

By Lawdenmarc Decamora

Friendship (as Gael García Bernal with burger wrap)

In a Pampango¹ restaurant after watching a Korean
telenovela, perhaps waiting for an American fried ice cream for afters,
I ask the white-skinned blond waitress serving it, Are you a *cabalen*²?

The whole day seems snugly pushed to the process
of approaching the entire week with nothing but meat
clad in divine white wrap mottled solid gold

a symbol of high taste, off to a royal start
but often mixed with unfamiliarity. Burger wrap it is,

on the menu. Eyes on the price, an enchanting 450 php
could have entranced my whole day's worth, as if it's a meal
all wrapped in *burgis*³ gold. Could have been.

So I bit of change the question, Do you serve *halo-halo*⁴?
She says they don't; it's recently phased out from the menu.

¹ It pertains to Pampanga, the culinary and food province of the Philippines.

² A resident of Pampanga

³ A satirical label for an arrogant affluent person or group of elites

⁴ A Filipino dessert or native ice cream

Some drinks, I think, are just some milk- sweetened interest
like soaps heavily concentrated on the ratings:
customer orders, available or not, common
or uncommon, pink, blue, green or parallelogram
are handed histories of instant concerns.

Imagine: a native resto without its native ice cream.
They're coffee lovers, I thought, enjoying the queer light
of 2017. There's a mix of flavoured doubts as to

where

I am now.

Last thing I say, myself now worried, You a fan of Isabel Granada⁵?
with a stark chink of doubt to my voice about to perch
off the near window. Natalia Oreiro?
she replies. My cheek a cloud-ruffled
syllabary, sharper than Tunisia that is time-wrapped
in anonymity. *Teka... dios mio...* these silvery words
I pawn under my breath. Leaving,

I say nothing to stir this concluding Mexican air
flailing above my shoulders. A heap of rush, in the tone

⁵ A famous Filipina mestiza celebrity in the 90s

of I have to go, in the shape of many, many
horses racing through my current thoughts, makes me want
to just tip a poor glass of water sweating upon my table.

Now

only a twenty peso bill
is enough for me to seek a fiesta in the nearby town
for a Mexican treat later.

Vyuha

The indeterminate shape
of modern fire twines past everyone's
automatic happiness.

You resemble the dissolving wheels of neon.

Time's a labyrinth. Twenty-nine, and depression
is a young man's war.

Shush—

I am shaking: some vital parts of me
scream, want to scale the higher ground, scoop
the fleshy sight of might
that wants to untangle,
free: I

submit

to memory the risk
risking this brute formation
of Asian sails beneath
the unstudied reflection
of Hastinapur.

Lalala-ckakravyuha⁶-lalala-unveiling-Krishna!

¹ A defensive and offensive military formation of the Kaurava army in the ancient Indian epic Mahabharata

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