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Debut

Heber Bartolome

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A Beach in Eastern Luzon, After Dumaguete

What moved me to act this way or sent
Me to the shore—stumbling where bent
Beach grass overgrew damp crab holes—
I don't know. I know the nearby shoals
Glittered in the wet sunlight. I saw
The sea wrack at water's edge grow
In darkening heaps to set entire.
I felt the moonrise rim the sea with fire.

When I walked barefoot to the end of land
I found desire in the tangle
Of kelp and driftwood on the gritty sand.
Now see I love is a worn-out shell
That had unhoused its habitant
And rued her loss by waves, as they rose and fell.

HEBER BARTOLOME

Debut

Labinwalong taon,
Labinwalong taon ka na ngayon, at
Tila malungkot,
Tila malungkot kung wala kang ama
Upang ikaw ay isayaw,
Upang ikaw ay isayaw at ipakilala
sa lipunang magulo,
puro rally at demo.

Labinwalong taon,
Labinwalong taon ka na ngayon, at
Tila masaya,
Tila masaya ang bayang nakarinig
Ng resulta ng Agrava,
Ng resulta ng isang dramang kinumisyon
at ito'y unang yugto,
nitong bukas na madugo.

Labinwalong taon,
 Labinwalong taon ka na ngayon, at
 E, ano ngayon?
 E, ano ngayon ang kabuluhan nito
 Kung wala namang silbi,
 Kung wala namang silbi ang mga kilos mo
 sa bayang nag-aalsa,
 laban sa diktadura.

Labinwalong taon,
 Labinwalong taon ka na ngayon, at
 Tila mainam,
 Tila mainam kung ikaw ay kikilos
 Para sa kalayaan,
 Para sa kalayaang susi ng kaunlaran
 malaon nang minimithi,
 nitong ating lahi.

R. TORRES PANDAN

Twin Sepultures

I

Here is bleak and Bacolod,
 its muscovado mills rot,
 molasses on wheels glitter and tax
 in a matriarch's farm.
 The death-black dust from stainless
 steel smoke-stacks on sun-bound
 days is the heart of this heartless
 country. New-edition cars pound
 concrete, shriek past ancient
 stalk-clotted tracts. The shoreline
 dredged for space, spews dust
 past cathedral mildew
 to diadem modern-house villas.
 Past meridian, a mad *matrona*,
 as a rum-drunk in the plaza,
 cracks under her gray days.
 Both vaguely mutter to the cooling blaze
 of the cogonal sun.