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## Promissory Elegy

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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.