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This Skeleton Must Have Been A Poem

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and esoteric love
or hatred or anger?

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i rolled a tear
among a million eyes
rolling down the streets
of the metropolis
where humps and bumps
paupers and slums
here and there
no longer jar a tear
nor mar the stare
of the million eyes
ego-tripping
with multi-million
neonlights.

MARJORIE E. PERNIA

**This Skeleton
Must Have Been
A Poem**

Breech baby afloat
on the salt seas,
the umbilical —
a hangman's cord
around the neck
of my longing —

cut
free
with the kitchen knife
and boiled in the salt
of its own sea
to tenderness.

I keep
the broken skull:

The blue heart
still beats;
the iris of the child's
eyes gleams crystal
between the white holes.

HERMINIO S. BELTRAN, JR.

Promissory Elegy

We shouldn't give in too much for lament
Praying is a family reunion in search of words
The heart is too small a cup for loving
The mind too brittle a plate for memories
At 31, I've got no vocabulary for dying.

But you're gone now, father, the clock ticks 3:00
The dawn rejoices, we watch the night slip by
Outside the door of the death room waits
None but the cashier writing down your name
On the doctors' bills coarse with devaluation rates.

Your purse is empty, your watch is old
As now we pack up your things in your wornout bag
Your friends surround, sing out your poems, we never knew
"Serve thy neighbor" could amount to such gracious rest.
A hometownful of friends could be such a helpless few.

For now as we move to settle all obligations
Your name and poems speak the language of the poor
The distance between your grave and your deathbed
Is the doctors' tourist funds and the hospital's gains.
But rest, father, the living know whose hearts are dead.

The world is for us much larger now as words vibrate
Friends though so few could grow beyond all the numbers
On the face of your wrist watch. Sign promises
We must in blood on all the cashier's counters
Now for the children we'll free the hospitals from profiteers.