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**Short Time
Enjambment
November the Second
The Death of a Revolutionary Friend**

Jaime An Lim

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JAIME AN LIM

Short Time

I am haunted by the sadness of men
 hanging out at night
 in all the parks and alleys of the world.
 They wait and meander
 weighing
 measuring
 the safer distance
 between dread
 and desire.
 Every face a catalog of possibilities,
 every look a whole vocabulary of need.

Tonight, you are the dream
 who walks in my waking sleep,
 who bears miraculously
 the shape voice motion of remembered love.
 How can I resist the reckless

Leap from the world
 of furtive bushes and tunnelling headlights
 to this room, no less anonymous,
 of thin walls, thinning mattresses
 where we grapple and thrash
 like beached sea creatures
 breathing the dry unfamiliar air?

When you stand to go, I ease myself
 into the hollow your body leaves.
 I press the faint smell of you to my face.
 O Christ, were I loving you
 drinking your blood, eating your flesh!

But the morning betrays nothing.
 The chair in the corner stands mute,
 the mirror repeats your absence.

When the curtains are flung back
to let the harsh light in,
the bed looms empty.

I am finally all I have.

Enjambment

who
will
 rock the waves
 bend
 the rainbow shape
 the quail's
 egg who
will nibble
 the moon
 fill
 the peach
 stone shut if
 you
 go love
who will
 pillow
 my thoughts color
 my skin milk
 my arching
 swollen
 body when
 you go love
who
 will stoke the dark
 fire
 between my legs

November the Second

Another year given and gone.
 I've come through, safe from this one more time
 From screeching tire and bloodied knife
 To stand before your silent grave.
 The day is warmer than I thought,
 It burns a pathway through the haze
 Of a thousand bird-filled mornings
 That would never touch your eyes.

Three years, and I still wonder
 If this is all there is. Finally. For us.
 For all our solemn vows of love
 And deathlessness and hope. This mound
 Of dirt slowly leveling to the ground,
 This slab of stone that claims your crumbling name.

Once, in jest, you promised you'd come back
 To tell me whether heaven or hell
 Truly lay on the other side. Weeks afterwards
 I waited for a sign, some phosphorescence
 Gathering in the dark to take
 The shape of body, hands, and flowing hair.
 You never did.

How can this silence, words folded into stone,
 Be all there is. I cannot, my wife, my love,
 Cannot bear the thought: The unkind
 Words I could never take back and make right
 The stupid wrongs I did out of ignorance
 Or pride, when you were alive.
 If I could believe your silence
 Is a way of bestowing forgiveness, I might
 Learn to let go at last, be at peace
 As the trees are at peace, content
 To stand in one root-locked place and accept
 What the sky gives or withholds.

To cup in memory's hands your face
 Growing softer and dimmer with the years . . .

In the air, the pungent smell of melting wax.
Gladioli and mums already mottling,
Like mortal flesh, in the morning heat.
Rank weeds shimmer in watery light.
I fall on my knee. I bow my head.
I do as lovers will, in mourning's dishevelment:
With bare hands, I tug and tear and pull
The encroaching weeds from your grave.

The Death of a Revolutionary Friend

—for E.R.

once your eyes were fresh mornings
wide open to new beginnings
your face a mountain stream so
transparent we could see every least bit
of cloud troubling your sorrow's sky
for you hoarded sorrow easily the way
the spaces beneath the bed collect
loose change dust fallen hair
the sad debris of our desperate lives
you cried mothering the pot-bellied child
in Cotabato you raged hearing
the massacre of the villagers in Jolo
you grieved over the ineptitude
the thieving in high places
and all week long a grey rain fell
your love we know now was as ruthless
and as reckless as your anger and hope
you left the corrupted city for the mountain
because you could not bear to see us shrivel
because you loved too much
because you dared to shape the world anew
but to whose heart's desire
what you could not touch with gentle words
you would challenge with fire bullet and scourge
and we were left to tend the dying garden
to nurse the maimed to bury the salvaged dead

now the mountain is giving you back
 you lie in a felled tree
 that cradles your stillborn dream
 the east my friend is not red
 and we move in endless circles of grief
 like the iron bars that enclose the grass
 that encloses the hunchbacked house
 of the living that hems us in
 over and over and over again
 a broken song holding the stubborn fact
 of your dream's implacable death

FATIMA LIM-WILSON

Alphabet Soup

(Mimicry as a Second Language)

Angel of letters, feed me.
 Beat your wings till I remember
 Cardboard cut-outs of ABC's. Why
 Does my memory hobble, lift
 Empty pails from an English castle's dark well?
 Fill me with the welter of vowels,
 Googol of consonants, tender French
 Hearts, dead Latin roots from where words grow,
 Insidiously. My tongue smokes, a
 Joss stick trailing mixed signals. What
 Keeps me from balancing a silver spoon
 Locked in my mouth? An echo.
 Mother humming her made-up melodies. She
 Nudges me to move my lips with hers.
 Old wives rustle, whisper tales in my ears.
 Palimpsest of longtailed syllables,
 Quick darting wings of a windseeking accent.
 Run, I must rend the tent of Thesaurus.
 Slash away till I warble, silvery voiced with a cut
 Tongue. I grow, a hunchback, trailing my master,
 Unctuous and anxious. Sweet, mute angel, cast your
 Veil over me to muffle my voice of broken glass.