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Monte Lago
Sa Gabi
The Moon Stares
Bayang Palengke

Neal Imperial

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I will wash my mouth with water
and carefully, spit him out.

NEAL IMPERIAL

Monte Lago

Beyond the bed's wrinkled edge,
Taal whispers mist
to a blue-glass lake
on which our bodies drift.

Sa Gabi

Ang lagkit ng iyong katawan sa gabi
ay pagkawala mo
sa aking tabi.

Wala ka kahit nariryan:
matigas na unan, maikling kumot,
bangungot at pag-asam.

Pinag-iisa mo ako
kapag hinahagkan,
pinipira-piraso
ng iyong anino
sa pag-unat ng magdamag.

Ginigising mo ang mga takot
na pinuyat ng pangako, tiwala,
asukal ng salita.

Sa gabi,
pinagbibihis mo ako ng kaliskis

upang matiis ang kamandag
ng pag-ibig.

Sa umaga,
ang kama, ang buong palapag
sa pamimilipit at bigat,
biglang bumabagsak.

The Moon Stares

The moon stares
like an orphan
on the sill:

A blot of light
in the blight
of air.

How far it bleeds
from the clutch
of my stare,

How near
the distance
to my heart.

Through the same screen now dry
with stardust, the embers of fireflies,
I gaze at birds, coal-blind, clench
their wings, plummet
like stones
in the black wind.

This is all
the stitch of time,
the sameness of a room
reminds:

I am father
of my past, its progeny
of grief.

Bayang Palengke

Bangkay ng bayan
itong palengkeng nakahilatay
sa gilid ng uka-
ukang aspalto.

Binabangaw ng dyip
ang tagilirang nagdurugo.

Inuuod ng tao
ang singit at tadyang.

Lumalapot sa katanghalian
ang lansa ng hiwa-hiwang balat.

Kinalawang na talukap
sunog na mata
labing tuklap.

Tinitimbang ang bigat
ng kalansing at itak.

ARKAYE KIERULF

We are Protected from so Much Pain

For example: graves.

The earth's roots and brown-black blood are busy
covering the soft, violated bodies of our loves.
Death is a secret, and the rain with its many hands