, Sutherland*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... I forgot a gilded door on Park Avenue you opened to a silver organza bag. Nestled in tulle netting were Lindor truffles in “all available flavors: milk, dark, white, amaretto, hazelnut, peanut butter and mint.”

[8]

I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot the empty chair that awaited us, its expanse the totality of a planet still unexplored.... I forgot a man revealing a pristine white cuff as he raised his wrist to check a steel Movado watch.... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem*... I forgot the signs surrounding the man with curdling milk in his eyes—signs signifying nothing relevant to an embattled world or self: *Macamundo, Push, Hoyo de Monterrey, Cohiba, Partagas, Excalibur, Davidoff, Zino*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.

There, Where the Pages Would End

[1]

I forgot, for him, she released milk to orphaned baby birds.... I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall.... I forgot the inevitability of ashes.... I forgot the sun can hum along.... I forgot pride is more adept than eye in discerning the invisible.... I forgot an island replete with chastened alleyways.... I forgot the Introduction as a permanent state.... I forgot you drowning in the Seychelles.... I forgot gardenias were crushed for perfume entrusted with cancelling midnights.... I forgot *that* sense of approaching a labyrinth.... I forgot your mouth became a cave stuffed with another woman's hair.

[2]

I forgot, for him, she released milk to orphaned baby birds.... I forgot the inevitability of ashes.... I forgot sentences like veins.... I forgot the Introduction as a permanent state.... I forgot you drowning in the Seychelles.... I forgot tentative acacia trees waiting behind sand dunes.... I forgot *that* sense of approaching a labyrinth.... I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall.... I forgot water becoming like love: miserable and lovely.

[3]

I forgot memory contains an underbrush.... I forgot a water lily forms instantaneously.... I forgot the sun can hum along.... I forgot the plasticity of recognition, e.g. silk, moonlight, velvet, crème brulee, honey on fingertip, awkward blood.... I forgot audacity, at times, must be a private affair.... I forgot tentative acacia trees waiting behind sand dunes.... I forgot *that* sense of approaching a labyrinth.... I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall.... I forgot water becoming like love: miserable and lovely.

[4]

I forgot the plasticity of recognition, e.g. silk, moonlight, velvet, crème brulee, honey on fingertip, awkward blood.... I forgot audacity, at times, must be a private affair.... I forgot the Introduction as a permanent state.... I forgot the summer-dusted landscape of Gambia.... I forgot Burkina Faso.... I forgot you drowning in the Seychelles.... I forgot gardenias were crushed for perfume entrusted with cancelling midnights.... I forgot your mouth became a cave stuffed with another woman's hair.... I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall.

[5]

I forgot, for him, she released milk to orphaned baby birds.... I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a

white wall.... I forgot memory contains an underbrush.... I forgot the inevitability of ashes.... I forgot laughter is not comprised of stars.... I forgot the sun can hum along.... I forgot pride is more adept than eye in discerning the invisible.... I forgot the flock with tin feathers.... I forgot an island replete with chastened alleyways.... I forgot the Introduction as a permanent state.

[6]

I forgot water becoming like love: miserable and lovely.... I forgot memory contains an underbrush.... I forgot the inevitability of ashes.... I forgot a water lily forms instantaneously.... I forgot the plasticity of recognition, e.g. silk, moonlight, velvet, crème brulee, honey on fingertip, awkward blood.... I forgot the flock with tin feathers.... I forgot an island replete with chastened alleyways.... I forgot sentences like veins.... I forgot Burkina Faso.... I forgot you drowning in the Seychelles.... I forgot *that* sense of approaching a labyrinth.

[7]

I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall.... I forgot memory contains an underbrush.... I forgot a water lily forms instantaneously.... I forgot laughter is not comprised of stars.... I forgot pride is more adept than eye in discerning the invisible.... I forgot an island replete with chastened alleyways.... I forgot Burkina Faso.... I forgot tentative acacia trees waiting behind sand dunes.... I forgot *that* sense of approaching a labyrinth.... I forgot, for him, she released milk to orphaned baby birds.

[8]

I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall.... I forgot the plasticity of recognition, e.g. silk, moonlight, velvet, crème brulee, honey on fingertip, awkward blood.... I forgot pride is more adept than eye in discerning the invisible.... I forgot the flock with tin feathers.... I forgot sentences like veins.... I forgot the Introduction as a permanent state.... I forgot gardenias were crushed for perfume entrusted with cancelling midnights.... I forgot *that* sense of approaching a labyrinth.

Ménage à trois With the 21st Century

[1]

I forgot I yearned for amnesia— I yearned for amnesia when I saw dragonflies off-kilter, shoving through air like husbands with bruised eyes— I forgot centuries of woodcarvers immortalizing stigmata on the limbs of virgins and saints, eyes wide and white in exaltation— I forgot your reputation for waking at quantum velocity.... I forgot the green stalks holding up *ylang-ylang* orchids—how their thin limbs refused to break from the weight of lush petals and overly fertile stamen.... I forgot how to italicize the word *God*.... I forgot possessing money for perfect hems consoles like martyrdom.... I forgot schools of fish dispersing to reveal the undulating sea floor as “suddenly flesh, suddenly scarred, suddenly aglow”.... I forgot “Geisha” lipstick clung to nights jousting at the West End Bar (New York City) when jazz still rained and reigned.... I forgot radiance must penetrate if it is to caress, and its price can never reach blasphemy.... I forgot commitment costs.

[2]

I forgot I yearned for amnesia— I forgot centuries of woodcarvers immortalizing stigmata on the limbs of virgins and saints, eyes wide and white in exaltation— I forgot how to long for rose petals yawning like little girls, like the daughters I never bore.... I forgot possessing money for perfect hems consoles like martyrdom.... I forgot schools of fish dispersing to reveal the undulating sea floor as “suddenly flesh, suddenly scarred, suddenly aglow”.... I forgot my heartbeats succumbing to radiance after curiosity taught me to bait handcuffs and whips.... I forgot radiance must penetrate if it is to caress, and its price can never reach blasphemy.... I forgot “civilized satiation” are words, not existence, though I had peeled away years to narrow the mutuality of our gaze into this moment when I finally ask, “How long must the sunrise remain between my thighs?” I forgot the fraying edges of fabrics still mustering to cover the shoulders of non-retired warriors.

[3]

I forgot the thermodynamics of farewells wherein exhaustion yielded the scent of armpits until sight clung to a riding crop, suddenly admired for its stiff leather spine— I forgot those days of unremitting brightness from ignoring all ancestors to stare directly at the sun, only to discover myself clasped by the cool dimness of a cathedral where hands penetrated marble bowls for holy water whose oily musk lingered on my filigreed fingers as if to sheathe my flesh— I forgot your reputation for waking at quantum velocity.... I forgot where bones erupted mountains in Guatemala and Peru.... I forgot no metaphors exist for genocide. I forgot my heartbeats succumbing to radiance after curiosity taught me to bait handcuffs and whips.... I forgot radiance must penetrate if it is to caress, and its price can never reach blasphemy.... I forgot commitment costs.... I forgot “civilized satiation” are words, not existence, though I had peeled away years to narrow the mutuality of our gaze into this moment when I finally ask, “How long must the sunrise remain between my thighs?”

[4]

I forgot where bones erupted mountains in Guatemala and Peru.... I forgot no metaphors exist for genocide.... I forgot possessing money for perfect hems consoles like martyrdom.... I forgot the scientist-poet who cautioned against “enhancing music” as more would trip “the fragile balance between sterility and sensuality”.... I forgot diving so deeply into salty seas I witnessed coral form skyscrapers upside down as they narrowed towards the molten center of earth.... I forgot schools of fish dispersing to reveal the undulating sea floor as “suddenly flesh, suddenly scarred, suddenly aglow”.... I forgot “Geisha” lipstick clung to nights jousting at the West End Bar (New York City) when jazz still rained and reigned.... I forgot commitment costs.... I forgot “civilized satiation” are words, not existence, though I had peeled away years to narrow the mutuality of our gaze into this moment when I finally ask, “How long must the sunrise remain between my thighs?”

[5]

I forgot I yearned for amnesia— I yearned for amnesia when I saw dragonflies off-kilter, shoving through air like husbands with bruised eyes— I forgot the thermodynamics of farewells wherein exhaustion yielded the scent of armpits until sight clung to a riding crop, suddenly admired for its stiff leather spine— I forgot centuries of woodcarvers immortalizing stigmata on the limbs of virgins and saints, eyes wide and white in exaltation— I forgot whether Love was relevant.... I forgot your reputation for waking at quantum velocity.... I forgot the green stalks holding up *ylang-ylang* orchids—how their thin limbs refused to break from the weight of lush petals and overly fertile stamen.... I forgot how the mountains of bones shared the pallor of thick, white candles burning in helplessly tin candelabras.... I forgot how to italicize the word *God*.... I forgot possessing money for perfect hems consoles like martyrdom.

[6]

I forgot black dimes interrupting the sun’s glare, an experience familiar to travelers visiting “Namibia in search of pure light”— I forgot the thermodynamics of farewells wherein exhaustion yielded the scent of armpits until sight clung to a riding crop, suddenly admired for its stiff leather spine— I forgot centuries of woodcarvers immortalizing stigmata on the limbs of virgins and saints, eyes wide and white in exaltation— I forgot those days of unremitting brightness from ignoring all ancestors to stare directly at the sun, only to discover myself clasped by the cool dimness of a cathedral where hands penetrated marble bowls for holy water whose oily musk lingered on my filigreed fingers as if to sheathe my flesh— I forgot where bones erupted mountains in Guatemala and Peru.... I forgot how the mountains of bones shared the pallor of thick, white candles burning in helplessly tin candelabras.... I forgot how to italicize the word *God*.... I forgot how to long for rose petals yawning like little girls, like the daughters I never bore.... I forgot diving so deeply into salty seas I witnessed coral form skyscrapers upside down as they narrowed towards the molten center of earth.... I forgot schools of fish dispersing to reveal the undulating sea floor as “suddenly flesh, suddenly scarred, suddenly aglow”.... I forgot radiance must penetrate if it is to caress, and its price can never reach blasphemy.

[7]

I yearned for amnesia when I saw dragonflies off-kilter, shoving through air like husbands with bruised eyes— I forgot the thermodynamics of farewells wherein exhaustion yielded the scent of armpits until sight clung to a riding crop, suddenly admired for its stiff leather spine— I forgot those days of unremitting brightness from ignoring all ancestors to stare directly at the sun, only to discover myself clasped by the cool dimness of a cathedral where hands penetrated marble bowls for holy water whose oily musk lingered on my filigreed fingers as if to sheathe my flesh— I forgot whether Love was relevant.... I forgot the green stalks holding up *ylang-ylang* orchids—how their thin limbs refused to break from the weight of lush petals and overly fertile stamen.... I forgot how to italicize the word *God*.... I forgot diving so deeply into salty seas I witnessed coral form skyscrapers upside down as they narrowed towards the molten center of earth.... I forgot my heartbeats succumbing to radiance after curiosity taught me to bait handcuffs and whips.... I forgot the sun hid from what I willingly bartered for *Lucidity*.

[8]

I yearned for amnesia when I saw dragonflies off-kilter, shoving through air like husbands with bruised eyes— I forgot where bones erupted mountains in Guatemala and Peru.... I forgot the green stalks holding up *ylang-ylang* orchids—how their thin limbs refused to break from the weight of lush petals and overly-fertile stamen.... I forgot how the mountains of bones shared the pallor of thick, white candles burning in helplessly tin candelabras.... I forgot how to long for rose petals yawning like little girls, like the daughters I never bore.... I forgot possessing money for perfect hems consoles like martyrdom.... I forgot “Geisha” lipstick clung to nights jousting at the West End Bar (New York City) when jazz still rained and reigned.... I forgot radiance must penetrate if it is to caress, and its price can never reach blasphemy.

Crucial Bliss Epilogues

[1]

I forgot the joy of eliding the vocabulary found in margins.... I forgot the Jessamine wafting over the paddock.... I forgot my sympathy for tender hours.... I forgot lurking forever in a red telephone booth to look up at rain and your window.... I forgot dew lingering on a carnation corsage left on a bench.... I forgot the starving Arab boy who wove a rug now hanging above the Spanish Queen's bed.... I forgot saying things I'd never said before.... I forgot the damp eyes were mine.... I forgot that if you call an island "Isla Mujeres," half of the population will be anguished.... I forgot part of mortality's significance is that wars end.... I forgot to be human is to be forgiven.

[2]

I forgot the joy of eliding the vocabulary found in margins.... I forgot my sympathy for tender hours.... I forgot the boy grinning as he folded silver foil into an eagle.... I forgot saying things I'd never said before.... I forgot the damp eyes were mine.... I forgot the pillow still shielding a stray tooth because someone believed in a fairy tale.... I forgot part of mortality's significance is that wars end.... I forgot the taste of your mouth was song of licorice.... I forgot releasing breath to describe milk transformed by your scent.

[3]

I forgot losing the language of scars—we shook lanterns to bestow frankincense and myrrh.... I forgot the neighbor hiding behind a curtain as he wrote a haiku about a thief tangoing with his shadow when the moon appeared.... I forgot lurking forever in a red telephone booth to look up at rain and your window.... I forgot the "Ideal Violet" whose petals blush during the lemonade days of summer.... I forgot that, sometimes, the world should be veiled.... I forgot the pillow still shielding a stray tooth because someone believed in a fairy tale.... I forgot part of mortality's significance is that wars end.... I forgot to be human is to be forgiven.... I forgot the taste of your mouth was song of licorice.

[4]

I forgot the "Ideal Violet" whose petals blush during the lemonade days of summer.... I forgot that, sometimes, the world should be veiled.... I forgot saying things I'd never said before.... I forgot the tea leaves I brought back from a tiny stall in Kathmandu.... I forgot the charm bracelet that required only one charm.... I forgot the damp eyes were mine.... I forgot that if you call an island "Isla Mujeres," half of the population will be anguished.... I forgot to be human is to be forgiven.... I forgot the taste of your mouth was song of licorice.

[5]

I forgot the joy of eliding the vocabulary found in margins.... I forgot the Jessamine wafting over the paddock.... I forgot losing the language of scars—we shook

lanterns to bestow frankincense and myrrh.... I forgot my sympathy for tender hours.... I forgot my son flinging his leather jacket over a puddle intersecting with my path across Bluemner Street.... I forgot lurking forever in a red telephone booth to look up at rain and your window.... I forgot dew lingering on a carnation corsage left on a bench.... I forgot popcorn spilt on the floor of a darkened movie theater—when butter gleamed, the dispensable became nuggets of gold.... I forgot the starving Arab boy who wove a rug now hanging above the Spanish Queen's bed.... I forgot saying things I'd never said before.

[6]

I forgot you spilling vermouth on the sky.... I forgot losing the language of scars—we shook lanterns to bestow frankincense and myrrh.... I forgot my sympathy for tender hours.... I forgot the neighbor hiding behind a curtain as he wrote a haiku about a thief tangoing with his shadow when the moon appeared.... I forgot the "Ideal Violet" whose petals blush during the lemonade days of summer.... I forgot popcorn spilt on the floor of a darkened movie theater—when butter gleamed, the dispensable became nuggets of gold.... I forgot the starving Arab boy who wove a rug now hanging above the Spanish Queen's bed.... I forgot the boy grinning as he folded silver foil into an eagle.... I forgot the charm bracelet that required only one charm.... I forgot the damp eyes were mine.... I forgot part of mortality's significance is that wars end.

[7]

I forgot the Jessamine wafting over the paddock.... I forgot losing the language of scars—we shook lanterns to bestow frankincense and myrrh.... I forgot the neighbor hiding behind a curtain as he wrote a haiku about a thief tangoing with his shadow when the moon appeared.... I forgot my son flinging his leather jacket over a puddle intersecting with my path across Bluemner Street.... I forgot dew lingering on a carnation corsage left on a bench.... I forgot the starving Arab boy who wove a rug now hanging above the Spanish Queen's bed.... I forgot the charm bracelet that required only one charm.... I forgot the pillow still shielding a stray tooth because someone believed in a fairy tale.... I forgot a snowfall of daisies whose mottles under moonlight twinkled like a saddhu's eyes.

[8]

I forgot the Jessamine wafting over the paddock... I forgot the "Ideal Violet" whose petals blush during the lemonade days of summer.... I forgot dew lingering on a carnation corsage left on a bench.... I forgot popcorn spilt on the floor of a darkened movie theater—when butter gleamed, the dispensable became nuggets of gold.... I forgot the boy grinning as he folded silver foil into an eagle.... I forgot saying things I'd never said before.... I forgot that if you call an island "Isla Mujeres," half of the population will be anguished.... I forgot part of mortality's significance is that wars end.

Songs of the Colon / The Estrus Gaze(s)

[1]

I forgot penetrating rot.... I forgot the bloat of betterment.... I forgot sympathy over the ne'er-do-well's dejection.... I forgot psoriasis enabling disparagement.... I forgot the sparseness of iridescence.... I forgot the zoo with retired cages.... I forgot you turned time into eternity by waiting at the gate.... I forgot we are all born.... I forgot unfamiliarity with the edges of my body.... I forgot ending evenings with lightning bugs in jars.

[2]

I forgot penetrating rot.... I forgot sympathy over the ne'er-do-well's dejection.... I forgot the gravestone outmaneuvers all.... I forgot the zoo with retired cages.... I forgot you turned time into eternity by waiting at the gate.... I forgot we are all born.... I forgot unfamiliarity with the edges of my body.... I forgot ending evenings with lightning bugs in jars.

[3]

I forgot when aura became scant.... I forgot sympathy over the ne'er-do-well's dejection.... I forgot the buttress of factionalism.... I forgot there is no cavalry.... I forgot powwows without credibility.... I forgot the salt of expired matchsticks.... I forgot unfamiliarity with the edges of my body.... I forgot ending evenings with lightning bugs in jars.... I forgot place became person.

[4]

I forgot the janitor's ulcer.... I forgot powwows without credibility.... I forgot the zoo with retired cages.... I forgot the gorilla's fingerprint forming the outline of your face.... I forgot ceasing our hurtle through the fragile chill of the Milky Way.... I forgot you turned time into eternity by waiting at the gate.... I forgot we are all born.... I forgot ending evenings with lightning bugs in jars.... I forgot place became person.

[5]

I forgot penetrating rot.... I forgot the bloat of betterment.... I forgot when aura became scant.... I forgot sympathy over the ne'er-do-well's dejection.... I forgot there is no cavalry.... I forgot psoriasis enabling disparagement.... I forgot the sparseness of iridescence.... I forgot the pantomimed proscenium.... I forgot the turnkey to a void.... I forgot the zoo with retired cages.

[6]

I forgot slickness profuse, then the ahems of misfires.... I forgot when aura became scant.... I forgot sympathy over the ne'er-do-well's dejection.... I forgot the buttress of factionalism.... I forgot the janitor's ulcer.... I forgot

the pantomimed proscenium.... I forgot the turnkey to a void.... I forgot the gravestone outmaneuvers all.... I forgot ceasing our hurtle through the fragile chill of the Milky Way.... I forgot you turned time into eternity by waiting at the gate.... I forgot unfamiliarity with the edges of my body.

[7]

I forgot the bloat of betterment.... I forgot when aura became scant.... I forgot the buttress of factionalism.... I forgot there is no cavalry.... I forgot the sparseness of iridescence.... I forgot the turnkey to a void.... I forgot ceasing our hurtle through the fragile chill of the Milky Way.... I forgot the salt of expired matchsticks.... I forgot unfamiliarity with the edges of my body.... I forgot lapis lazuli pebbles harvested from deer manure.

[8]

I forgot the bloat of betterment.... I forgot the janitor's ulcer.... I forgot the sparseness of iridescence.... I forgot the pantomimed proscenium.... I forgot the gravestone outmaneuvers all.... I forgot the zoo with retired cages.... I forgot we are all born.... I forgot unfamiliarity with the edges of my body.

Post Bling Bling

[1]

I forgot Lexus engineers.... I forgot life defined through the credit card.... I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.... I forgot shoes subject to credit approval.... I forgot Microsoft snooping on our passions.... I forgot Tequila Corazon de Agave alchemized from the heart of blue agave bred in the rich, red soil of the "Highlands" in Arandas, Jalisco, Mexico.... I forgot the classic contents of the Filipino Balikbayan Box:

- Dove soap
- L'Oreal shampoo
- Colgate ("has to be Colgate, not Crest") toothpaste
- SPAM corned beef
- Set of *Encyclopedia Britannica* from the 1970s
- Nestle's Quick chocolate
- Folger's (nowadays, Walmart house brand) coffee

I forgot Lexus engineers.... I forgot life defined through the credit card.... I forgot financial advisors attuned to the good.... I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.

[2]

I forgot Lexus engineers.... I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.... I forgot the luxury of appointments.... I forgot the classic contents of the Filipino Balikbayan Box:

- Snickers
- M&Ms
- Irish Spring soap
- Libby's corned beef
- Costco Vitamin B-12
- See's chocolates

I forgot Lexus engineers.... I forgot the glimpse of eternity in black obsidian.... I forgot financial advisors attuned to the good.... I forgot Las Vegas' invitation to be at home with The Topless, The Wet, The White: Mandalay Bay!... I forgot shoes subject to credit approval.

[3]

I forgot financial advisors attuned to the good.... I forgot the artist who traded identity for a Tiffany house brand.... I forgot shoes subject to credit approval.... I forgot Ford's definition of "Escape": blowing by a mountain-high 18-wheeler through 200 horsepower V8.... I forgot W Hotel's promise to balance "style" and "soul".... I forgot the glimpse of eternity in black obsidian... I forgot financial advisors attuned to the good.... I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.... I forgot Las Vegas' invitation to be at home with The Topless, The Wet, The White: Mandalay Bay!

[4]

I forgot Ford's definition of "Escape": blowing by a mountain-high 18-wheeler through 200 horsepower V8.... I forgot W Hotel's promise to balance "style" and "soul".... I forgot the classic contents of the Filipino Balikbayan Box:

Back issues of *Conde Nast Traveler*, *The New Yorker*, *Marie Claire*,
Entertainment Weekly, *Newsweek*, *Glamour*
Oil of Olay lotion
Almay lotion
Ziploc plastic bags
Nutella

I forgot gifts carefully differentiated among recipients—the matron's painstaking definitions of servants versus those served.... I forgot the giftbox was the gift.... I forgot Lexus engineers.... I forgot life defined through the credit card.... I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.... I forgot the artist who traded identity for a Tiffany house brand.... I forgot Las Vegas' invitation to be at home with *The Topless*, *The Wet*, *The White*: Mandalay Bay!

[5]

I forgot Lexus engineers.... I forgot life defined through the credit card.... I forgot ~~financial advisors attuned to the good....~~ I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.... I forgot Las Vegas' invitation to be at home with *The Topless*, *The Wet*, *The White*: Mandalay Bay!... I forgot shoes subject to credit approval.... I forgot Microsoft snooping on our passions.... I forgot the feminism advocated by diamond traders: *Women of the World! Buy Your Own!*... I forgot Tequila Corazon de Agave alchemized from the heart of blue agave bred in the rich, red soil of the "Highlands" in Arandas, Jalisco, Mexico.... I forgot the classic contents of the Filipino Balikbayan Box:

Nutella
Reynolds aluminum foil and saran wrap
Campbell's soups
Nine West and Liz Claiborne purses ("from factory outlets")
Parker pens with refills

[6]

I forgot the glimpse of eternity in black obsidian.... I forgot ~~financial advisors attuned to the good....~~ I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.... I forgot the artist who traded identity for a Tiffany house brand.... I forgot Ford's definition of "Escape": blowing by a mountain-high 18-wheeler through 200 horsepower V8.... I forgot the feminism advocated by diamond traders: *Women of the World! Buy Your Own!*... I forgot Tequila Corazon de Agave alchemized from the heart of blue agave bred in the rich, red soil of the "Highlands" in Arandas, Jalisco, Mexico.... I forgot the luxury of appointments.... I forgot the giftbox was the gift.... I forgot Lexus engineers.... I forgot life defined through the credit card.... I forgot the glimpse of eternity in black obsidian.... I forgot ~~financial advisors attuned to the good.~~

[7]

I forgot life defined through the credit card.... ~~I forgot financial advisors attuned to the good....~~ I forgot the artist who traded identity for a Tiffany house brand.... I forgot Las Vegas' invitation to be at home with The Topless, The Wet, The White: Mandalay Bay!... I forgot Microsoft snooping on our passions.... I forgot Tequila Corazon de Agave alchemized from the heart of blue agave bred in the rich, red soil of the "Highlands" in Arandas, Jalisco, Mexico.... I forgot the giftbox was the gift.... I forgot the glimpse of eternity in black obsidian.... ~~I forgot financial advisors attuned to the good....~~ I forgot the artist who traded identity for a Tiffany house brand.

[8]

I forgot life defined through the credit card.... I forgot Ford's definition of "Escape": blowing by a mountain-high 18-wheeler through 200 horsepower V8.... I forgot Microsoft snooping on our passions.... I forgot the feminism advocated by diamond traders: Women of the World! Buy Your Own!... I forgot the luxury of appointments.... I forgot the classic contents of the Filipino Balikbayan Box:

Osh Kosh playsuit

Baby Gap, Old Navy and Fisher Price onesies

Bayer aspirin

Carnation instant creamer

Nail polish: "L'Oreal for family, Maybelline or Wet n Wild for the servants"

Shampoo: "Pantene for family, Suave for neighbors"

I forgot life defined through the credit card.... I forgot the glimpse of eternity in black obsidian.... ~~I forgot financial advisors attuned to the good.~~

I Take Thee, English, For My Beloved

[1]

I forgot the ~~difficulty in dying~~ the world saw me as a humpback.... I forgot your hands paused before my black brassiere.... I forgot drinking from ancient goblets whose cracked rims snagged lips into a bleeding burning. I forgot my skin was ruin.... I forgot birds forming a toupee for trees.... I forgot your fingers reaching to caress the hollows formed when my knees bent.... I forgot belting my jeans with a used halo.... I forgot envying the thorns.... I forgot vivid is subjective.... I forgot "abashed aubergine".... I forgot how effectively lineage seduces.... I forgot Manolo Blahnik's elegy for crocodiles.

[2]

I forgot the ~~difficulty in dying~~ the world saw me as a humpback.... I forgot drinking from ancient goblets whose cracked rims snagged lips into a bleeding burning. I forgot my skin was ruin.... I forgot a pedestal bloodied by ~~what~~ who leapt from it.... I forgot envying the thorns.... I forgot vivid is subjective.... I forgot the Bengal Tiger mimicking a helicopter's dance.... I forgot how effectively lineage seduces.... I forgot "Mutual Funds" is an oxymoron.... I forgot cheer dispersed through fishnet stockings.

[3]

I forgot to be an angel is to be alone in a smudged gown, fingers poking through holes burnt by epistemology.... I forgot the baby rattlesnake staining asphalt green after it was ran over by a neighbor who, it was rumored, adored massive mahogany libraries jam-packed with cracked leather covers, yellowing pages, and wisdom best left forgotten.... I forgot birds forming a toupee for trees.... I forgot the violet bruise from a rifle's intimacy.... I forgot my feet mischievously walking two inches above ground.... I forgot the Bengal Tiger mimicking a helicopter's dance.... I forgot how effectively lineage seduces.... I forgot Manolo Blahnik's elegy for crocodiles.... I forgot "Mutual Funds" is an oxymoron.

[4]

I forgot the violet bruise from a rifle's intimacy.... I forgot my feet mischievously walking two inches above ground.... I forgot envying the thorns.... I forgot Beauty can be reasonable.... I forgot fear is a loss.... I forgot vivid is subjective.... I forgot "abashed aubergine"... I forgot Manolo Blahnik's elegy for crocodiles.... I forgot "Mutual Funds" is an oxymoron.

[5]

I forgot the ~~difficulty in dying~~ the world saw me as a humpback.... I forgot your hands paused before my black brassiere.... I forgot to be an angel is to be alone in a smudged gown, fingers poking through holes burnt by epistemology.... I forgot drinking from ancient goblets whose cracked rims snagged lips into a bleeding burning. I forgot my skin was ruin.... I forgot the big-bellied man whispering

Murder can remain mere story over a cigar smoked down to the length of my then-enchanted thumb.... I forgot birds forming a toupee for trees.... I forgot your fingers reaching to caress the hollows formed when my knees bent.... I forgot a girl shrieking as her swing soared towards a boiling sky.... I forgot belting my jeans with a used halo.... I forgot envying the thorns.

[6]

I forgot you reminding, "Honey, angels may fall but they never die".... I forgot to be an angel is to be alone in a smudged gown, fingers poking through holes burnt by epistemology.... I forgot drinking from ancient goblets whose cracked rims snagged lips into a bleeding burning. I forgot my skin was ruin.... I forgot the baby rattlesnake staining asphalt green after it was ran over by a neighbor who, it was rumored, adored massive mahogany libraries jam-packed with cracked leather covers, yellowing pages, and wisdom best left forgotten.... I forgot the violet bruise from a rifle's intimacy.... I forgot a girl shrieking as her swing soared towards a boiling sky.... I forgot belting my jeans with a used halo.... I forgot a pedestal bloodied by ~~what~~ who leapt from it.... I forgot fear is a loss.... I forgot vivid is subjective.... I forgot how effectively lineage seduces.

[7]

I forgot your hands paused before my black brassiere.... I forgot to be an angel is to be alone in a smudged gown, fingers poking through holes burnt by epistemology.... I forgot the baby rattlesnake staining asphalt green after it was ran over by a neighbor who, it was rumored, adored massive mahogany libraries jam-packed with cracked leather covers, yellowing pages, and wisdom best left forgotten.... I forgot the big-bellied man whispering *Murder can remain mere story* over a cigar smoked down to the length of my then-enchanted thumb.... I forgot your fingers reaching to caress the hollows formed when my knees bent.... I forgot belting my jeans with a used halo.... I forgot fear is a loss.... I forgot the Bengal Tiger mimicking a helicopter's dance.... I forgot how effectively lineage seduces.... I forgot the momentary immortality of a new car.

[8]

I forgot your hands paused before my black brassiere.... I forgot the violet bruise from a rifle's intimacy.... I forgot your fingers reaching to caress the hollows formed when my knees bent.... I forgot a girl shrieking as her swing soared towards a boiling sky.... I forgot a pedestal bloodied by ~~what~~ who leapt from it.... I forgot envying the thorns.... I forgot "abashed aubergine".... I forgot the Bengal Tiger mimicking a helicopter's dance.... I forgot how effectively lineage seduces.

The Secret Lives of Punctuations

[1]

I forgot the world is never unclad, ~~despite Cezanne's wish~~.... I forgot the white velvet ribbon stripped from a negligee to remember the last page read.... I forgot mercury.... I forgot the open door through which, faintly, *Bach* I forgot the revolt of the minor key.... I forgot deathbeds where eyes take on an ascetic's gleam of ecstasy.... I forgot white prows slicing oceans.... I forgot the seduction of wet cobblestones.... I forgot the scent of a lunatic negative.... I forgot geometry.... I forgot rough skin was a map.

[2]

I forgot the world is never unclad, ~~despite Cezanne's wish~~.... I forgot mercury.... I forgot wings.... I forgot white prows slicing oceans.... I forgot the seduction of wet cobblestones.... I forgot a god aspiring to decay.... I forgot geometry.... I forgot weeping over the language shared by a toddler and a stuffed animal.... I forgot bone.

[3]

I forgot tears cannot dilute the color of a gaze.... I forgot the unknown source of a lover's pause.... I forgot the open door through which, faintly, *Bach* ... I forgot the marrow and murmurs melting into soup.... I forgot exodus.... I forgot a god aspiring to decay.... I forgot geometry.... I forgot rough skin was a map.... I forgot weeping over the language shared by a toddler and a stuffed animal.

[4]

I forgot the marrow and murmurs melting into soup.... I forgot exodus.... I forgot white prows slicing oceans.... I forgot the pulse pulsing among persimmons.... I forgot persimmons.... I forgot the seduction of wet cobblestones.... I forgot the scent of a lunatic negative.... I forgot rough skin was a map.... I forgot weeping over the language shared by a toddler and a stuffed animal.

[5]

I forgot the world is never unclad, ~~despite Cezanne's wish~~.... I forgot the white velvet ribbon stripped from a negligee to remember the last page read.... I forgot tears cannot dilute the color of a gaze.... I forgot mercury.... I forgot to freeze the spiral that is memory's perspective.... I forgot the open door through which, faintly, *Bach* ... I forgot the revolt of the minor key.... I forgot pepper as the visual substitute for truffles.... I forgot deathbeds where eyes take on an ascetic's gleam of ecstasy.... I forgot white prows slicing oceans.

[6]

I forgot lace.... I forgot tears cannot dilute the color of a gaze.... I forgot mercury.... I forgot the unknown source of a lover's pause.... I forgot the marrow and murmurs

melting into soup.... I forgot pepper as the visual substitute for truffles.... I forgot deathbeds where eyes take on an ascetic's gleam of ecstasy.... I forgot wings.... I forgot persimmons.... I forgot the seduction of wet cobblestones.... I forgot geometry.

[7]

I forgot the white velvet ribbon stripped from a negligee to remember the last page read.... I forgot tears cannot dilute the color of a gaze.... I forgot the unknown source of a lover's pause.... I forgot to freeze the spiral that is memory's perspective.... I forgot the revolt of the minor key.... I forgot deathbeds where eyes take on an ascetic's gleam of ecstasy.... I forgot persimmons.... I forgot a god aspiring to decay.... I forgot geometry.... I forgot the glue of "if"s.

[8]

I forgot the white velvet ribbon stripped from a negligee to remember the last page read.... I forgot the marrow and murmurs melting into soup.... I forgot the revolt of the minor key.... I forgot pepper as the visual substitute for truffles.... I forgot wings.... I forgot white prows slicing oceans.... I forgot the scent of a lunatic negative.... I forgot geometry.

Dredging for Atlantis

[1]

I forgot when memory became a colander with generous holes.... I forgot not remembering that trembling seacoast city.... I forgot baby priests turning away to cast profiles forsworn to Donatello.... I forgot the errors in pretty miscalculations—*monotone* transformed to *moonstone*.... I forgot the wind stuffing headless birds and spermatozoa into fragile craters of a lassoed moon.... I forgot a breakfast of rain.... I forgot minarets growing within muddy whirlpools.... I forgot *those* dolls—for a moment, their eyes had relaxed.... I forgot kohl telling stories without words.... I forgot a coffin's succoring bed.... I forgot how down covered her thighs.

[2]

I forgot when memory became a colander with generous holes.... I forgot baby priests turning away to cast profiles forsworn to Donatello.... I forgot a poem writ on the milk bill.... I forgot minarets growing within muddy whirlpools.... I forgot *those* dolls—for a moment, their eyes had relaxed.... I forgot cabs waiting as brandy cherries decomposed in sealed jars.... I forgot a coffin's succoring bed.... I forgot a noonday cannon scattering pigeons.... I forgot her hobby of attending to death beds—afterwards, she always lusted for hotel lobbies stuffed with crystal chandeliers.

[3]

I forgot the Carrara defiled until a nude woman emerged—her magnificent breasts paled against the blank gaze of her stone eyes.... I forgot to nurture salvation's seedlings.... I forgot the errors in pretty miscalculations—*monotone* transformed to *moonstone*.... I forgot coaxing lullabys out of empty tin cans.... I forgot flabbergasted lions bred for locked jaws.... I forgot cabs waiting as brandy cherries decomposed in sealed jars.... I forgot a coffin's succoring bed.... I forgot how down covered her thighs.... I forgot a noonday cannon scattering pigeons.

[4]

I forgot coaxing lullabys out of empty tin cans.... I forgot flabbergasted lions bred for locked jaws.... I forgot minarets growing within muddy whirlpools.... I forgot a lady in Florence, violets in her hair, who avoided sunlight.... I forgot virgins and children revealing their true nature by how they scratched themselves.... I forgot *those* dolls—for a moment, their eyes had relaxed.... I forgot kohl telling stories without words.... I forgot how down covered her thighs.... I forgot a noonday cannon scattering pigeons.

[5]

I forgot when memory became a colander with generous holes.... I forgot not remembering that trembling seacoast city.... I forgot the Carrara defiled until a nude woman emerged—her magnificent breasts paled against the blank gaze

of her stone eyes.... I forgot baby priests turning away to cast profiles forsworn to Donatello.... I forgot he was the essence of licorice.... I forgot the errors in pretty miscalculations—*monotone* transformed to *moonstone*.... I forgot the wind stuffing headless birds and spermatozoa into fragile craters of a lassoed moon.... I forgot the sobs from an abandoned harem bringing down comets to accuse the alcove.... I forgot a breakfast of rain.... I forgot minarets growing within muddy whirlpools.

[6]

I forgot that *piccola città* replete with hyphens.... I forgot the Carrara defiled until a nude woman emerged—her magnificent breasts paled against the blank gaze of her stone eyes.... I forgot baby priests turning away to cast profiles forsworn to Donatello.... I forgot to nurture salvation's seedlings.... I forgot coaxing lullabies out of empty tin cans.... I forgot the sobs from an abandoned harem bringing down comets to accuse the alcove.... I forgot a breakfast of rain.... I forgot a poem writ on the milk bill.... I forgot virgins and children revealing their true nature by how they scratched themselves.... I forgot *those* dolls—for a moment, their eyes had relaxed.... I forgot a coffin's succoring bed.

[7]

I forgot not remembering that trembling seacoast city.... I forgot the Carrara defiled until a nude woman emerged—her magnificent breasts paled against the blank gaze of her stone eyes.... I forgot to nurture salvation's seedlings.... I forgot he was the essence of licorice.... I forgot the wind stuffing headless birds and spermatozoa into fragile craters of a lassoed moon.... I forgot a breakfast of rain.... I forgot virgins and children revealing their true nature by how they scratched themselves.... I forgot cabs waiting as brandy cherries decomposed in sealed jars.... I forgot a coffin's succoring bed.... I forgot grey men fading as they fell to melt into grey stones.

[8]

I forgot not remembering that trembling seacoast city.... I forgot coaxing lullabies out of empty tin cans.... I forgot the wind stuffing headless birds and spermatozoa into fragile craters of a lassoed moon.... I forgot the sobs from an abandoned harem bringing down comets to accuse the alcove.... I forgot minarets growing within muddy whirlpools.... I forgot a lady in Florence, violets in her hair, who avoided sunlight.... I forgot kohl telling stories without words.... I forgot a coffin's succoring bed.

It's Curtains

[1]

I forgot the fair where I learned loud carnies overpower reason.... I forgot the stench of spilled wine.... I forgot the town where all women possessed supple thighs.... I forgot the dank air around a man, belt wrapped around one arm, heating a spoon.... I forgot strolling outside to hear trees murmur.... I forgot the Frenchman cooking horsemeat in blood, wine and garlic while lecturing on techniques for making plastique.... I forgot rain becoming thick.... I forgot too many hot and dusty evenings at train stations.... I forgot long lines of Arab workers in cheap suits attached to small bundles.... I forgot time slowing into a taut agony.... I forgot a dirty river glittering underneath the false life I created with no intention.

[2]

I forgot the fair where I learned loud carnies overpower reason.... I forgot the town where all women possessed supple thighs.... I forgot lighting candles but not saying Grace.... I forgot rain becoming thick.... I forgot too many hot and dusty evenings at train stations.... I forgot the laughter of weary men as they shared a wicker-covered bottle.... I forgot time slowing into a taut agony.... I forgot a dirty river glittering underneath the false life I created with no intention.... I forgot the days when I wished for just a bit of Heaven.... I forgot sleeping on a traffic island on a highway near Lyon.

[3]

I forgot feeling more far away than the moon over Ferris wheel.... I forgot summer clarified by sitting on a stone embankment on an ancient street: *suddenly heat rushed out of the evening...!* I forgot the dank air around a man, belt wrapped around one arm, heating a spoon.... I forgot the row of prone people on the remains of mattresses.... I forgot sighting a bloodied face through a cracked windshield, and moving on.... I forgot the laughter of weary men as they shared a wicker-covered bottle.... I forgot time slowing into a taut agony.... I forgot a dirty river glittering underneath the false life I created with no intention.... I forgot the days when I wished for just a bit of Heaven.

[4]

I forgot the row of prone people on the remains of mattresses.... I forgot sighting a bloodied face through a cracked windshield, and moving on.... I forgot rain becoming thick.... I forgot the tiny woman with huge buckteeth her lover used as a bottle opener.... I forgot the enchanting glow emanating from a murderer's eyes.... I forgot too many hot and dusty evenings at train stations.... I forgot long lines of Arab workers in cheap suits attached to small bundles.... I forgot a dirty river glittering underneath the false life I created with no intention.... I forgot the days when I wished for just a bit of Heaven.

[5]

I forgot the fair where I learned loud carries overpower reason.... I forgot the stench of spilled wine.... I forgot feeling more far away than the moon over Ferris wheel.... I forgot the town where all women possessed supple thighs.... I forgot the hollow man in a basement collecting water as it dropped from a corroded hole.... I forgot the dank air around a man, belt wrapped around one arm, heating a spoon.... I forgot strolling outside to hear trees murmur.... I forgot seeing sky as the sea and sea as the sky.... I forgot the Frenchman cooking horsemeat in blood, wine and garlic while lecturing on techniques for making plastique.... I forgot rain becoming thick.

[6]

I forgot the bare arms that defined "summer browned".... I forgot feeling more far away than the moon over Ferris wheel.... I forgot the town where all women possessed supple thighs.... I forgot summer clarified by sitting on a stone embankment on an ancient street: *suddenly heat rushed out of the evening...!* I forgot the row of prone people on the remains of mattresses.... I forgot seeing sky as the sea and sea as the sky.... I forgot the Frenchman cooking horsemeat in blood, wine and garlic while lecturing on techniques for making plastique.... I forgot lighting candles but not saying Grace.... I forgot the enchanting glow emanating from a murderer's eyes.... I forgot too many hot and dusty evenings at train stations.... I forgot time slowing into a taut agony.

[7]

I forgot the stench of spilled wine.... I forgot feeling more far away than the moon over Ferris wheel.... I forgot summer clarified by sitting on a stone embankment on an ancient street: *suddenly heat rushed out of the evening...!* I forgot the hollow man in a basement collecting water as it dropped from a corroded hole.... I forgot strolling outside to hear trees murmur.... I forgot the Frenchman cooking horsemeat in blood, wine and garlic while lecturing on techniques for making plastique.... I forgot the enchanting glow emanating from a murderer's eyes. I forgot the laughter of weary men as they shared a wicker-covered bottle.... I forgot time slowing into a taut agony.... I forgot intention is a form of focus, at times control.

[8]

I forgot the stench of spilled wine.... I forgot the row of prone people on the remains of mattresses.... I forgot strolling outside to hear trees murmur.... I forgot seeing sky as the sea and sea as the sky.... I forgot lighting candles but not saying Grace.... I forgot rain becoming thick.... I forgot long lines of Arab workers in cheap suits attached to small bundles.... I forgot time slowing into a taut agony.

Silences: The Autobiography of Loss

[1]

I forgot she was not the wind. Not then.... I forgot surveying bone resigned to an impending break.... I forgot instructing saliva to wait.... I forgot she accommodated my brandy.... I forgot obviating zero gravity to hone in.... I forgot turning professorial with a box of Corona Gordas harrumphing by my side.... I forgot hands slowly betraying their French manicures.... I forgot she throbbed.... I forgot the conundrums of evacuating mornings.... I forgot eyes widening to pull in more of the world.... I forgot intimacies with cognac and port, mahogany furniture, creaking butlers, stuffed animal heads on walls, minor European royalty, cherry-scented pipes, tartan...

[2]

I forgot she was not the wind. Not then.... I forgot instructing saliva to wait.... I forgot promiscuity in chiding weather.... I forgot hands slowly betraying their French manicures.... I forgot she throbbed.... I forgot eyes unable to transcend bleakness.... I forgot eyes widening to pull in more of the world.... I forgot chastisement rom a scar traversing her belly.... I forgot whispering as a failed position, *It is good to feel*.

[3]

I forgot I knew better than to display flinch.... I forgot periscopic sightings of her toes, so much like young toads from an underbrush in Brazil.... I forgot she accommodated my brandy.... I forgot her poverty at spatial relationships—in sympathy, one of us pawed at air.... I forgot my chin's truculent shoving at air expanded the whites in her eyes, but also parted her lips to reveal a lollipop-green tongue's peek.... I forgot eyes unable to transcend bleakness.... I forgot eyes widening to pull in more of the world.... I forgot intimacies with cognac and port, mahogany furniture, creaking butlers, stuffed animal heads on walls, minor European royalty, cherry-scented pipes, tartan.... I forgot chastisement rom a scar traversing her belly.

[4]

I forgot her poverty at spatial relationships—in sympathy, one of us pawed at air.... I forgot my chin's truculent shoving at air expanded the whites in her eyes, but also parted her lips to reveal a lollipop-green tongue's peek.... I forgot hands slowly betraying their French manicures.... I forgot she became the wind after losing all misgivings at drying my feet with her hair.... I forgot the moons ending all days bequeathed by leap years.... I forgot she throbbed.... I forgot the conundrums of evacuating mornings.... I forgot intimacies with cognac and port, mahogany furniture, creaking butlers, stuffed animal heads on walls, minor European royalty, cherry-scented pipes, tartan.... I forgot chastisement rom a scar traversing her belly.

[5]

I forgot she was not the wind. Not then.... I forgot surveying bone resigned to an impending break.... I forgot I knew better than to display flinch.... I forgot instructing saliva to wait.... I forgot she quivered like 19th century theater.... I forgot she accommodated my brandy.... I forgot obviating zero gravity to hone in.... I forgot germs in silk pavilions embossed with blue dragons.... I forgot turning professorial with a box of Corona Gordas harrumphing by my side.... I forgot hands slowly betraying their French manicures.

[6]

I forgot her red-rimmed eyes denoted the exhausted pace of a replicating light-year.... I forgot I knew better than to display flinch.... I forgot instructing saliva to wait.... I forgot periscopic sightings of her toes, so much like young toads from an underbrush in Brazil.... I forgot her poverty at spatial relationships—in sympathy, one of us pawed at air.... I forgot germs in silk pavilions embossed with blue dragons.... I forgot turning professorial with a box of Corona Gordas harrumphing by my side.... I forgot promiscuity in chiding weather.... I forgot the moons ending all days bequeathed by leap years.... I forgot she throbbed.... I forgot eyes widening to pull in more of the world.

[7]

I forgot surveying bone resigned to an impending break.... I forgot I knew better than to display flinch.... I forgot periscopic sightings of her toes, so much like young toads from an underbrush in Brazil.... I forgot she quivered like 19th century theater.... I forgot obviating zero gravity to hone in.... I forgot turning professorial with a box of Corona Gordas harrumphing by my side.... I forgot the moons ending all days bequeathed by leap years.... I forgot eyes unable to transcend bleakness.... I forgot eyes widening to pull in more of the world.... I forgot her interior became an effective compass.

[8]

I forgot surveying bone resigned to an impending break.... I forgot her poverty at spatial relationships—in sympathy, one of us pawed at air.... I forgot obviating zero gravity to hone in.... I forgot germs in silk pavilions embossed with blue dragons.... I forgot promiscuity in chiding weather.... I forgot hands slowly betraying their French manicures.... I forgot the conundrums of evacuating mornings.... I forgot eyes widening to pull in more of the world....

The Light Sang as It Left Your Eyes

[1]

I forgot steel will bend to form a heart.... I forgot wax will freeze to form a heart.... I forgot water will trap itself in rust to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Yasuhiko Asaka of Japan.... I forgot my father is not Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania.... I forgot stone will receive the chisel to form a heart.... I forgot branches will break to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Hermann Wilhelm Goering of Germany.... I forgot a child will crayon to form a heart.... I forgot flamenco will stomp the floor to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Adolf Hitler of Germany.

[2]

I forgot steel will bend to form a heart.... I forgot water will trap itself in rust to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Francisco Franco Bahamonde of Spain.... I forgot branches will break to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Hermann Wilhelm Goering of Germany.... I forgot my father is not Heinrich Himmler of Germany.... I forgot flamenco will stomp the floor to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Enver Hoxha of Albania.... I forgot my father is not Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

[3]

I forgot my father is not Idi Amin of Uganda.... I forgot my father is not Ion Antonescu of Romania.... I forgot my father is not Yasuhiko Asaka of Japan.... I forgot leaves will fall to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti.... I forgot my father is not Heinrich Himmler of Germany.... I forgot flamenco will stomp the floor to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Adolf Hitler of Germany.... I forgot my father is not Enver Hoxha of Albania.

[4]

I forgot leaves will fall to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti.... I forgot branches will break to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Joseph Goebbels of Germany.... I forgot muscle will grow to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Hermann Wilhelm Goering of Germany.... I forgot a child will crayon to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Adolf Hitler of Germany.... I forgot my father is not Enver Hoxha of Albania.

[5]

I forgot steel will bend to form a heart.... I forgot wax will freeze to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Idi Amin of Uganda.... I forgot water will trap itself in rust to form a heart.... I forgot tears will evaporate to remember a heart.... I forgot my father is not Yasuhiko Asaka of Japan.... I forgot my father is not Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania.... I forgot a mountain will split to form a heart.... I forgot stone will receive the chisel to form a heart.... I forgot branches will break to form a heart.

[6]

I forgot ink will flow to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Idi Amin of Uganda.... I forgot water will trap itself in rust to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Ion Antonescu of Romania.... I forgot leaves will fall to form a heart.... I forgot a mountain will split to form a heart.... I forgot stone will receive the chisel to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Francisco Franco Bahamonde of Spain.... I forgot muscle will grow to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Hermann Wilhelm Goering of Germany.... I forgot flamenco will stomp the floor to form a heart.

[7]

I forgot wax will freeze to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Idi Amin of Uganda.... I forgot my father is not Ion Antonescu of Romania.... I forgot tears will evaporate to remember a heart.... I forgot a mountain will split to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Francisco Franco Bahamonde of Spain.... I forgot muscle will grow to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Heinrich Himmler of Germany.... I forgot flamenco will stomp the floor to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Elie Hobeika of Lebanon.

[8]

I forgot wax will freeze to form a heart.... I forgot leaves will fall to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania.... I forgot a mountain will split to form a heart.... I forgot my father is not Francisco Franco Bahamonde of Spain.... I forgot branches will break to form a heart.... I forgot a child will crayon to form a heart.... I forgot flamenco will stomp the floor to form a heart.

The Singer and Others: Flamenco Hay(na)ku

[1]

I forgot the waves rolling away from Asia to storm even the Americas.... I forgot the pulse of waves echoing heels—two dozen pounding on wood floors, pulsing to a flamenco beat.... I forgot flamenco's Third Commandment: never reveal the rest to outsiders.... I forgot Carmen Amaya who sweated so much when she danced that aftermath meant pouring sweat out of her shoes.... I forgot cantaores drowning in their own blood to sing one last letra.... I forgot El Gitano ripped his shirt.... I forgot draping black velvet over the sun.... I forgot the blood in the Sangria was my mother's.... I forgot glasses of *aguardiente* to kill what cannot really be killed.... I forgot Clementina ladling milk over white marble, then pouring crimson pollen over gold statues living in gardens visible only to third eyes.... I forgot Clementina laughing at the purpling sky and her father's brooding windows.

[2]

I forgot the waves rolling away from Asia to storm even the Americas.... I forgot flamenco's Third Commandment: never reveal the rest to outsiders.... I forgot she clawed her cheeks.... I forgot draping black velvet over the sun.... I forgot the blood in the Sangria was my mother's.... I forgot Clementina stuffing Rosa with candied chestnuts in brandy syrup, perfectly grilled sardines, and the most tender, marinated octopus.... I forgot Clementina ladling milk over white marble, then pouring crimson pollen over gold statues living in gardens visible only to third eyes.... I forgot him singing the whips over his ancestors as they were driven out of India.... I forgot him singing a man thrown in jail for stealing grapes to appease the ugly grunts of his starving wife and children.

[3]

I forgot flamenco's Second Commandment: do it in time, *en compas(s)*! I forgot my summer with Lorca: *So much desire! So much to desire!* I forgot Carmen Amaya who sweated so much when she danced that aftermath meant pouring sweat out of her shoes.... I forgot green mornings pulsing with the ferocious flowers of red hearts.... I forgot the killer nicknamed "Bullet" for his bald head and thick neck, all smooth except where puckered a scar documenting the flight of a gunshot.... I forgot Clementina stuffing Rosa with candied chestnuts in brandy syrup, perfectly grilled sardines, and the most tender, marinated octopus.... I forgot Clementina ladling milk over white marble, then pouring crimson pollen over gold statues living in gardens visible only to third eyes.... I forgot Clementina laughing at the purpling sky and her father's brooding windows.... I forgot him singing the whips over his ancestors as they were driven out of India.

[4]

I forgot green mornings pulsing with the ferocious flowers of red hearts.... I forgot the killer nicknamed "Bullet" for his bald head and thick neck, all smooth except where puckered a scar documenting the flight of a gunshot.... I forgot draping black velvet over the sun.... I forgot the claws ending her feet.... I forgot large fists bunched on her back, hunched from reined-in wings.... I forgot the blood

in the Sangria was my mother's.... I forgot glasses of *aguardiente* to kill what cannot really be killed.... I forgot Clementina laughing at her bruises, both then and those yet to come.... I forgot him singing a man thrown in jail for stealing grapes to appease the ugly grunts of his starving wife and children.

[5]

I forgot the waves rolling away from Asia to storm even the Americas.... I forgot the pulse of waves echoing heels—two dozen pounding on wood floors, pulsing to a flamenco beat.... I forgot flamenco's Second Commandment: do it in time, *en compas(s)*! I forgot flamenco's Third Commandment: never reveal the rest to outsiders.... I forgot stepping into a story I falsely thought belonged to me.... I forgot Carmen Amaya who sweated so much when she danced that aftermath meant pouring sweat out of her shoes.... I forgot cantaores drowning in their own blood to sing one last letra.... I forgot Vincent Romero, sweat, marijuana, oranges, cloves and the fall of blue-black hair.... I forgot El Gitano ripped his shirt.... I forgot draping black velvet over the sun.

[6]

I forgot flamenco's First of Ten Commandments: *Dame la verdad*, Tell the Truth! I forgot flamenco's Second Commandment: do it in time, *en compas(s)*! I forgot flamenco's Third Commandment: never reveal the rest to outsiders.... I forgot my summer with Lorca: *So much desire! So much to desire!* I forgot green mornings pulsing with the ferocious flowers of red hearts.... I forgot Vincent Romero, sweat, marijuana, oranges, cloves and the fall of blue-black hair.... I forgot El Gitano ripped his shirt.... I forgot she clawed her cheeks.... I forgot large fists bunched on her back, hunched from reined-in wings.... I forgot the blood in the Sangria was my mother's.... I forgot Clementina ladling milk over white marble, then pouring crimson pollen over gold statues living in gardens visible only to third eyes.

[7]

I forgot the pulse of waves echoing heels—two dozen pounding on wood floors, pulsing to a flamenco beat.... I forgot flamenco's Second Commandment: do it in time, *en compas(s)*! I forgot my summer with Lorca: *So much desire! So much to desire!* I forgot stepping into a story I falsely thought belonged to me.... I forgot cantaores drowning in their own blood to sing one last letra.... I forgot El Gitano ripped his shirt.... I forgot large fists bunched on her back, hunched from reined-in wings.... I forgot Clementina stuffing Rosa with candied chestnuts in brandy syrup, perfectly grilled sardines, and the most tender, marinated octopus.... I forgot Clementina ladling milk over white marble, then pouring crimson pollen over gold statues living in gardens visible only to third eyes.... I forgot Clementina laughing at her bruises, both then and those yet to come.

[8]

I forgot the pulse of waves echoing heels—two dozen pounding on wood floors, pulsing to a flamenco beat.... I forgot green mornings pulsing with the ferocious flowers of red hearts.... I forgot cantaores drowning in their own blood to sing one last letra.... I forgot Vincent Romero, sweat, marijuana, oranges, cloves and

the fall of blue-black hair.... I forgot she clawed her cheeks.... I forgot draping black velvet over the sun.... I forgot glasses of *aguardiente* to kill what cannot really be killed.... I forgot Clementina ladling milk over white marble, then pouring crimson pollen over gold statues living in gardens visible only to third eyes.

Nota Bene Eiswein

[1]

I forgot the interior, from the beginning, was stone.... I forgot that stone was the compromise defining the absence of void.... I forgot how effectively pain obviates abstractions.... I forgot that *thing* unidentifiable, though it evoked pink pearls luminescent among a gutted goat's entrails.... I forgot I was left with a stone watching itself like a poem in a forest, covered fretfully by ancient moss, its legacy only a stone toe with its orange paint long faded (though it lingers in someone's memory).... I forgot sunsets call for wine.... I forgot we agreed to toss away the blindfold so that our ears can become more than holes for burning stones tossed our way by a cruel race.... Or stones tossed our way by a passive bureaucrat wielding power over the education of the child we will never have.... Or stones tossed our way by that obscene combination of trust fund baby and hedge fund billionaire.... I forgot the absence of green as my bandaged wing swung to break stalactites. I forgot that after ice falls, they merely lie on ground, evaporating.... I forgot a mirrored face only partially owns its reflection.

[2]

I forgot the interior, from the beginning, was stone.... I forgot how effectively pain obviates abstractions.... I forgot paint can transform canvas to skin. I forgot that when the paint can is empty, only then will innocence reveal itself.... I forgot we agreed to toss away the blindfold so that our ears can become more than holes for burning stones tossed our way by a cruel race.... Or stones tossed our way by a passive bureaucrat wielding power over the education of the child we will never have.... Or stones tossed our way by the demands of poverty: how poverty paradoxically narrows the impoverished focus into the small, then petty, then brutish.... I forgot the absence of green as my bandaged wing swung to break stalactites. I forgot that after ice falls, they merely lie on ground, evaporating. I forgot a long-haired woman exists, but outside the frame as has been reality for centuries.... I forgot how the sun's stare becomes tolerable through the cotton eyelets of another generation's apron.

[3]

I forgot a roof tile flew and slate sliced my cheek. Blood on fingers after brushing against cheek's glimmer of bone.... I forgot *crackle of light, dream of icicles* and the unpredictability of angles cut by any creature chased for its nutritious heart.... I forgot that *thing* unidentifiable, though it evoked pink pearls luminescent among a gutted goat's entrails.... I forgot we were swollen underground with rain as certain elements erased their absence:

whisper
Song
stairway

I forgot the moving prop of clouds can fail to soften the edges of dark architecture.... Or stones tossed our way by the demands of poverty: how poverty paradoxically narrows the impoverished focus into the small, then petty, then brutish.... I forgot the absence of green as my bandaged wing swung to break stalactites. I forgot

that after ice falls, they merely lie on ground, evaporating.... I forgot a mirrored face only partially owns its reflection.... I forgot a long-haired woman exists, but outside the frame as has been reality for centuries.

[4]

I forgot we were swollen underground with rain as certain elements erased their absence:

whisper

Song

stairway

I forgot the moving prop of clouds can fail to soften the edges of dark architecture.... I forgot we agreed to toss away the blindfold so that our ears can become more than holes for burning stones tossed our way by a cruel race.... Or stones tossed our way by a venal dictatorship.... Or stones tossed our way by an incompetent health care system.... Or stones tossed our way by a passive bureaucrat wielding power over the education of the child we will never have.... Or stones tossed our way by that obscene combination of trust fund baby and hedge fund billionaire.... I forgot a mirrored face only partially owns its reflection.... I forgot a long-haired woman exists, but outside the frame as has been reality for centuries.

[5]

I forgot the interior, from the beginning, was stone.... I forgot that stone was the compromise defining the absence of void.... I forgot a roof tile flew and slate sliced my cheek. Blood on fingers after brushing against cheek's glimmer of bone.... I forgot how effectively pain obviates abstractions.... ~~I forgot the maddened sunlight into which hostages emptied long-held fears as they erupted from a robbed bank....~~ I forgot that *thing* unidentifiable, though it evoked pink pearls luminescent among a gutted goat's entrails.... I forgot I was left with a stone watching itself like a poem in a forest, covered fretfully by ancient moss, its legacy only a stone toe with its orange paint long faded (though it lingers in someone's memory).... I forgot a woman shrouded herself in white linen—a poem invisible but stubbornly transparent until flesh became stone.... I forgot sunsets call for wine.... I forgot we agreed to toss away the blindfold so that our ears can become more than holes for burning stones tossed our way by a cruel race.

[6]

I forgot that when a stone hand cracks, its pieces will not be caught.... I forgot a roof tile flew and slate sliced my cheek. Blood on fingers after brushing against cheek's glimmer of bone.... I forgot how effectively pain obviates abstractions.... I forgot *crackle of light, dream of icicles* and the unpredictability of angles cut by any creature chased for its nutritious heart.... I forgot we were swollen underground with rain as certain elements erased their absence:

whisper

Song

stairway

I forgot a woman shrouded herself in white linen—a poem invisible but stubbornly

transparent until flesh became stone.... I forgot sunsets call for wine.... I forgot paint can transform canvas to skin. I forgot that when the paint can is empty, only then will innocence reveal itself.... Or stones tossed our way by an incompetent health care system.... Or stones tossed our way by a passive bureaucrat wielding power over the education of the child we will never have.... I forgot the absence of green as my bandaged wing swung to break stalactites. I forgot that after ice falls, they merely lie on ground, evaporating.

[7]

I forgot that stone was the compromise defining the absence of void.... I forgot a roof tile flew and slate sliced my cheek. Blood on fingers after brushing against cheek's glimmer of bone.... I forgot *crackle of light, dream of icicles* and the unpredictability of angles cut by any creature chased for its nutritious heart.... I forgot the maddened sunlight into which hostages emptied long-held fears as they erupted from a robbed bank.... I forgot I was left with a stone watching itself like a poem in a forest, covered fretfully by ancient moss, its legacy only a stone toe with its orange paint long faded (though it lingers in someone's memory).... I forgot sunsets call for wine.... Or stones tossed our way by an incompetent health care system.... Or stones tossed our way by the demands of poverty: how poverty paradoxically narrows the impoverished focus into the small, then petty, then brutish.... I forgot the absence of green as my bandaged wing swung to break stalactites. I forgot that after ice falls, they merely lie on ground, evaporating.... I forgot flying fish are always wide-eyed always breathless always look unbelieving.

[8]

I forgot that stone was the compromise defining the absence of void.... I forgot we were swollen underground with rain as certain elements erased their absence:

whisper
Song
stairway

I forgot I was left with a stone watching itself like a poem in a forest, covered fretfully by ancient moss, its legacy only a stone toe with its orange paint long faded (though it lingers in someone's memory).... I forgot a woman shrouded herself in white linen—a poem invisible but stubbornly transparent until flesh became stone.... I forgot paint can transform canvas to skin. I forgot that when the paint can is empty, only then will innocence reveal itself.... I forgot we agreed to toss away the blindfold so that our ears can become more than holes for burning stones tossed our way by a cruel race.... Or stones tossed our way by that obscene combination of trust fund baby and hedge fund billionaire.... I forgot the absence of green as my bandaged wing swung to break stalactites. I forgot that after ice falls, they merely lie on ground, evaporating.

Footnotes to Algebra

[1]

I forgot the musk of evenings quivering into post-elegance.... I forgot the blossoming of desk lamps.... I forgot there was no need to apologize for dancing from one's hips *roundly*, eyes closed, taking up as much space as one wanted on the dance floor of someone else's wedding.... I forgot the brutality of cracked skies captured by ancient warriors with "lightning marks" as long grooves along the wooden shafts of their arrows.... I forgot Montana where I breathed *deeply* the scent of black earth, *dampening*.... I forgot whispering to a daughter borne from rape, "Regret is not your legacy".... I forgot Alexander Pope's proclamation in *The Second Book of Horace*, "The vulgar boil while the *learned* roast an egg".... I forgot the storm that shamed the nasturtiums I'd watered all summer with dishwater.... I forgot whatever you did that would cause you to rear up on your death bed, agony anticipating your aftermath.... I forgot wrestling a long poem until I had gathered all thorns into my cupped palms for birthing psalms. I saw a stranger's blood mixed with rose petals to birth generous perfume.... I forgot turquoise on the Kachina doll hanging on your wall, color of sunlit ocean embracing Greece while you explored Mexico. I remember Philip Lamantia.

[2]

I forgot the musk of evenings quivering into post-elegance.... I forgot there was no need to apologize for dancing from one's hips *roundly*, eyes closed, taking up as much space as one wanted on the dance floor of someone else's wedding.... I forgot violets vomiting rue.... I forgot Alexander Pope's proclamation in *The Second Book of Horace*, "The vulgar boil while the *learned* roast an egg".... I forgot the storm that shamed the nasturtiums I'd watered all summer with dishwater.... I forgot three coyotes peeing upon the buttercups.... I forgot wrestling a long poem until I had gathered all thorns into my cupped palms for birthing psalms. I saw a stranger's blood mixed with rose petals to birth generous perfume.... I forgot you entering the blue frame of glass bordering the blue wooden door into *Maykadeh* where we met for "they do wonders with tongue." I forgot the sprezzatura that woke my veins. I remember Philip Lamantia.... I forgot how, sweetly, you offered eggplant—its skin made palatable through much prior bruising. I remember you, Philip Lamantia.

[3]

I forgot a plea to be buried under a canopy of red roses.... I forgot Pygmalion sculpted himself into an embrace, and used stone in hopes the hold would never break.... I forgot the brutality of cracked skies captured by ancient warriors with "lightning marks" as long grooves along the wooden shafts of their arrows.... I forgot the votive candle flickering within my navel.... I forgot the wasp nesting behind the screen door.... I forgot three coyotes peeing upon the buttercups.... I forgot wrestling a long poem until I had gathered all thorns into my cupped palms for birthing psalms. I saw a stranger's blood mixed with rose petals to birth generous perfume.... I forgot turquoise on the Kachina doll hanging on your wall, color of sunlit ocean embracing Greece while you explored Mexico. I remember

Philip Lamantia.... I forgot you entering the blue frame of glass bordering the blue wooden door into *Maykadeh* where we met for “they do wonders with tongue.” I forgot the sprezzatura that woke my veins. I remember Philip Lamantia.

[4]

I forgot the votive candle flickering within my navel.... I forgot the wasp nesting behind the screen door.... I forgot Alexander Pope’s proclamation in *The Second Book of Horace*, “The vulgar boil while the *learned* roast an egg”.... I forgot never privileging the chaff.... I forgot betraying the butler with mother-of-pearl cufflinks.... I forgot the storm that shamed the nasturtiums I’d watered all summer with dishwater.... I forgot whatever you did that would cause you to rear up on your death bed, agony anticipating your aftermath.... I forgot turquoise on the Kachina doll hanging on your wall, color of sunlit ocean embracing Greece while you explored Mexico. I remember Philip Lamantia.... I forgot you entering the blue frame of glass bordering the blue wooden door into *Maykadeh* where we met for “they do wonders with tongue.” I forgot the sprezzatura that woke my veins. I remember Philip Lamantia.

[5]

I forgot the musk of evenings quivering into post-elegance.... I forgot the blossoming of desk lamps.... I forgot a plea to be buried under a canopy of red roses.... I forgot there was no need to apologize for dancing from one’s hips *roundly*, eyes closed, taking up as much space as one wanted on the dance floor of someone else’s wedding.... I forgot sand shimmering with black diamonds, the world pausing to form a black diamond, and fear becoming as real as a black diamond.... I forgot the brutality of cracked skies captured by ancient warriors with “lightning marks” as long grooves along the wooden shafts of their arrows.... I forgot Montana where I breathed *deeply* the scent of black earth, *dampening*.... I forgot the practicality of water.... I forgot whispering to a daughter borne from rape, “Regret is not your legacy”.... I forgot Alexander Pope’s proclamation in *The Second Book of Horace*, “The vulgar boil while the learned roast an egg.”

[6]

I forgot I wanted to make memories, not simply press petals between pages of expendable books.... I forgot a plea to be buried under a canopy of red roses.... I forgot there was no need to apologize for dancing from one’s hips *roundly*, eyes closed, taking up as much space as one wanted on the dance floor of someone else’s wedding.... I forgot Pygmalion sculpted himself into an embrace, and used stone in hopes the hold would never break.... I forgot the votive candle flickering within my navel.... I forgot the practicality of water.... I forgot whispering to a daughter borne from rape, “Regret is not your legacy”.... I forgot violets vomiting rue.... I forgot betraying the butler with mother-of-pearl cufflinks.... I forgot the storm that shamed the nasturtiums I’d watered all summer with dishwater.... I forgot wrestling a long poem until I had gathered all thorns into my cupped palms for birthing psalms. I saw a stranger’s blood mixed with rose petals to birth generous perfume.

[7]

I forgot the blossoming of desk lamps.... I forgot a plea to be buried under a canopy of red roses.... I forgot Pygmalion sculpted himself into an embrace, and used stone in hopes the hold would never break.... I forgot sand shimmering with black diamonds, the world pausing to form a black diamond, and fear becoming as real as a black diamond.... I forgot Montana where I breathed *deeply* the scent of black earth, *dampening*.... I forgot whispering to a daughter borne from rape, "Regret is not your legacy".... I forgot betraying the butler with mother-of-pearl cufflinks.... I forgot three coyotes peeing upon the buttercups.... I forgot wrestling a long poem until I had gathered all thorns into my cupped palms for birthing psalms. I saw a stranger's blood mixed with rose petals to birth generous perfume.... I forgot the puzzle of agriculture. I remember Philip Lamantia.

[8]

I forgot the blossoming of desk lamps.... I forgot the votive candle flickering within my navel.... I forgot Montana where I breathed *deeply* the scent of black earth, *dampening*.... I forgot the practicality of water.... I forgot violets vomiting rue.... I forgot Alexander Pope's proclamation in *The Second Book of Horace*, "The vulgar boil while the *learned* roast an egg".... I forgot whatever you did that would cause you to rear up on your death bed, agony anticipating your aftermath.... I forgot wrestling a long poem until I had gathered all thorns into my cupped palms for birthing psalms. I saw a stranger's blood mixed with rose petals to birth generous perfume.

Roman Holiday

[1]

I forgot there are keys to everything, even handcuffs missing their rabbit fur linings.... I forgot everything about Catullus except his scurrilous invective.... I forgot folding into sadness.... I forgot wondering if sweat can ever be dishonest.... I forgot I never knew the words to a poem etched beneath the exact center of the Vatican.... I forgot you consistently parted your lips when you uttered my name.... I forgot disappointing myself for emulating Lucan who created *Bellum Civile* by using Vergil's *Aeneid* as a "negative compositional model".... I forgot whether English became the universal language for its limited vocabulary.... I forgot the hundreds of words in Hindi that mean "lotus".... I forgot she tottered on ice despite thick ankles.... I forgot Sulpicia, the Roman woman writer who wrote Latin elegies attributed to the man Tibullus.

[2]

I forgot there are keys to everything, even handcuffs missing their rabbit fur linings.... I forgot folding into sadness.... I forgot the fool who thought the Gobi Desert stretched out its arms and yawned.... I forgot disappointing myself for emulating Lucan who created *Bellum Civile* by using Vergil's *Aeneid* as a "negative compositional model".... I forgot whether English became the universal language for its limited vocabulary.... I forgot Quintus Ennius who founded a movement through which he became replaced.... I forgot she tottered on ice despite thick ankles.... I forgot satire is the literary genre Romans considered truly their own.... I forgot penury forcing me into a staring contest with an ice cube.

[3]

I forgot artists rise (or fall into) desecrated battlegrounds.... I forgot the bottle emptying as another day gave way.... I forgot wondering if sweat can ever be dishonest.... I forgot the relief of witnessing a smile.... I forgot my father was benign in his absence.... I forgot Quintus Ennius who founded a movement through which he became replaced.... I forgot she tottered on ice despite thick ankles.... I forgot Sulpicia, the Roman woman writer who wrote Latin elegies attributed to the man Tibullus.... I forgot satire is the literary genre Romans considered truly their own.

[4]

I forgot the relief of witnessing a smile.... I forgot my father was benign in his absence.... I forgot disappointing myself for emulating Lucan who created *Bellum Civile* by using Vergil's *Aeneid* as a "negative compositional model".... I forgot meals haphazardly made from hors d'oeuvres.... I forgot doubting Shakespeare's appreciation of Titus Maccius Plautus: perhaps "greatest comic" is like "giant shrimp"? I forgot whether English became the universal language for its limited vocabulary.... I forgot the hundreds of words in Hindi that mean "lotus".... I forgot Sulpicia, the Roman woman writer who wrote Latin elegies

attributed to the man Tibullus.... I forgot satire is the literary genre Romans considered truly their own.

[5]

I forgot there are keys to everything, even handcuffs missing their rabbit fur linings.... I forgot everything about Catullus except his scurrilous invective.... I forgot artists rise (or fall into) desecrated battlegrounds.... I forgot folding into sadness.... I forgot looking at glass and not seeing its transparency.... I forgot wondering if sweat can ever be dishonest.... I forgot I never knew the words to a poem etched beneath the exact center of the Vatican.... I forgot *mansplainers*—forgot nothing about Albius Tibullus whose poems lurched their way into non-existence, though Quintilian considered him the best poet of the Roman empire.... I forgot you consistently parted your lips when you uttered my name.... I forgot disappointing myself for emulating Lucan who created *Bellum Civile* by using Vergil's *Aeneid* as a “negative compositional model.”

[6]

I forgot the trip wire, leering as it hid in shimmering summer heat.... I forgot artists rise (or fall into) desecrated battlegrounds.... I forgot folding into sadness.... I forgot the bottle emptying as another day gave way.... I forgot the relief of witnessing a smile.... I forgot *mansplainers*—forgot nothing about Albius Tibullus whose poems lurched their way into non-existence, though Quintilian considered him the best poet of the Roman empire.... I forgot you consistently parted your lips when you uttered my name.... I forgot the fool who thought the Gobi Desert stretched out its arms and yawned.... I forgot doubting Shakespeare's appreciation of Titus Maccius Plautus: perhaps “greatest comic” is like “giant shrimp”? I forgot whether English became the universal language for its limited vocabulary.... I forgot she tottered on ice despite thick ankles.

[7]

I forgot everything about Catullus except his scurrilous invective.... I forgot artists rise (or fall into) desecrated battlegrounds.... I forgot the bottle emptying as another day gave way.... I forgot looking at glass and not seeing its transparency.... I forgot I never knew the words to a poem etched beneath the exact center of the Vatican.... I forgot you consistently parted your lips when you uttered my name.... I forgot doubting Shakespeare's appreciation of Titus Maccius Plautus: perhaps “greatest comic” is like “giant shrimp”? I forgot Quintus Ennius who founded a movement through which he became replaced.... I forgot she tottered on ice despite thick ankles.... I forgot the winter ballroom where tuxedos prevailed.

[8]

I forgot everything about Catullus except his scurrilous invective.... I forgot the relief of witnessing a smile.... I forgot I never knew the words to a poem etched beneath the exact center of the Vatican.... I forgot *mansplainers*—forgot nothing about Albius Tibullus whose poems lurched their way into non-existence, though Quintilian considered him the best poet of the Roman empire.... I forgot the fool who thought the Gobi Desert stretched out its arms and yawned.... I forgot disappointing myself for emulating Lucan who created *Bellum Civile* by using

Vergil's *Aeneid* as a "negative compositional model".... I forgot the hundreds of words in Hindi that mean "lotus".... I forgot she tottered on ice despite thick ankles.

The Thorn Rosary

[1]

I forgot the child soldiers.... I forgot how, at the slightest hint of light, he closed like a purple mirabilis jalapa folding petals into a fist.... I forgot the mother whose absence was a singe.... I forgot Pushkin grieving specifically because Beauty exists.... I forgot how, instead of longing for me, you simply became confused with my absence.... I forgot how you saw a tree and *felt* a rope.... I forgot algebra can become orphaned.... I forgot the gentle rain of Burgundy, its warmth washing the slate path towards Anne Gros' winery. I forgot how she crafted the wine, but deferred to her father.... I forgot a desecrated battleground as a condition precedent towards becoming an artist.... I forgot how tiny stones clattered from his tread as he strode down your garden path, mud falling from his riding boots.... I forgot that, under his left eye, there lurked a scar people did not acknowledge but always culled from memory.

[2]

I forgot the child soldiers.... I forgot the mother whose absence was a singe.... I forgot how you saw a mule and *felt* the incredible sadness only gods should feel because (1) they are omniscient, and (2) they might be seduced into mercy.... I forgot algebra can become orphaned.... I forgot the gentle rain of Burgundy, its warmth washing the slate path towards Anne Gros' winery. I forgot how she crafted the wine, but deferred to her father.... I forgot how fire erupted like a poem.... I forgot how tiny stones clattered from his tread as he strode down your garden path, mud falling from his riding boots.... I forgot cool breezes coiling milky skeins around pine trees. It was Baguio City before every inch of its hills became slathered with shanties.... I forgot how delicately the afternoon sliced his face with the edge of a half-open curtain that revealed just enough of the sun's passage and distaste.

[3]

I forgot a bedroom designed as an egg. I forgot silk walls of the same pale lapis lazuli occasionally discerned staining Antarctic ice.... I forgot the loss of translation when she uttered, "Sky is better than aspirin".... I forgot Pushkin grieving specifically because Beauty exists.... I forgot how an orphanage faded into grey noise. I forgot how the universe can settle into a role of background.... I forgot how you saw a mountain and *felt* a stove fire.... I forgot how fire erupted like a poem.... I forgot how tiny stones clattered from his tread as he strode down your garden path, mud falling from his riding boots.... I forgot that, under his left eye, there lurked a scar people did not acknowledge but always culled from memory.... I forgot cool breezes coiling milky skeins around pine trees. It was Baguio City before every inch of its hills became slathered with shanties.

[4]

I forgot how an orphanage faded into grey noise. I forgot how the universe can settle into a role of background.... I forgot how you saw a mountain and

felt a stove fire.... I forgot algebra can become orphaned.... I forgot there are keys to everything, even "safe houses".... I forgot Catullus due to his scurrilous invective.... I forgot the gentle rain of Burgundy, its warmth washing the slate path towards Anne Gros' winery. I forgot how she crafted the wine, but deferred to her father.... I forgot a desecrated battleground as a condition precedent towards becoming an artist.... I forgot that, under his left eye, there lurked a scar people did not acknowledge but always culled from memory.... I forgot cool breezes coiling milky skeins around pine trees. It was Baguio City before every inch of its hills became slathered with shanties.

[5]

I forgot the child soldiers.... I forgot how, at the slightest hint of light, he closed like a purple *mirabilis jalapa* folding petals into a fist.... I forgot a bedroom designed as an egg. I forgot silk walls of the same pale lapis lazuli occasionally discerned staining Antarctic ice.... I forgot the mother whose absence was a singe.... I forgot a dream of a harpist in white taffeta, ignored in a hotel lobby as she strummed and crooned atop chilly marble.... I forgot Pushkin grieving specifically because Beauty exists.... I forgot how, instead of longing for me, you simply became confused with my absence.... I forgot how you saw a cloud, but *felt* a hammer.... I forgot how you saw a tree and *felt* a rope.... I forgot algebra can become orphaned.

[6]

I forgot that "rehabilitation" meant he could accompany her smile that slid mirrors away from her eyes of blue sapphires.... I forgot a bedroom designed as an egg. I forgot silk walls of the same pale lapis lazuli occasionally discerned staining Antarctic ice.... I forgot the mother whose absence was a singe.... I forgot the loss of translation when she uttered, "Sky is better than aspirin".... I forgot how an orphanage faded into grey noise. I forgot how the universe can settle into a role of background.... I forgot how you saw a cloud, but *felt* a hammer.... I forgot how you saw a tree and *felt* a rope.... I forgot how you saw a mule and *felt* the incredible sadness only gods should feel because (1) they are omniscient, and (2) they might be seduced into mercy.... I forgot Catullus due to his scurrilous invective.... I forgot the gentle rain of Burgundy, its warmth washing the slate path towards Anne Gros' winery. I forgot how she crafted the wine, but deferred to her father.... I forgot how tiny stones clattered from his tread as he strode down your garden path, mud falling from his riding boots.

[7]

I forgot how, at the slightest hint of light, he closed like a purple *mirabilis jalapa* folding petals into a fist.... I forgot a bedroom designed as an egg. I forgot silk walls of the same pale lapis lazuli occasionally discerned staining Antarctic ice.... I forgot the loss of translation when she uttered, "Sky is better than aspirin".... I forgot a dream of a harpist in white taffeta, ignored in a hotel lobby as she strummed and crooned atop chilly marble.... I forgot how, instead of longing for me, you simply became confused with my absence.... I forgot how you saw a tree and *felt* a rope.... I forgot Catullus due to his scurrilous invective.... I forgot how fire erupted like a poem.... I forgot how tiny stones clattered from his tread

as he strode down your garden path, mud falling from his riding boots.... I forgot the famous painter who whispered, "When you see the glass, you do not see its transparency."

[8]

I forgot how, at the slightest hint of light, he closed like a purple *mirabilis jalapa* folding petals into a fist.... I forgot how an orphanage faded into grey noise. I forgot how the universe can settle into a role of background.... I forgot how, instead of longing for me, you simply became confused with my absence.... I forgot how you saw a cloud, but *felt* a hammer.... I forgot how you saw a mule and *felt* the incredible sadness only gods should feel because (1) they are omniscient, and (2) they might be seduced into mercy.... I forgot algebra can become orphaned.... I forgot a desecrated battleground as a condition precedent towards becoming an artist.... I forgot how tiny stones clattered from his tread as he strode down your garden path, mud falling from his riding boots.

the relational elations
of ORPHANED ALGEBRA

[1]

I forgot other boys like Samuel and Elwin whose bones became transparent.... I forgot imagination cannot alchemize air into protein.... I forgot an ascetic's illusion of ecstasy will always be illusion due to its condition precedent: a suffering so unmitigated it hollowed non-survivors from children to earthworms.... I forgot no one else noticing the diminishing moon's tiptoe across the night sky.... I forgot the lucidity of ancient mountains.... I forgot staring at a photograph of a baby with belly larger than head and later arguing with my math teacher, "Two negatives do not equal a positive!" I forgot broken glass surfacing my first conception of *Beauty* from the lovely wink of a glass sliver, belying edges and their sharpness.... I forgot the clutter of broken objects manifesting affordable treasures when one owns nothing, or owns only dilemmas over belonging.... I forgot the seeking that began without knowing whether one was beginning to stink or sing.... I forgot the differences between desires for father and fodder.... I forgot anthologies of glass.

[2]

I forgot other boys like Samuel and Elwin whose bones became transparent.... I forgot an ascetic's illusion of ecstasy will always be illusion due to its condition precedent: a suffering so unmitigated it hollowed non-survivors from children to earthworms.... I forgot a grandmother who threw empty bottles at a toddler's face.... I forgot broken glass surfacing my first conception of *Beauty* from the lovely wink of a glass sliver, belying edges and their sharpness.... I forgot the clutter of broken objects manifesting affordable treasures when one owns nothing, or owns only dilemmas over belonging.... I forgot questions thickening as the sun moved alongside the moon to preserve the possibility of synchronous precisions against skeptics who surfaced to avoid commitment.... I forgot the differences between desires for father and fodder.... I forgot a carapace, then its splitting.... I forgot a bolt of cream linen turning crimson along the edges touching the floor.

[3]

I forgot a "Mom" and "Dad" bringing me to a turquoise house cheered by kittens and where I learned meals will be finished and still there will be food for the next.... I forgot stuffing doves into burlap bags.... I forgot no one else noticing the diminishing moon's tiptoe across the night sky.... I forgot receiving a scar on my cheek while an emerald mountain wept.... I forgot the white light, white roses, white silk, white lace and white pearls that adorned my wedding—instead I remember this happy day included the whisper, "Mama, glass is easily broken ..." I forgot questions thickening as the sun moved alongside the moon to preserve the possibility of synchronous precisions against skeptics who surfaced to avoid commitment.... I forgot the differences between desires for father and fodder.... I forgot anthologies of glass.... I forgot a carapace, then its splitting.

[4]

I forgot receiving a scar on my cheek while an emerald mountain wept.... I forgot the white light, white roses, white silk, white lace and white pearls that adorned my wedding—instead I remember this happy day included the whisper, “Mama, glass is easily broken ...” I forgot broken glass surfacing my first conception of *Beauty* from the lovely wink of a glass sliver, belying edges and their sharpness.... I forgot algebra failing to succor when relationships were inevitably destabilized by indigenous cell memory.... I forgot the aftermaths from dilemmas of belonging.... I forgot the clutter of broken objects manifesting affordable treasures when one owns nothing, or owns only dilemmas over belonging.... I forgot the seeking that began without knowing whether one was beginning to stink or sing.... I forgot anthologies of glass.... I forgot a carapace, then its splitting.

[5]

I forgot other boys like Samuel and Elwin whose bones became transparent.... I forgot imagination cannot alchemize air into protein.... I forgot a “Mom” and “Dad” bringing me to a turquoise house cheered by kittens and where I learned meals will be finished and still there will be food for the next.... I forgot an ascetic’s illusion of ecstasy will always be illusion due to its condition precedent: a suffering so unmitigated it hollowed non-survivors from children to earthworms.... I forgot pausing to scratch with a missing finger.... I forgot no one else noticing the diminishing moon’s tiptoe across the night sky.... I forgot the lucidity of ancient mountains.... I forgot the original human born only because bamboo was split.... I forgot staring at a photograph of a baby with belly larger than head and later arguing with my math teacher, “Two negatives do not equal a positive!” I forgot broken glass surfacing my first conception of *Beauty* from the lovely wink of a glass sliver, belying edges and their sharpness.

[6]

I forgot immersing myself in a sea until, chin just topping salty water, my head became attached to the entire planet.... I forgot a “Mom” and “Dad” bringing me to a turquoise house cheered by kittens and where I learned meals will be finished and still there will be food for the next.... I forgot an ascetic’s illusion of ecstasy will always be illusion due to its condition precedent: a suffering so unmitigated it hollowed non-survivors from children to earthworms.... I forgot stuffing doves into burlap bags.... I forgot receiving a scar on my cheek while an emerald mountain wept.... I forgot the original human born only because bamboo was split.... I forgot staring at a photograph of a baby with belly larger than head and later arguing with my math teacher, “Two negatives do not equal a positive!” I forgot a grandmother who threw empty bottles at a toddler’s face.... I forgot the aftermaths from dilemmas of belonging.... I forgot the clutter of broken objects manifesting affordable treasures when one owns nothing, or owns only dilemmas over belonging.... I forgot the differences between desires for father and fodder.

[7]

I forgot imagination cannot alchemize air into protein.... I forgot a “Mom” and “Dad” bringing me to a turquoise house cheered by kittens and where I learned

meals will be finished and still there will be food for the next.... I forgot stuffing doves into burlap bags.... I forgot pausing to scratch with a missing finger.... I forgot the lucidity of ancient mountains.... I forgot staring at a photograph of a baby with belly larger than head and later arguing with my math teacher, "Two negatives do not equal a positive!" I forgot the aftermaths from dilemmas of belonging.... I forgot questions thickening as the sun moved alongside the moon to preserve the possibility of synchronous precisions against skeptics who surfaced to avoid commitment.... I forgot the differences between desires for father and fodder.... I forgot the silvery thrum among treetops during perpetual autumns.

[8]

I forgot imagination cannot alchemize air into protein.... I forgot receiving a scar on my cheek while an emerald mountain wept.... I forgot the lucidity of ancient mountains.... I forgot the original human born only because bamboo was split.... I forgot a grandmother who threw empty bottles at a toddler's face.... I forgot broken glass surfacing my first conception of *Beauty* from the lovely wink of a glass sliver, belying edges and their sharpness.... I forgot the seeking that began without knowing whether one was beginning to stink or sing.... I forgot the differences between desires for father and fodder.

5 Shades of Gray

[1]

I Forgot.... I forgot how, afterwards, I always turned away as if the wall would not only speak but console.... I forgot how, once, you cracked. Even as your grip tightened, you whispered, "I am not as strong as you believe".... I forgot you understood immediately what would require months of your meticulously loving mockery, at times harsh and at times subtle, for me to learn. I forgot how swiftly you pushed us to begin.... I forgot that your tongue lingered over relished flavors.... I forgot how you insisted I needed to expand my vocabulary. I forgot that the definition of "signify" is embedded in the sample sentence, "How those borrowed rooms *signify* how young I was!" I forgot how reality usually intrudes through compromise. Consequently—and I had forgotten this—I never wondered how I ended up tip-toeing on red high heels down dim hallways towards *your* definition of "sun".... I forgot that even the most unbearable parting never made me doubt that I was happier because of our history. I never questioned my joy at the candle-lit room we created from a single chair. *The door always opened to the scent of magnolias crushed to release perfume*.... I forgot how fearless you were, how you acknowledged fear as we began. I forgot your discipline—I forgot the impassive face over the heartbeat you could not calm.... I forgot how, once, I tried to rationalize confusion by telling you about another artist whose anguish led her to bathrooms with men young enough to be her sons. I forgot how, at our engagement's most agonizing moments, I still recognized how *ours* was not the worst way. At its best? No words. Poetry is not words.... I forgot the Sphinx's unasked riddle:

"Which is more powerful?
A moon so bright it erases night
or
A sun so bright it darkens vision?"

[2]

I Forgot.... I forgot how, once, you cracked. Even as your grip tightened, you whispered, "I am not as strong as you believe".... I forgot yet another cliché—how I came to consider anew the significance of a scarf
as it tears
as it ties
as it muffles
as it falls
as it knots
as it hides
as it binds
as its colors fade despite the absence of light deep within a locked closet.... I forgot how reality usually intrudes through compromise. Consequently—and I had forgotten this—I never wondered how I ended up tip-toeing on red high heels down dim hallways towards *your* definition of "sun".... I forgot that even the most unbearable parting never made me doubt that I was happier because of our history. I never questioned my joy at the candle-lit room we created from a single chair. *The door always opened to the scent of magnolias crushed to release*

perfume..... I forgot how, once, I tried to rationalize confusion by telling you about another artist whose anguish led her to bathrooms with men young enough to be her sons. I forgot how, at our engagement's most agonizing moments, I still recognized how *ours* was not the worst way. At its best? No words. Poetry is not words..... I forgot that negatives—"it is not!"—cannot accurately capture reality. Petal is not synonymous with pistil..... I forgot how you mastered by discerning unawakened longings. You saw Me. Including that I would control the *Aftermath*...

[3]

I forgot the texture of your cheeks which is stubble-rough, the secret of your cheeks which are dimples, the seduction of your cheeks which are slanted cheekbones, and the scent of your cheeks whenever it became me.... Oh, paradox! Such a reliable door to the unknown! I forgot you understood immediately what would require months of your meticulously loving mockery, at times harsh and at times subtle, for me to learn. I forgot how swiftly you pushed us to begin.... I forgot you smeared caviar across my breasts.... I forgot that you did ask. And because you asked, I said, "It could be improved with caresses *afterward*." You nodded but did not react. A decade would pass before I would comprehend, you did act in response.... I forgot how your heart became a fragile scared bird I could hear as you pinned me against your chest.... I forgot how, once, I tried to rationalize confusion by telling you about another artist whose anguish led her to bathrooms with men young enough to be her sons. I forgot how, at our engagement's most agonizing moments, I still recognized how *ours* was not the worst way. At its best? No words. Poetry is not words.... I forgot the Sphinx's unasked riddle:

"Which is more powerful?

A moon so bright it erases night

or

A sun so bright it darkens vision?"

I forgot that negatives—"it is not!"—cannot accurately capture reality. Petal is not synonymous with pistil.

[4]

I forgot you smeared caviar across my breasts.... I forgot that you did ask. And because you asked, I said, "It could be improved with caresses *afterward*." You nodded but did not react. A decade would pass before I would comprehend, you did act in response.... I forgot how reality usually intrudes through compromise. Consequently—and I had forgotten this—I never wondered how I ended up tip-toeing on red high heels down dim hallways towards *your* definition of "sun".... I forgot how you taught me to deconstruct velvet. I forgot how, in that process, you convinced me that the blue in velvet is alien to sky and sapphires.... I forgot because I anguished over the worst part of your legacy: that I will always have a secret from my future beloved.... I forgot that even the most unbearable parting never made me doubt that I was happier because of our history. I never questioned my joy at the candle-lit room we created from a single chair. *The door always opened to the scent of magnolias crushed to release perfume*.... I forgot how fearless you were, how you acknowledged fear as we began. I forgot your discipline—I forgot the impassive face over the heartbeat you could not calm.... I forgot the Sphinx's unasked riddle:

"Which is more powerful?
A moon so bright it erases night
or
A sun so bright it darkens vision?"

I forgot that negatives—"it is not!"—cannot accurately capture reality. Petal is not synonymous with pistil.

[5]

I Forgot.... I forgot how, afterwards, I always turned away as if the wall would not only speak but console.... I forgot the texture of your cheeks which is stubble-rough, the secret of your cheeks which are dimples, the seduction of your cheeks which are slanted cheekbones, and the scent of your cheeks whenever it became me.... I forgot how, once, you cracked. Even as your grip tightened, you whispered, "I am not as strong as you believe".... I forgot how much you can harvest from the tiniest of seeds. How I innocently shared at an early meeting, so early we still met outside of buildings, "I saw your painting and assumed you to be dead".... I forgot you understood immediately what would require months of your meticulously loving mockery, at times harsh and at times subtle, for me to learn. I forgot how swiftly you pushed us to begin.... I forgot that your tongue lingered over relished flavors.... I forgot that you ate.... I forgot how you insisted I needed to expand my vocabulary. I forgot that the definition of "signify" is embedded in the sample sentence, "How those borrowed rooms *signify* how young I was!" I forgot how reality usually intrudes through compromise. Consequently—and I had forgotten this—I never wondered how I ended up tip-toeing on red high heels down dim hallways towards *your* definition of "sun."

[6]

I forgot the color of your eyes which is grey.... I forgot the texture of your cheeks which is stubble-rough, the secret of your cheeks which are dimples, the seduction of your cheeks which are slanted cheekbones, and the scent of your cheeks whenever it became me.... I forgot how, once, you cracked. Even as your grip tightened, you whispered, "I am not as strong as you believe".... Oh, paradox! Such a reliable door to the unknown! I forgot you smeared caviar across my breasts.... I forgot that you ate.... forgot how you insisted I needed to expand my vocabulary. I forgot that the definition of "signify" is embedded in the sample sentence, "How those borrowed rooms *signify* how young I was!" I forgot yet another cliché—how I came to consider anew the significance of a scarf
as it tears
as it ties
as it muffles
as it falls
as it knots
as it hides
as it binds
as its colors fade despite the absence of light deep within a locked closet.... I forgot because I anguished over the worst part of your legacy: that I will always have a secret from my future beloved.... I forgot that even the most unbearable parting never made me doubt that I was happier because of our history. I never questioned my joy at the candle-lit room we created from a single chair. *The*

door always opened to the scent of magnolias crushed to release perfume.... I forgot how, once, I tried to rationalize confusion by telling you about another artist whose anguish led her to bathrooms with men young enough to be her sons. I forgot how, at our engagement's most agonizing moments, I still recognized how *ours* was not the worst way. At its best? No words. Poetry is not words.

[7]

I forgot how, afterwards, I always turned away as if the wall would not only speak but console.... I forgot the texture of your cheeks which is stubble-rough, the secret of your cheeks which are dimples, the seduction of your cheeks which are slanted cheekbones, and the scent of your cheeks whenever it became me.... Oh, paradox! Such a reliable door to the unknown! I forgot how much you can harvest from the tiniest of seeds. How I innocently shared at an early meeting, so early we still met outside of buildings, "I saw your painting and assumed you to be dead".... I forgot that your tongue lingered over relished flavors.... I forgot how you insisted I needed to expand my vocabulary. I forgot that the definition of "signify" is embedded in the sample sentence, "How those borrowed rooms *signify* how young I was!" I forgot because I anguished over the worst part of your legacy: that I will always have a secret from my future beloved.... I forgot how your heart became a fragile scared bird I could hear as you pinned me against your chest.... I forgot how, once, I tried to rationalize confusion by telling you about another artist whose anguish led her to bathrooms with men young enough to be her sons. I forgot how, at our engagement's most agonizing moments, I still recognized how *ours* was not the worst way. At its best? No words. Poetry is not words.... I forgot clarity. I forgot you became angry when I insisted on seeing as if I still wore a blindfold. I forgot I saw blue velvet fall and its flowing aftermath softened the concrete.

[8]

I forgot how, afterwards, I always turned away as if the wall would not only speak but console.... I forgot you smeared caviar across my breasts.... I forgot that your tongue lingered over relished flavors.... I forgot that you ate.... I forgot yet another cliché—how I came to consider anew the significance of a scarf
as it tears
as it ties
as it muffles
as it falls
as it knots
as it hides
as it binds
as its colors fade despite the absence of light deep within a locked closet.... I forgot how reality usually intrudes through compromise. Consequently—and I had forgotten this—I never wondered how I ended up tip-toeing on red high heels down dim hallways towards *your* definition of "sun".... I forgot how fearless you were, how you acknowledged fear as we began. I forgot your discipline—I forgot the impassive face over the heartbeat you could not calm.... I forgot how, once, I tried to rationalize confusion by telling you about another artist whose anguish led her to bathrooms with men young enough to be her sons. I forgot how, at our engagement's most agonizing moments, I still recognized how *ours* was not the worst way. At its best? No words. Poetry is not words.

The Awakening

[1]

I forgot the mysterious C___ who slipped syphilis to Vincent Van Gogh—she was a refugee from something unknown thus only imaginable by us: a world of people with hacked-off hands, thus, no paintings to criticize or admire.... I forgot how to perceive the shift of stars without feeling them fade or fall.... I forgot how to feel the Milky Way expand simply because, upon my waist, you placed your palm.... I forgot Tiziano Vecelli's kindness—refusing to discriminate between daughters, he gave the illegitimate Emilia the same dowry of 700 ducats bestowed upon the legitimate Lavinia.... I forgot when one of a love-making couple is blindfolded, one is a lover and the other a canvas, page, *smoke* I forgot the alley of your city where I stood as a statue frozen by unrequited longing.... I forgot Auguste Rodin drawing women while they took their “melancholy pleasure” in front of him.... I forgot Jackson Pollock teaching the harmony of feelings in riot.... I forgot Arthur Rimbaud who said the bears are dancing but what we had wanted to do was move the stars to pity.... I forgot Pierre-Auguste Renoir who loved the girls of Les Halles for letting their breasts sing soprano above their bodices.... I forgot Paul Cezanne painting furniture to escape naked women about whom, he felt, “One has to be on the defensive.”

[2]

I forgot the mysterious C___ who slipped syphilis to Vincent Van Gogh—she was a refugee from something unknown thus only imaginable by us: a world of people with hacked-off hands, thus, no paintings to criticize or admire.... I forgot how to feel the Milky Way expand simply because, upon my waist, you placed your palm.... I forgot the sense of “walking upon a cloud”—the “calm” that overcame William Carlos Williams upon hearing the minister bestow a benediction: “May the peace of God which passeth all understanding be and abide with you now and forever more. Amen”.... I forgot Auguste Rodin drawing women while they took their “melancholy pleasure” in front of him.... I forgot Jackson Pollock teaching the harmony of feelings in riot.... I forgot romancing the stars to deflect the mundane, even pre-torture rendition.... I forgot Pierre-Auguste Renoir who loved the girls of Les Halles for letting their breasts sing soprano above their bodices.... I forgot Degas' great joy at glimpsing through an open doorway a beautiful an anguished woman at her bath.... I forgot Dr. Williams fell in love with a young negress lying stripped on a dissecting table.

[3]

I forgot Michelangelo on his back servicing a syphilitic Christian—for euphemism, cite him instead painting the Sistine Chapel for Pope Julius II.... I forgot Leonardo Da Vinci dissecting criminals who died with hard-ons to demonstrate the penis is not inflated by the retention of wind.... I forgot Tiziano Vecelli's kindness—refusing to discriminate between daughters, he gave the illegitimate Emilia the same dowry of 700 ducats bestowed upon the legitimate Lavinia.... I forgot Titian's prowess: he painted nudes with their eyes open to stare back at you as your eyes memorized powdered their flesh.... I forgot the thief (in Li-Young

Lee's favorite haiku) who stopped in the dangerous night to sing to the beauty of the hovering moon.... I forgot romancing the stars to deflect the mundane, even pre-torture rendition.... I forgot Pierre-Auguste Renoir who loved the girls of Les Halles for letting their breasts sing soprano above their bodices.... I forgot Paul Cezanne painting furniture to escape naked women about whom, he felt, "One has to be on the defensive".... I forgot Degas' great joy at glimpsing through an open doorway a beautiful an anguished woman at her bath.

[4]

I forgot Titian's prowess: he painted nudes with their eyes open to stare back at you as your eyes memorized powdered their flesh.... I forgot the thief (in Li-Young Lee's favorite haiku) who stopped in the dangerous night to sing to the beauty of the hovering moon.... I forgot Auguste Rodin drawing women while they took their "melancholy pleasure" in front of him.... I forgot mistaking reproductions for what they copy.... I forgot the anguish of knowledge.... I forgot Jackson Pollock teaching the harmony of feelings in riot.... I forgot Arthur Rimbaud who said the bears are dancing but what we had wanted to do was move the stars to pity.... I forgot Paul Cezanne painting furniture to escape naked women about whom, he felt, "One has to be on the defensive".... I forgot Degas' great joy at glimpsing through an open doorway a beautiful an anguished woman at her bath.

[5]

I forgot the mysterious C___ who slipped syphilis to Vincent Van Gogh—she was a refugee from something unknown thus only imaginable by us: a world of people with hacked-off hands, thus, no paintings to criticize or admire.... I forgot how to perceive the shift of stars without feeling them fade or fall.... I forgot Michelangelo on his back servicing a syphilitic Christian— for euphemism, cite him instead painting the Sistine Chapel for Pope Julius II.... I forgot how to feel the Milky Way expand simply because, upon my waist, you placed your palm.... I forgot scientists becoming radical to pursue the ecstasy of Truth.... I forgot Tiziano Vecelli's kindness—refusing to discriminate between daughters, he gave the illegitimate Emilia the same dowry of 700 ducats bestowed upon the legitimate Lavinia.... I forgot when one of a love-making couple is blindfolded, one is a lover and the other a canvas, page, *smoke* I forgot how to perceive with tenderness.... I forgot the alley of your city where I stood as a statue frozen by unrequited longing.... I forgot Auguste Rodin drawing women while they took their "melancholy pleasure" in front of him.

[6]

I forgot Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni possessed incomparable draftsmanship except as regards breasts, though he was weaned by a daughter and wife of stone masons.... I forgot Michelangelo on his back servicing a syphilitic Christian— for euphemism, cite him instead painting the Sistine Chapel for Pope Julius II.... I forgot how to feel the Milky Way expand simply because, upon my waist, you placed your palm.... I forgot Leonardo Da Vinci dissecting criminals who died with hard-ons to demonstrate the penis is not inflated by the retention of wind.... I forgot Titian's prowess: he painted nudes with their eyes open to stare back at you as your eyes memorized powdered their flesh.... I

forgot how to perceive with tenderness.... I forgot the alley of your city where I stood as a statue frozen by unrequited longing.... I forgot the sense of “walking upon a cloud”—the “calm” that overcame William Carlos Williams upon hearing the minister bestow a benediction: “May the peace of God which passeth all understanding be and abide with you now and forever more. Amen”.... I forgot the anguish of knowledge.... I forgot Jackson Pollock teaching the harmony of feelings in riot.... I forgot Pierre-Auguste Renoir who loved the girls of Les Halles for letting their breasts sing soprano above their bodices.

[7]

I forgot how to perceive the shift of stars without feeling them fade or fall.... I forgot Michelangelo on his back servicing a syphilitic Christian— for euphemism, cite him instead painting the Sistine Chapel for Pope Julius II.... I forgot Leonardo Da Vinci dissecting criminals who died with hard-ons to demonstrate the penis is not inflated by the retention of wind.... I forgot scientists becoming radical to pursue the ecstasy of Truth.... I forgot when one of a love-making couple is blindfolded, one is a lover and the other a canvas, page, *smoke* I forgot the alley of your city where I stood as a statue frozen by unrequited longing.... I forgot the anguish of knowledge.... I forgot romancing the stars to deflect the mundane, even pre-torture rendition.... I forgot Pierre-Auguste Renoir who loved the girls of Les Halles for letting their breasts sing soprano above their bodices.... I forgot—as did everyone else in the universe—the name of Georges Seurat’s mistress: Madeleine Knobloch.

[8]

I forgot how to perceive the shift of stars without feeling them fade or fall.... I forgot Titian’s prowess: he painted nudes with their eyes open to stare back at you as your eyes memorized powdered their flesh.... I forgot when one of a love-making couple is blindfolded, one is a lover and the other a canvas, page, *smoke*.... I forgot how to perceive with tenderness.... I forgot the sense of “walking upon a cloud”—the “calm” that overcame William Carlos Williams upon hearing the minister bestow a benediction: “May the peace of God which passeth all understanding be and abide with you now and forever more. Amen”.... I forgot Auguste Rodin drawing women while they took their “melancholy pleasure” in front of him.... I forgot Arthur Rimbaud who said the bears are dancing but what we had wanted to do was move the stars to pity.... I forgot Pierre-Auguste Renoir who loved the girls of Les Halles for letting their breasts sing soprano above their bodices.

147 Million Orphans

[1]

I forgot which author, (false) god, or chemical reaction the meticulous *unrelenting* litigator in your mind chose to sue for the script aborting joy from your life.... I forgot the bald girl who hurled rocks at orphanage windows precisely because her intellect dwarfed her malnourished body.... I forgot a father's fist against a mother's cheek integrates the malignant into myocardium.... I forgot Karma sucks anti-lollipops.... I forgot the petal always hidden from view might as well be stillborn, or a wound.... I forgot the wabi sabi vase is not only more luminous but stronger once repaired. And its ruptures, I forgot, are transparently presented to a world stuck in a binary over orphans: avidity vs. indifference.... I forgot the new parent crying out on behalf of many adoptive parents, "I didn't save a child—a child saved me"... I forgot the reeds were frozen *into* it because the river was entirely frozen.... I forgot forbearance.... I forgot what unfolded beyond asterisks.... I forgot they were born into a dowerless present.

[2]

I forgot which author, (false) god, or chemical reaction the meticulous *unrelenting* litigator in your mind chose to sue for the script aborting joy from your life.... I forgot a father's fist against a mother's cheek integrates the malignant into myocardium.... I forgot the lack of empathy not anticipated by thousands of Central American children unaware the world of 147 million orphans worldwide predates their births as a parallel universe few choose to enter and many prefer to ignore.... I forgot the new parent crying out on behalf of many adoptive parents, "I didn't save a child—a child saved me"... I forgot the reeds were frozen *into* it because the river was entirely frozen.... I forgot sickened oceans vomiting dead fish and dumped sewage from every myoclonic jerk.... I forgot what unfolded beyond asterisks.... I forgot the introduction to, then frequent engagements with, snow ... but never the acquaintance of pretty clarity defined by new snow.... I forgot smiles in photographs veneer phantoms like those behind shut doors to closets or rundown barns.

[3]

I forgot "Mentwabe Dawit" whose rape was subsumed into "Angelina Jolie"... I forgot the difficulty of ethics: how to rationalize when what is good does not give an advantage in a world you define as alley? ("Can you stop running if the monster does not stop chasing?").... I forgot Karma sucks anti-lollipops.... I forgot my son is afire and with all the water of pre-drought Sierras fauceteting through my fingers I still cannot caress him cannot hold him cannot help him.... I forgot the estimate of orphans worldwide is inherently a square root.... I forgot sickened oceans vomiting dead fish and dumped sewage from every myoclonic jerk.... I forgot what unfolded beyond asterisks.... I forgot they were born into a dowerless present.... I forgot the introduction to, then frequent engagements with, snow ... but never the acquaintance of pretty clarity defined by new snow.

[4]

I forgot my son is afire and with all the water of pre-drought Sierras fauceting through my fingers I still cannot caress him cannot hold him cannot help him.... I forgot the estimate of orphans worldwide is inherently a square root.... I forgot the new parent crying out on behalf of many adoptive parents, "I didn't save a child—a child saved me".... I forgot the opposite of fog.... I forgot the aftermath can be a dwindling.... I forgot the reeds were frozen *into* it because the river was entirely frozen.... I forgot forbearance.... I forgot they were born into a dowerless present.... I forgot the introduction to, then frequent engagements with, snow ... but never the acquaintance of pretty clarity defined by new snow.

[5]

I forgot which author, (false) god, or chemical reaction the meticulous *unrelenting* litigator in your mind chose to sue for the script aborting joy from your life.... I forgot the bald girl who hurled rocks at orphanage windows precisely because her intellect dwarfed her malnourished body.... I forgot "Mentwabe Dawit" whose rape was subsumed into "Angelina Jolie".... I forgot a father's fist against a mother's cheek integrates the malignant into myocardium.... I forgot all those children asking for cameras—what became real required photographs they could always ~~witness~~ see, occasionally caress, occasionally crumple.... I forgot Karma sucks anti-lollipops.... I forgot the petal always hidden from view might as well be stillborn, or a wound.... I forgot she hid her anger over losing (illusions of) nobility because there is nothing noble about giving or receiving help. I forgot she was angered over being (a) minor.... I forgot the wabi sabi vase is not only more luminous but stronger once repaired. And its ruptures, I forgot, are transparently presented to a world stuck in a binary over orphans: avidity vs. indifference.... I forgot the new parent crying out on behalf of many adoptive parents, "I didn't save a child—a child saved me."

[6]

I forgot Madagascar's sleeping birds who drank tears through a harpoon-shaped proboscis they slipped beneath your eyelids.... I forgot "Mentwabe Dawit" whose rape was subsumed into "Angelina Jolie".... I forgot a father's fist against a mother's cheek integrates the malignant into myocardium.... I forgot the difficulty of ethics: how to rationalize when what is good does not give an advantage in a world you define as alley? ("Can you stop running if the monster does not stop chasing?") I forgot my son is afire and with all the water of pre-drought Sierras fauceting through my fingers I still cannot caress him cannot hold him cannot help him.... I forgot she hid her anger over losing (illusions of) nobility because there is nothing noble about giving or receiving help. I forgot she was angered over being (a) minor.... I forgot the wabi sabi vase is not only more luminous but stronger once repaired. And its ruptures, I forgot, are transparently presented to a world stuck in a binary over orphans: avidity vs. indifference.... I forgot the lack of empathy not anticipated by thousands of Central American children unaware the world of 147 million orphans worldwide predates their births as a parallel universe few choose to enter and many prefer to ignore.... I forgot the aftermath can be a dwindling.... I forgot the reeds were frozen *into* it because the river was entirely frozen.... I forgot what unfolded beyond asterisks.

[7]

I forgot the bald girl who hurled rocks at orphanage windows precisely because her intellect dwarfed her malnourished body.... I forgot "Mentwabe Dawit" whose rape was subsumed into "Angelina Jolie".... I forgot the difficulty of ethics: how to rationalize when what is good does not give an advantage in a world you define as alley? ("Can you stop running if the monster does not stop chasing?") I forgot all those children asking for cameras—what became real required photographs they could always witness see, occasionally caress, occasionally crumple.... I forgot the petal always hidden from view might as well be stillborn, or a wound.... I forgot the wabi sabi vase is not only more luminous but stronger once repaired. And its ruptures, I forgot, are transparently presented to a world stuck in a binary over orphans: avidity vs. indifference.... I forgot the aftermath can be a dwindling.... I forgot sickened oceans vomiting dead fish and dumped sewage from every myoclonic jerk.... I forgot what unfolded beyond asterisks.... I forgot all the voices weary from replaying details. *Susmaryosep, ibaga manen ibaga manen!*

[8]

I forgot the bald girl who hurled rocks at orphanage windows precisely because her intellect dwarfed her malnourished body.... I forgot my son is afire and with all the water of pre-drought Sierras faucetng through my fingers I still cannot caress him cannot hold him cannot help him.... I forgot the petal always hidden from view might as well be stillborn, or a wound.... I forgot she hid her anger over losing (illusions of) nobility because there is nothing noble about giving or receiving help. I forgot she was angered over being (a) minor.... I forgot the lack of empathy not anticipated by thousands of Central American children unaware the world of 147 million orphans worldwide predates their births as a parallel universe few choose to enter and many prefer to ignore.... I forgot the new parent crying out on behalf of many adoptive parents, "I didn't save a child—a child saved me".... I forgot forbearance.... I forgot what unfolded beyond asterisks.

Sun Stigmata

[1]

I forgot love stutters over a lifetime.... I forgot I admired encaustic for protecting forever the fragility of paper.... I forgot to see the thing as the thing itself.* I forgot I looked through a window and saw only glass.... I forgot how the matter-of-factness in many poems does not contradict their nature as protest poems.... I forgot that a poem can unfold unchecked in a manner where suffering becomes rationale for salvation.... I forgot I happily volunteered my tears. I forgot the sweetness of damp cheeks.... I forgot that I prayed, only to have prayer bring forth stigmata in areas of my body usually hidden from public gaze.... I forgot the poet who'd insert a typo at the last minute of proofing manuscripts—he longed to create a space for readers to inhabit, in the tradition of indigenous weavers creating imperfections as doorways for spirits to enter.... I forgot how so much depends on a punctuation mark.... I forgot the complexity of evolution from : to : ;, or how few have persisted to explore : : : I forgot lucidity does not always translate to freshness in language.

[2]

I forgot love stutters over a lifetime.... I forgot to see the thing as the thing itself.* I forgot I looked through a window and saw only glass.... I forgot how poems can set you ablaze until you look at the world with glowing alien eyes—lidless to see better, gold irises to erase the sun's glare, and unblinking.... I forgot that I prayed, only to have prayer bring forth stigmata in areas of my body usually hidden from public gaze.... I forgot the poet who'd insert a typo at the last minute of proofing manuscripts—he longed to create a space for readers to inhabit, in the tradition of indigenous weavers creating imperfections as doorways for spirits to enter.... I forgot how rarely an author realizes when a punctuation mark's significance is exaggerated.... I forgot the complexity of evolution from : to : ;, or how few have persisted to explore : : : I forgot the poems writ casually to be minor poems but failed to be minor.... I forgot the advantage of an ignored chandelier.

[3]

I forgot the plastic flowers, their radioactive yellows and reds inappropriate for marking grief. (But how else to see them by roadsides when they are passed by so swiftly by traffic?) I forgot that an orphan's rant for attachment speaks to desire for desire's own sake. I forgot that not knowing what one wants does not obviate the *wanting*.... I forgot how the matter-of-factness in many poems does not contradict their nature as protest poems.... I forgot you can be drawn into turmoil, into trauma, through empathy—that the distance between a page and a reader's eyes can be as intimate as our commingling breaths.... I forgot the poem whose first word is “but.” I forgot the poem whose first word is “consequently.” And another poem whose first word is “nevertheless.” I forgot the poems that began with the least lyrical words to raise the threshold for the definition of “treasure”.... I forgot how rarely an author realizes when a punctuation mark's significance is exaggerated.... I forgot the complexity of evolution from : to : ;, or how few have persisted to explore : : : I forgot lucidity does not always translate to freshness

in language.... I forgot the poems writ casually to be minor poems but failed to be minor.

[4]

I forgot you can be drawn into turmoil, into trauma, through empathy—that the distance between a page and a reader’s eyes can be as intimate as our commingling breaths.... I forgot the poem whose first word is “but.” I forgot the poem whose first word is “consequently.” And another poem whose first word is “nevertheless.” I forgot the poems that began with the least lyrical words to raise the threshold for the definition of “treasure”.... I forgot that I prayed, only to have prayer bring forth stigmata in areas of my body usually hidden from public gaze.... I forgot the poem whose words entranced by galloping across the page until you felt the wind against your face and, suddenly, you were composing the opera that would come to be known as “Sonora!” I forgot how I went through a phase at poetry readings of ripping pages from my books—sometimes I’d autograph them before handing them out with a “They’re worthy of eBay!”, sometimes I crumpled them into balls I’d toss towards the audience as if they were money or my underwear.... I forgot the poet who’d insert a typo at the last minute of proofing manuscripts—he longed to create a space for readers to inhabit, in the tradition of indigenous weavers creating imperfections as doorways for spirits to enter.... I forgot how so much depends on a punctuation mark.... I forgot lucidity does not always translate to freshness in language.... I forgot the poems writ casually to be minor poems but failed to be minor.

[5]

I forgot love stutters over a lifetime.... I forgot I admired encaustic for protecting forever the fragility of paper.... I forgot to see the thing as the thing itself.* I forgot I looked through a window and saw only glass.... I forgot the poem whose page was a glass pane etched with words—that paper would be too soft a field for your hand leaving my waist.... I forgot how the matter-of-factness in many poems does not contradict their nature as protest poems.... I forgot that a poem can unfold unchecked in a manner where suffering becomes rationale for salvation.... I forgot the wet walls of a beer bottle, against which I had laid my brow.... I forgot I happily volunteered my tears. I forgot the sweetness of damp cheeks.... I forgot that I prayed, only to have prayer bring forth stigmata in areas of my body usually hidden from public gaze.

[6]

I forgot that meditation, if conducted deeply, must harvest pain.... I forgot the plastic flowers, their radioactive yellows and reds inappropriate for marking grief. (But how else to see them by roadsides when they are passed by so swiftly by traffic?) I forgot to see the thing as the thing itself.* I forgot I looked through a window and saw only glass.... I forgot that an orphan’s rant for attachment speaks to desire for desire’s own sake. I forgot that not knowing what one wants does not obviate the *wanting*.... I forgot you can be drawn into turmoil, into trauma, through empathy—that the distance between a page and a reader’s eyes can be as intimate as our commingling breaths.... I forgot the wet walls of a beer bottle, against which I had laid my brow.... I forgot I happily volunteered

my tears. I forgot the sweetness of damp cheeks.... I forgot how poems can set you ablaze until you look at the world with glowing alien eyes—lidless to see better, gold irises to erase the sun's glare, and unblinking.... I forgot how I went through a phase at poetry readings of ripping pages from my books—sometimes I'd autograph them before handing them out with a "They're worthy of eBay!", sometimes I crumpled them into balls I'd toss towards the audience as if they were money or my underwear.... I forgot the poet who'd insert a typo at the last minute of proofing manuscripts—he longed to create a space for readers to inhabit, in the tradition of indigenous weavers creating imperfections as doorways for spirits to enter.... I forgot the complexity of evolution from : to : :, or how few have persisted to explore : : :

[7]

I forgot I admired encaustic for protecting forever the fragility of paper.... I forgot the plastic flowers, their radioactive yellows and reds inappropriate for marking grief. (But how else to see them by roadsides when they are passed by so swiftly by traffic?) I forgot that an orphan's rant for attachment speaks to desire for desire's own sake. I forgot that not knowing what one wants does not obviate the *wanting*.... I forgot the poem whose page was a glass pane etched with words—that paper would be too soft a field for your hand leaving my waist. I forgot that a poem can unfold unchecked in a manner where suffering becomes rationale for salvation.... I forgot I happily volunteered my tears. I forgot the sweetness of damp cheeks.... I forgot how I went through a phase at poetry readings of ripping pages from my books—sometimes I'd autograph them before handing them out with a "They're worthy of eBay!", sometimes I crumpled them into balls I'd toss towards the audience as if they were money or my underwear. I forgot how rarely an author realizes when a punctuation mark's significance is exaggerated.... I forgot the complexity of evolution from : to : :, or how few have persisted to explore : : : I forgot space is difficult to depict without the negative grid.

[8]

I forgot I admired encaustic for protecting forever the fragility of paper.... I forgot you can be drawn into turmoil, into trauma, through empathy—that the distance between a page and a reader's eyes can be as intimate as our commingling breaths.... I forgot that a poem can unfold unchecked in a manner where suffering becomes rationale for salvation.... I forgot the wet walls of a beer bottle, against which I had laid my brow.... I forgot how poems can set you ablaze until you look at the world with glowing alien eyes—lidless to see better, gold irises to erase the sun's glare, and unblinking.... I forgot that I prayed, only to have prayer bring forth stigmata in areas of my body usually hidden from public gaze.... I forgot how so much depends on a punctuation mark.... I forgot the complexity of evolution from : to : :, or how few have persisted to explore : : :





PROCESS AND POETICS

... to paraphrase something I once heard
from some Buddhist, German or French
philosopher, or Star Trek character,
"No one or nothing is alien to me."



Murder, Death and Resurrections: A Poetry Generator

An ongoing work, “Murder, Death and Resurrection” (MDR), includes “The MDR Poetry Generator” that brings together much of my poetics and poet ics. The MDR Poetry Generator contains a database of 1,146 lines, which can be combined randomly to make a large number of poems; the shortest would be a couplet and the longest would be a poem of 1,146 lines.

The MDR Poetry Generator’s conceit is that any combination of its 1,146 lines succeeds in creating a poem. Thus, I can create—generate—new poems unthinkingly from its database. For example, several poems were created by blindly pointing at lines on a print-out to combine. While the poems cohere partly by the scaffolding of beginning each line with the phrase “I forgot...” (a tactic inspired by reading Tom Beckett’s fabulous poem “I Forgot” in his book *DIPSTICK (DIPTYCH)*, Marsh Hawk Press, 2014), these poems reflect long-held interests in abstract and cubist language—partly as a means to interrogate English whose (linear) narrative was used by the United States to solidify its 20th century colonization of my birthland, the Philippines. Through my perceptions of abstraction and cubism, I’ve written poems whose lines are not fixed in order and, indeed, can be reordered (many years ago, I was very interested in the prose poem form and in writing paragraphs that can be reordered within the poem).

Because English was a tool for colonialism, it’s been called by Filipinos “the borrowed tongue,” though “enforced tongue” would be more accurate. Whenever I disrupt conventional uses of English—from linear narrative to normative syntax to dictionary definitions—I view the result as poetry for transforming language into its own—and stripped of its past as a tool for damage—as well as “returning the borrowed tongue” (also the title of an anthology of Filipino and Filipino-American poetry edited by Nick Carbo and released by Coffee House Press in 1995).



While the MDR Poetry Generator presents poems that are based partly on randomness or not generated through conscious personal intention, the results are not distanced from the author: I created the 1,146 lines by reading through 27 previously-published poetry collections (the lines include excerpts from the poems as they were read or were generated from my emotional reaction to what was being read). The title’s references to murder, death and resurrection reflect the idea of putting to death the prior work, only to resurrect them into something new: sometimes, creation first requires destruction. But if randomness is the operating system for new poems (i.e. the lines can be combined at random to make new poems), those new poems nonetheless contain my “I”—and love!—that went into the writing of its lines. The results dislocate without eliminating or pretending to eliminate a directly personal involvement in the making of the poems. (If only as a person/poet of color, I am hesitant about erasures, including self-erasures.)

My approach, thus, differs from many “poetry generators” created by poets more skilled than I am with computer- and code-related technology, e.g. Nick Montfort whose work also inspired this project. Mr. Montfort, an associate professor of digital media at MIT, is both a poet and computer scientist (as well as author of interactive fiction) who has created computational poetry. In computational poetry, the poet creates a computer program that then generates poems. Such poetry is not merely technical but serves to explore aesthetics and expand critical thinking (thus, my layman’s understanding that, notwithstanding the use of code, such poetry is not necessarily about eliminating the self). In 2014, Counterpath Press released Mr. Montfort’s marvelous book *#!* (pronounced “shebang”) which consists of poetic texts presented alongside the short computer programs that generated them. I copied the structure and “code” I perceived in one of *#!*’s poems, “THROUGH THE PARK,” to create the poems in *The Connoisseur of Alleys*. I did so to reflect my appreciation for Mr. Montfort’s *#!* as well as my perception that his poem’s “code” can be another possible ordering of the lines in The MDR Poetry Generator.

(The nature of The MDR Poetry Generator also had led me to look for ways to order (arbitrarily) its lines, e.g. the use of a “code” I perceived in Mr. Montfort’s poem. Another example is the application of prime numbers against The MDR Poetry Generator’s database of lines, resulting in a different book, *THE OPPOSITE OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA: Prime’s Anti-Autobiography* which is forthcoming from Knives Forks and Spoons Press (U.K.).)

Because I read through 27 prior poetry collections to create The MDR Poetry Generator’s database of lines, the database also can be sectioned into 27 poems, each titled with the same title of the read poetry collection (“base poems”). Maintaining those sections, I applied the code and structure discerned from Mr. Montfort’s poem against the lines in these base poems. I also retained the titles of my previous poetry collections for titling the new poems that would come to make up *The Connoisseur of Alleys*. As with “THROUGH THE PARK,” my poems contain eight sections of prose paragraphs (the ellipses replaced the line break that existed in the base poems).

The following is the “code” I lifted from “THROUGH THE PARK” to apply to my base poems. The numbers refer to the order of the lines in Mr. Montfort’s poem. Thus, repetition of a line occurs if a number is referenced more than once. As you see, each poem required that the base poem be at least 25 lines (because a 25th line is necessary to be sourced); if a base poem was shorter than 25 lines, the count began anew with the poem’s first line.

**Code: the Order of Lines applied to Base Poems
to create New 8-Paragraph Poems:**

- (1) 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22
- (2) 1, 5, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25
- (3) 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 20, 21, 22, 24
- (4) 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24
- (5) 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15
- (6) 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21
- (7) 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, 21, 23
- (8) 2, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 19, 21



For calculating the number of poems (in math, “permutations”) possible from The MDR Poetry Generator’s 1,146 lines, I had asked my son’s high school math tutor, Carl Ericson, for assistance. Carl could not find an explicit formula for evaluating my question. But he did find an approximation formula to apply. His approximated answer to the total poems possible to be generated by the MDR Poetry Generator is a number that has 3,011 digits. Since the number of permutated poems is huge, this means—were I of a mind to do so—I can keep ~~writing~~ making poems for the rest of my life without having to write new text.

The MDR Project has generated, to date, nearly 150 poems, including those that make up the following poetry collections (parentheticals indicate confirmed publishers as of this writing):

44 RESURRECTIONS (2014, PostModernPoetry E-Ratio Editions)

I FORGOT LIGHT BURNS (2015, Moria Books)

DUENDE IN THE ALLEYS (2015, swirl editions)

THE CONNOISSEUR OF ALLEYS (2016, Marsh Hawk Press)

THE OPPOSITE OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA: Prime’s Anti-Autobiography (2016, Knives, Forks and Spoons Press)

AMNESIA: Somebody’s Memoir (2016, Black Radish Press)

HIRAETH: Tercets From The Last Archipelago

Some poems have also generated visual poetry versions, such as “I Forgot Forgetting My Skin Was Ruin”) which inaugurated *h&*, a journal of visual/concrete poetry curated by Ian Whistle.

One poem, “I Forgot the Plasticity of Recognition,” generated a folio of response poems by other poets: John Bloomberg-Rissman, Sheila E. Murphy, Iars Palm, Marthe Reed, Leny M. Strobel and Anne Gorrick. These were published by *Otoliths*, edited by Mark Young.



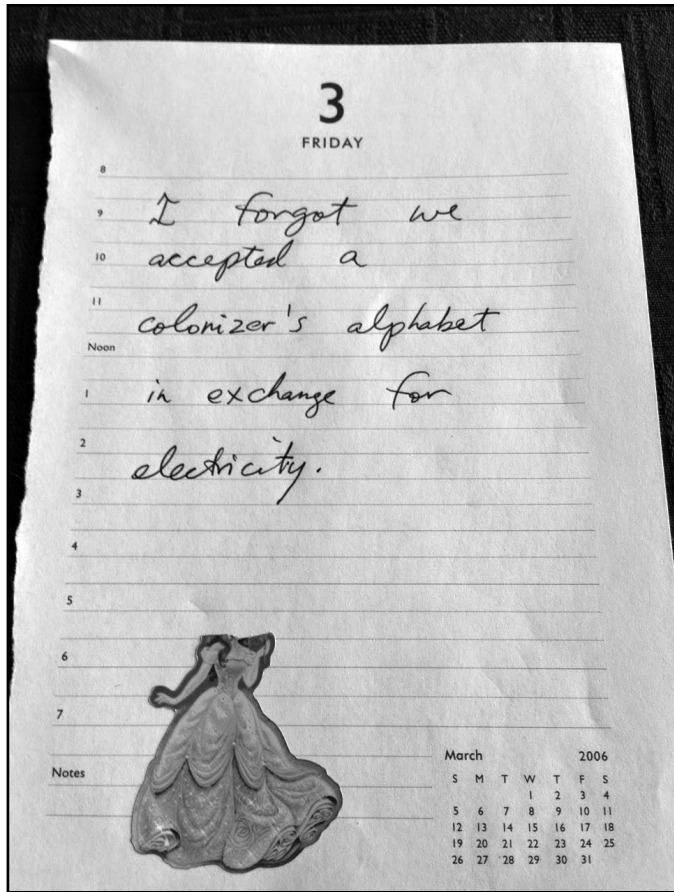
The MDR Poetry Generator also reflects what I call “Babaylan Poetics”—a poetics based on indigenous Filipino practices. A Babaylan from the Philippines’ pre-colonial times was someone who mediated with the spirit world, was blessed with the gifts of healing, foretelling and insight, and who served as a community leader. The Babaylan is often a source of inspiration to contemporary Filipinos, including myself, who are inspired by the Babaylan’s attributes, including what the Center for Babaylan Studies in Santa Rosa, CA, calls a “belief in Sacred Wholeness... [and] the desire to serve their communities in achieving justice and

peace.” As regards how I apply the Babaylan’s inspiration to my poetics, there’s an image from pre-colonial Philippine times of a human standing with a hand lifted upwards; if you happened to be at a certain distance from the human and took a snapshot, it would look like the human was touching the sky. In a poetics essay in my book *THE AWAKENING* (theenk books, New York, 2013), I describe the significance of this image as:

...the moment, the space, from which I attempt to create poems. In the indigenous myth, the human, by being rooted onto the planet but also touching the sky, is connected to everything in the universe and across all time, including that the human is rooted to the past and future—indeed, there is no unfolding of time. In that moment, all of existence—past, present and future—has coalesced into a singular moment, a single gem with an infinite expanse. In that moment, were I that human, I am connected to everything so that there is nothing or no one I do not know. I am everyone and everything, and everything and everyone is me. In that moment, to paraphrase something I once I heard from some Buddhist, German or French philosopher, or Star Trek character, “No one or nothing is alien to me.”

Consequently, within this indigenous moment or space where I create poems, issues of authorship and (or versus) the randomness with which the lines are combined from The MDR Poetry Generator are ultimately irrelevant—*All is One and One is All*. And aptly so, for poetics can also be the blueprint for how one lives—Babaylan poetics guides me in my behavior beyond the page: Babaylan Poetics believes that differences cannot erase how we are interconnected with each other—that we all live in the same world. As a poet and a human being, I try to behave accordingly.

—Eileen R. Tabios



From "I Forgot Forgetting My Skin Was Ruin"

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks to Vince Gotera for his generous Foreword; Marsh Hawk Press editors Sandy McIntosh and Thomas Fink; Michelle Bautista for design, technical expertise and art- and life-related guidance; and cover artist Advaita Patel for openness to this project as well as beautiful imagery.

The Connoisseur of Alleys would not exist without Nick Montfort's poem "THROUGH THE PARK" in his marvelous poetry collection *#!* (Counterpath, Denver, 2014). I thank Mr. Montfort for the inspiration.

Thanks as well to the following publications and their editors for first publishing (or accepting for publication) individual poems: *Delirious Hem*, Curators Susana Gardner and Jessica Smith; *Entropy*, Poetry Editor Michelle Detorie and Editor Janice Lee; *Marsh Hawk Review*, Editor Thomas Fink; *MOSS TRILL*, Editor William Allegrezza; *On Barcelona*, Editor Halvard Johnson; *Otoliths*, Editor Mark Young; *Ottawa Poetry Newsletter*, for series curated by Ian Whistle; *Our Own Voice*, Editors Reme Grefalda and Aileen Ibardaloza; *Swirl*, Editor lars palm; *The Helios Mss*, Editor Raymond Farr; and *TRUCK*, Guest Editor Allen Bramhall.

The following poems comprised *DUENDE IN THE ALLEYS*, an e-chapbook from Swirl (Sweden, 2015), Editor lars palm: "After the Egyptians Determined The Shape of the World is a Circle," "Reproductions of the Empty Flagpole," "Dredging for Atlantis," Ménage à Trois with the 21ST Century" and "The Singer and Others: Flamenco!"

The following poems are featured in an anthology of *Philippine Women Writers*, Editors Janine Dimaranan and Faye Cura (Gantala Press, Philippines, 2016): "I Take Thee, English, For My Beloved" and "SILENCES: The Autobiography of Loss."

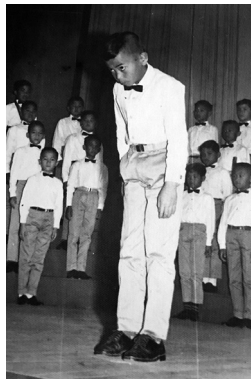
An earlier version of "Babaylan Poetics & The MDR Poetry Generator" is featured in *seedings: an annual of poetics*, Editor Jerrold Shiroma (Duration Press, 2016).

ABOUT THE POET



Eileen R. Tabios with José García Villa (1908-1997)

Eileen R. Tabios loves books and has released about 30 collections of poetry, essays, fiction and experimental biographies from publishers in nine countries and cyberspace. She has also exhibited visual art and visual poetry in the United States, Serbia and Asia. Recipient of the Philippines' National Book Award for Poetry for her first poetry book collection, she has crafted an award-winning body of work that is unique for melding ekphrasis with transcolonialism. Her poems have been translated into seven languages as well as computer-generated hybrid languages, Paintings, Video, Drawings, Visual Poetry, Mixed Media Collages, Kali Martial Arts, Music, Modern Dance and Sculpture. She also has edited, co-edited or conceptualized ten anthologies of poetry, fiction and essays in addition to serving as editor or guest editor for various literary journals. She maintains a bibliophilic blog, "Eileen Verbs Books"; edits *Galatea Resurrects*, a popular poetry review; steers the literary and arts publisher Meritage Press; and frequently curates thematic online poetry projects including *LinkedIn Poetry Recommendations* (a recommended list of contemporary poetry books) and *The Halo-Halo Review* which presents engagements with Filipino literature in all genres. More information is available at <http://eileentabios.com>



*The poet also dedicates this book to her brother
Roy Tilan Tabios (1958-1980),
a genius reader who she's never forgotten
and whose presence she sensed
on Advaita Patel's front cover photograph.*

Titles from Marsh Hawk Press

- Jane Augustine**, *KRAZY: Visual Poems and Performance Scripts, A Woman's Guide to Mountain Climbing, Night Lights, Arbor Vitae*
Tom Beckett, *ΔΙΠΣΤΗΓΚ (DIPTYCH)*
Sigman Byrd, *Under the Wanderer's Star*
Patricia Carlin, *Quantum Jitters, Original Green*
Claudia Carlson, *Pocket Park, The Elephant House*
Meredith Cole, *Miniatures*
Jon Curley, *Hybrid Moments*
Neil de la Flor, *An Elephant's Memory of Blizzards, Almost Dorothy*
Chard deNiord, *Sharp Golden Thorn*
Sharon Dolin, *Serious Pink*
Steve Fellner, *The Weary World Rejoices, Blind Date with Cavafy*
Thomas Fink, *Selected Poems & Poetic Series, Joyride, Peace Conference, Clarity and Other Poems, After Taxes, Gossip: A Book of Poems*
Norman Finkelstein, *Inside the Ghost Factory, Passing Over*
Edward Foster, *Dire Straits, The Beginning of Sorrows, What He Ought To Know, Mahrem: Things Men Should Do for Men*
Paolo Javier, *The Feeling Is Actual*
Burt Kimmelman, *Somehow*
Burt Kimmelman and Fred Caruso, *The Pond at Cape May Point*
Basil King, *The Spoken Word/the Painted Hand from Learning to Draw/A History 77 Beasts: Basil King's Bestiary, Mirage*
Martha King, *Imperfect Fit*
Phillip Lopate, *At the End of the Day: Selected Poems and An Introductory Essay*
Mary Mackey, *Travelers With No Ticket Home, Sugar Zone, Breaking the Fever*
Jason McCall, *Dear Hero*,
Sandy McIntosh, *A Hole In the Ocean: A Hamptons' Apprenticeship, Cemetery Chess: Selected and New Poems, Ernesta, in the Style of the Flamenco, Forty-Nine Guaranteed Ways to Escape Death, The After-Death History of My Mother, Between Earth and Sky*
Stephen Paul Miller, *Any Lie You Tell Will Be the Truth, There's Only One God and You're Not It, Fort Dad, The Bee Flies in May, Skinny Eighth Avenue*
Daniel Morris, *If Not for the Courage*,
Bryce Passage, *Hit Play*
Sharon Olinka, *The Good City*
Christina Olivares, *No Map of the Earth Includes Stars*
Justin Petropoulos, *Eminent Domain*
Paul Pines, *Divine Madness, Last Call at the Tin Palace, Charlotte Songs*
Jacquelyn Pope, *Watermark*
George Quasha, *Things Done For Themselves*
Karin Randolph, *Either She Was*
Rochelle Ratner, *Ben Casey Days, Balancing Acts, House and Home*
Michael Rerick, *In Ways Impossible to Fold*
Corrine Robins, *Facing It: New and Selected Poems, Today's Menu, One Thousand Years*
Eileen R. Tabios, *The Connoisseur of Alleys, Sun Stigmata, The Thorn Rosary: Selected Prose Poems and New (1998-2010), The Light Sang As It Left Your Eyes: Our Autobiography, I Take Thee, English, for My Beloved, Reproductions of the Empty Flagpole*
Eileen R. Tabios and jj hastain, *the relational elations of ORPHANED ALGEBRA*
Susan Terris, *Ghost of Yesterday, Natural Defenses*
Madeline Tiger, *Birds of Sorrow and Joy*
Tana Jean Welch, *Latest Volcano*
Harriet Zinnes, *New and Selected Poems, Weather Is Whether, Light Light or the Curvature of the Earth, Whither Nonstopping, Drawing on the Wall*

Year	Author	MHP Poetry Prize Title	Judge
2004	Jacquelyn Pope	<i>Watermark</i>	Marie Ponsot
2005	Sigman Byrd	<i>Under the Wanderer's Star</i>	Gerald Stern
2006	Steve Fellner	<i>Blind Date With Cavafy</i>	Denise Duhamel
2007	Karin Randolph	<i>Either She Was</i>	David Shapiro
2008	Michael Rerick	<i>In Ways Impossible to Fold</i>	Thylia Moss
2009	Neil de la Flor	<i>Almost Dorothy</i>	Forrest Gander
2010	Justin Petropoulos	<i>Eminent Domain</i>	Anne Waldman
2011	Meredith Cole	<i>Miniatures</i>	Alicia Ostriker
2012	Jason McCall	<i>Dear Hero</i> ,	Cornelius Eady
2013	Tom Beckett	<i>ΔΙΠΣΤΗΓΚ(DIPTYCH)</i>	Charles Bernstein
2014	Christina Olivares	<i>No Map of the Earth Includes Stars</i>	Brenda Hillman
2015	Tana Jean Welsh	<i>Latest Volcano</i>	Stephanie Strickland

Artistic Advisory Board

Toi Derricotte, Denise Duhamel, Marilyn Hacker, Allan Kornblum (in memorium), Maria Mazziotti Gillan, Alicia Ostriker, Marie Ponsot, David Shapiro, Nathaniel Tarn, Anne Waldman, and John Yau
 For more information, please go to: www.marshhawkpress.com