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## **Eve of Eid'l Fitr: Final Caption Before the Stillness of Flowers Wraith**

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RICARDO M. DE UNGRIA

## Eve of Eid'l Fitr: Final Caption

*(In memoriam: Gene Boyd Lumawag)*

On the eve of the festival, Gene Boyd was walking back to his hotel from the pier in Jolo, Sulu where he had just taken shots of the sunset late Friday when an unknown assailant shot him in the head. He died still clutching his camera.

—Newspaper item

Unnumbered the ways  
light leaves  
at end of day.  
Like variations  
in a game of chess,  
or falling in love,  
this tumble among  
cloudwork, wind,  
and dirty molecules  
in darkening air  
can work up  
sights of God  
to carry the day.

It takes an other  
eye to spot  
and spirit fleet  
arrangements of heaven's  
lights into art—  
or what, in the end,  
throws us back  
into our own  
heart dreaming  
in the next room  
with eyes open  
into the unseen,

the unguessed at,  
the ineluctable  
and premonitory.

Say, this shot  
of whitest light  
holding up  
the deepening blues  
of November sky  
and spilling over  
into Jolo waters  
must have stilled  
the words between  
those two boys perched  
on a slab on the pier,  
cutting a silhouette  
as of rowers atop  
*manunggul* jars  
caught before  
they dip their oars  
and ferry across  
inexplicable spaces  
the stolen lives under the lids  
and irredeemable shards  
of peace.

Who's to say  
it will be,  
without a by your leave,  
the last configurations of light  
to see?  
That the shot, at all,  
was snapped—  
and what of the shot  
pointblank  
from behind?

Art we leave behind  
keeps us

dusted off somehow,  
as well the questions  
we hold death to—  
still unanswered and still  
asked,  
still holding up  
the pulled-apart air.

### **Before the Stillness of Flowers**

*(After two photographs in the Sun Star Davao, 4 April 2003)*

A common enough sight perhaps  
along the fine sand beach of Paradise  
or on a bench in Magsaysay Park after dark,

casual in sleeveless shirt, denims, & rubber sandals,  
she, holding back amazement  
& the noise behind her, not ruffled by new & strong

emotion piercing her but looking longingly  
down on him, her arm stretched out  
to touch his hair as though to confirm

his attendance shiftless now but changed before her  
full of surrender to a beckoning point beyond  
pushed into focus by the white of his unsubduable eyes—

except that now he lies on the white-tiled floor  
of the hospital morgue wrapped in white cloth  
mottled with dried blood like the others  
beside him in the row, just brought in from Sasa wharf,

except that his has just been pushed back  
to show his naked chest and young face still full of arrival  
at sunset into Davao skies from open seas

& far Kuwait, as though, stunned  
& unsteadily walking straight into air from the brief earth  
he forgot everything he wanted to tell her,

and she has just stooped down to plant a kiss  
on his right cheek near his still open eye,  
the hair she has tied to a girlish ponytail

running up her steeply arched back  
to allow her to touch him just with her lips  
& all the words taken away from her just now.

### **Wraith**

Full moon in the mizzle.  
Pathway softened earlier by rain  
it kept a quilt of sole marks,  
though it had body enough  
not to turn into slosh.  
Along the lane of the bird cages  
quiet roosts. Call and response  
of cicadas only, reminding me  
of the sound of stars coming out.  
There are no stars tonight.  
Nor the frogs of after-rain.  
Between darknesses and path lights,  
waiters with plate-heaps on trays  
scurry about and turn into visions,  
like those ghostlier ones caught  
only from the corners of the eyes.  
On the beach shrouded by esoteric  
talisay trees, the lights of Davao  
shimmer in the abyss—  
across which moves without a sound  
the dull light of what must be  
a solitary fishing boat.  
I look for the woman who spears the leaves  
on the ground with her bamboo stick  
as if they were food scraps to be saved up  
for a last mouthful else God won't provide  
another for tomorrow.

She must be on the other end of the strand  
where the lights are,  
picking the near-empty grounds clean,  
even at night, of leavings and blown-down  
wastes and oddments that mar  
the worked-at glow and readiness  
of a tended, tendered place.

ALAIN RUSS DIMZON

### **Ang Paraiso ni Amado**

Nagbalik  
Si Amado

Daw ginlansang  
Ang iya mga tuhod  
Sa batobusilak  
Nga salog.

Nagaduko sia  
Sa atubang  
Sang krus.

Ginapilit niya  
Nga panason  
Sa iya panghunahuna  
Ang hayahay  
Nga may imprinta  
Nga garab  
Kag martilyo.

Gintusmaw niya  
Ang iya tuo  
Nga kamut  
Sa balaan  
Nga tubig.