

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

An Old Woman's Thoughts Inside a Bus Candles

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Philippine Studies vol. 33, no. 3(1985) 405–406

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

DANTON R. REMOTO

An Old Woman's Thoughts Inside a Bus

I step inside a gray bus.
A late afternoon rain
starts to pelt the earth.

An old man stares at me,
company
on this journey.

From the wrinkled window
I see nothing
but blurred buildings.

My fingers brush past
my forehead rutted with lines.
I touch a face no longer there.

Trees begin to sleep
in the falling dusk.
I wish I were bark.

Candles

Candles melt
the hard darkness
inside the church.
Smoke thinner
than thread quivers
to the Mother
of Perpetual Help.

May the Holy Mother
smell
a father's shirt
beaded with debts,
lines skull-deep
on a mother's forehead,
children with violated
dreams—

The tears
of a country
that seems to have run
out of candles to burn.

KRIS MONTAÑEZA

Igang

Mahigpit ang kapit
Ng ugat sa igang,
Pumupulupot, bumabaon
Sa mga batong inuka't
Pinatalas ng ulan at araw
Sa kabundukan.
Sa makikitid na lupaing
Hinawan ng mga magsasaka,
Bumubulas ang mais at palay,
Mga kararuton—balinghoy,
Kamote, bisol, mga pagkaing
Pamatid-gutom na'y
Di pa makasapat.
Nakaumang ang igang
Sa mga daang ikinukubli
Ng hagunoy sa burol
At gilid ng mga bundok,
Mga patalim
Na sa talampakang kumapal sa hirap
Ay tuntungang humahantong
Sa layu-layong dampa
At pananim, sa mga balong
May alon at tilamsik ng ilog.
Sa lihim na mga lagusan,
Rumaragasa ang tubig
Mula sa mga bundok
Na dumadagundong sa natipong lakas.
Ngayon, dumarami
Ang mga balong nabubuksan,
Lalong tumatalim ang igang
Sa masisiglang yapak,
Humahawan ng bagong landas