

Poetry Series

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan
- poems -

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Jaime Jesus Borlagdan(March 6,1979)

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan is a Filipino poet, song-writer, graphic artist and musician. He writes in three languages, but presently uses his native tongue Albay-Bikol. He has published a book of Tagalog poems *Maynila: Libro ng Pobyá* (Manila: Book of Fears) in 1999, which is now considered by his young followers as an important and influential collection. His recent works in the Bikol language have not yet appeared collectively in printed form except in his blogsite *Suralista* (). He works as a consultant at Tabaco City Hall, in Tabaco City Albay. He lives with his wife Caren and daughter Radha.

Marne Kilates, poet, writes:

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan is, by all indications, one of the main tributaries from the Albay sector feeding into the onrushing river of writing that's happening in the Bikol language today. One of the most active in literary writing in the Web today, Borlagdan, maintains two sites: a website for his works at

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A Rush of Metaphors, Tremor of Cadences, and Sad Subversions

Notes on the Poetry of Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

By Tito Genova Valiente

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The first time I read the poems of Jesus Jaime Borlagdan, simple to those who know him, I felt immediately the seething movement of the words. There was a rush of metaphors in his works. I immediately liked the feeling that the rhythm caused in one's reading for poetry, in my book, should always be read aloud. I was hearing the voice. It was a voice that happened to sound from afar and it was struggling to link up with a present that would not easily appear.

It was heartbreaking to feel the form. I felt the lines constricting. I saw the phrases dangling to tease, breaking the code of straight talk and inverting them to seduce the mind to think beyond the words. Somewhere, the poems were reverting back to direct sentences, weakening the art of poetry with its universe of ellipses and nuances, but then as suddenly as the words lightened up, the poems then dipped back into a silent retreat, into a cave, to lick its own wounds from the confrontation that it dared to initiate.

For this column, I decide to share parts of the longer paper I am writing about this poet.

In Karangahan, the poet begins with: Bulebard, ikang muymuyon na salog/ki gatas buda patenteng nakahungko, /ako ngonian kahurona. Borlagdan translates this into: Boulevard, you forlorn river/ of milk and downcast lights/ speak to me now. Savor the translation, for in Bikol that which is a dialog has become an entreaty.)

The poet is always talking to someone but in *An istorya ninda*, an *osipon ta*, he talks about a the fruits of some narrative: Ta sa dara nindang korona kita an hadi/ sa krus, kita su may nakatadok na espada./Naitaram na ninda an saindang istorya./Punan ta na man su satong osipon./This I translate as: For in the crown they bear we are the King/ on the cross, with the embedded sword./ Marvel at this construction, as the poet cuts at the word "hadi" and begins the next line with "krus" and the "espada." Marvel, too, at how he looks at conversion and faith, a process that made us special but also wounded us with ourselves stuck with the sword.

Finally, the poet says those lines of the true believer: They have already spoken their story, now let us begin with our tale. The poet does not have a translation but will the *istorya* in this line be "history" and *osipon* be "myth." Shall these last four lines in the first stanza be both a subversion of our faith embedded in a foreign culture or a celebration of what we are not, and what we have not become?

Puni na an paghidaw. Puni na an pagluwas/hali sa kwartong pano ki luha, puni na/an paghiling sa luwas kan bintana./Puni na an paghidaw para sa binayaan./Puni na an pagsulit sa daluging tinimakan./Puni na an paghidaw sa mga sinugbang utoban. Terrifying lines as the poet calls us to begin the remembering and also begin the moving out from the room full of tears. In the poet's mind, the *lacrimarum vale* or valley of tears had become an intimate area for instigating his own release.

The rhythm is there as in a prayer. But it is no prayer. There is the repetition but it is not a plea. There is the self but it is one that has turned away from itself into something else. That self is one that shall face the recollection of the faith that has been burned.

And yet the poet, resolute when he wants to, loves to sing and hint of fear and anxiety. Even when he is merely observing children playing in the rains, he summons images of terrible beauty. The skies become *diklom na pinandon na "may luho"* (with hole) . From this hole, comes the *sarong pisi ki sildang/ tisuon na buminulos*. The poet stays with this metaphor with such intensity that the

silken thread coming from the hole justifiably becomes luhang garo hipidon na busay/paluwas sa mata/kan dagom. Dark wit and a penchant for the horrifying are tandem graces in these lines.

This is the poet who can, without self-consciousness, tell us of the ...haya/kan mga ayam na namimibi/nakakapabuskad ki barahibo/nakakaulakit ki lungsi. He whispers of "halas na rimuranon, malamti/sa hapiyap kan mga bituon."

This is a startling universe, where dogs pray (and bay) , and where fears bloom and paleness afflicts and infects, and serpents are caressed by the stars.

[su Yaon Sa Tore] / (The Ones In The Tower)

Su yaon sa tore
dakol an aram
manungod sa kinaban
na saindang pigdudukuan:
an gabos daa tarakod
sa sarong banal na balanse
langit kontra daga o dagat
mga eternal na kontrapeso
sa planadong pisaran
matematikang pigbilang an kawaran,
katotoohan, pinatagas sa altar na salming
mga gwapong kabayong nagrarakas
sa de pakpak na hurop-hurop.
Dai man mababasol ta hali mananggad sa itaas
an kinaban talimon kan perlas
daing tipak, daing rungas.

Su mga nakahadok sa daga ugaring
laen man an pigtataram.
Dai daa ninda aram
kun ano an kinaban.
An aram sana ninda
iyo an pagmate
kan pagtukad buda pagbulusok
kan dalan.
Mga daing herak na bulod
ki matarom na gapo buda basud
na pigkakamangan kan nabulot
nindang magabat na baktot.

Abril 17,2007. Karangahan.

English:

The ones in the tower
Know a lot
About the world
Which they stoop upon:

Everything they say is connected
To a holy balance
Heaven against earth or sea
Eternal weights
In a pre-conceived scale
A mathematics of counting the emptiness
Truth, immobilized in a glass altar
Beautiful horses galloping
On winged meditation.
We can't blame them for from the top
The earth really is a sphere of a pearl
Without a crack, without a scratch.

Those who are pressed to the ground through
Allegedly don't know
What the world is.
The only thing they know of
Is the feeling
Of the climbing and the falling
Of the path.
Merciless hills
Of sharp rocks and sand
Where their stuck heavy load
Crawls.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Alimagyo / Storm

Ini an gabat na hinuba kan langit
saralak an daga buda tubig.

Kun isusurulit o susurusugon, an gubot
garo pagsuruwayan hale sa kugos na mapulot.
Biribid an mga kalamias kan koryente
buda sanga, sarapi kan tanglay
sa lambang saro sarablay.
Mga dahon, mga batiris
na puminakit kan bintana.
Mga gasgas, mga duga
an nagtagas na gira.

Gira kan dalan na bulos
kan dagat na luminakaw sa daga,
kasubanggi sa irarom kan ipo-ipong bulan
na an sildang pairarom sa sadiring diklom.
Su kugos kan Habagat rapadong higot
maisog na duon na humalon an mawot
sa kinaban sa sarong gugom na kamot.
Halos daing takot, halos diit pang garo pagkamoot
na suminuklob sa gabos.

Sa tinampo, sa ugat
su hinalat na sinabat
kan kurutab-kutab
uminaging buhing mga kabayo.
Pagtundag kan alpog
an aga tamong na gubot.
Natada an daga na dai nang sulot.
Duman sa pagtakdag kan burak
sa ati na nag-aling sa gamot,
suminupang an hamot
kan gumos na awot.
Sa pangalag-kalag kan liwanag
su linaw giraray nabilog.
Sa napasang kaganan ini man sana
an nakasaray,
sa haloy na pagkaykay,

ini an laog kan kalot.
Pebrero 17 2005. Pawa

English:

This is the weight stripped off by the sky
mixed are the earth and water.

If the disorder will be put back in place or traced,
it would be like peeling away from a sticky embrace.
Twisted are the limbs of electricity
and branches, broken by strain
slumped at each other.
The leaves, the pebbles
which tore the windows.
Scratches, sap
were the solidified tracks.

Marks of the gushing path
of the ocean which walked the earth,
last night under the twister moon
whose beam was inward to its own gloom.
The embrace of the Habagat, south wind, was a whipping tight
brutal pressure whose desire is to devour
the world in one clenched hand.
Almost without fear, almost close to be like love
which enveloped all.

On the roads, in the veins
the waited which was met
by anxiety
wafted like untamed horses.
At the clearing of dust
the morning was a crumpled sheet.
Remained was the soil naked.
There in the falling of the flower
to the dirt which nursed the root,
bloomed the scent
of the trampled upon grass.
In the surfacing of light
clarity again is formed.
In the shattered container this alone

is what is kept
in the long digging
this is what's in the pit.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Amater

Dai ka nangad daa magbuntog
sa Amater, sabi kan iba
kun dai man sanang pagkamoot
na kairiba.
Mala malipot,
baka maliptan,
baka magmawot
ki makukupuan.
Pero pano kun dai?
Pano kun gapo
na malumot sana
an kahurohunlakan.
Su gilid kan hagyanan
sana an kakurukairibanan.
Mantang sa linaw kan irarom
kan tubig na nagtatakig,
pinagduwang mga kamada
kan nagpapaimbong na mga unit.

Asi, dai na pagbuntog,
pigtataraman na,
kun daing kairibang
pagkamoot.
Pag inuragan sa karapsaw
kan mga aki,
baka pumaparos-paros
sa bulod kan mga burabod,
baka makursunadahan
kan mga tawong lipod.
Baka bumulasok na sana
sa rusdusan na halas
paghugpa sa tubig
dai na bumutwa.
Hulyo 30 2004. Karangahan.

English:

Never dip
in Amater, according to some

without accompanying love.
Because it's chilly
you might get cold
you might want
something to hold.
But what if there's none?
What if only the mossy stones
are your romp-mates.
The edge of the stairs
your only company.
While in the clear depth
of the shivering water,
piles of twos
of warming skins.

I'm telling you
don't ever think about dipping
if you don't have accompanying love.
When you become annoyed with the horseplay
of the kids
you might want to cool off
in the spring-giving hills
you might be smitten
by the tawong-lipod, the unseen.
You might just plunge
down the serpent slide
and after reaching the water
never to surface again.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Aki Sa Laog Kan Harong / The Child In The House

Su silensiyong sa laog kan harong
su sa barayleng kawat pagpundo kan tugtog.
Dai naghihiriro su mga bagay. Kidit
sa pagpasan sa sadiri nindang saray
na kumugtakan: an mamugtak.
Ini an saindang tibay, daing makadaog.
Ini an pruwera kan saindang pagkagadan.

Dawa pa, pinugol man giraray kan aki
su saiyang paghangos. Ginugom su kamot
nganing dai maglaylay pag natanglay.
Binurarat su mata maski magruluha
dai sana magpirok. Muya niyang mation
an tagas kan mga tukawan.
Saparon an pasensiya
kan mga garapon na gapo.
Sa arog kaini garo kairiba siya
sa saindang paghalat
kan sarong pag-abot na dai niya pa aram.

Dinupa kan relo su rayo
kan dose sa sais. Tisuhon
na ispin, nakatadok sa tahaw
kan matalimon na pansagang.
Namamate niya an paghali
kan saiyang pagmati.
Sa higot kan saiyang gugom
nalingawan niya su saiyang kamot.
Sa linaw na nagdumig sa saiyang mata
duminiklom su saiyang paghiling.
Luminataw su isog kan saiyang tagas
siniba su saiyang tulang.
Arog na siya sainda:
an liya-liyang nagtitipon ki liday,
an kurtinang nag-iipos ki paglataw.

Pag harani na an saiyang pagkalamos
iisip niya na nagriririp siyang perlas
na naguong sa batak sa kanti.

Kun minainit an saiyang daghan
iisip niya na arog kaan an higot
na kugos kan saiyang tatawanan.

May saro na sana
na dai siya napapapundo.
Nagtutuktok ini.
Arog pag bangging dai nang ribok
pigtatahob niya an saiyang kamot
sa tahaw niya nganing dai niya na madangog.
Ngonian na napahalo na niya su gabos na tanog
ini na sana su nadadangog.
Kan pinundo niya su gabos na paghiro
namate niya an paghiro kaini.
Naglalakop hali sa kun sain na rarom
na maski nasa laog niya dai niya maturo.
Nagtutuktok ini.
Nagtutuktok ini sa saiyang tikab.
Nagtutuktok ini sa saiyang kamot.
Sa saiyang luong. Sintido. Rapandapan.
Hanggan sa mapano siya ki mga tuktok.
Garo siya naghalon ki mga duwendeng
dai nagagadan. Pigraraot kaini
an saindang laoman.

Dangan kuminagrit siya
sa puro kan kaya niyang tioson.
Sa luwas, suminalak an tanog na ini
sa ikik kan mga bayong sa piot na mangga
buda sa arual kan mga surusuan na makina.

English:

The silence in the house
is of the dancing game when the music stops.
The things are still: strained
in carrying their own kept
condition: to be content.
This is their skill, none can surpass.
This is the proof of their deadness.

Even so, the child still held

his breathing. Clenched his hand
to keep them from dangling in case of strain.
Widened his eyes to the point of tears
just to keep from blinking. He wanted to feel
the hardness of the chairs.
Suffer the patience
of the stone jars.
In this way, it's as if he belongs
to their waiting
for an arrival not yet known.

The clock stretched for the distance
of the twelve to the six. An unswerving
spear, plunged at the center
of a circular shield.
He feels the departure
of his senses.
In his clench's tightness
he forgot his hand.
With the clearness wetting his eyes
his vision darkened.
His vicious hardness surfaced
devouring his bones.
He has become like them:
the rocking chair which gathers fluency
the curtain preparing its flight.

Whenever drowning nears
he imagines himself diving for pearls
stuck between the cracks at ocean's trenches.
Whenever his chest burns
he imagines it as the tightness
in the embrace of the one (for whom all of this will be given.)

There's one more thing
he can't hush.
It knocks.
Like at night when the noises are gone,
he places a hand
in his center to shut it off.
Now that he had all the sounds silenced
this is what remains sounding.

After he had frozen all movements
he can feel it moving.
Spreading out from a certain depth
he can not pin-point, even if it's within.
It knocks.
It knocks at his chest.
It knocks at his hand.
On his nape. Head. Underfoot.
Until he is filled with knockings.
As if he had swallowed deathless dwarves. They are tearing down
their prison.

Then he shrieked
at the limit of what he can take.
Outside, the sound blended
with the screech of the birds in the crowded mango
and the howling of jammed engines.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Astronomo / The Astronomer

Kinadakulaan ko na an pagtanggap.
Puminuon sa mga kawatan kan kakawat
na nakua sa aginaldo o kaaldawan.

Pag ako naghagad kaini pero dai tinawan
minahurok ako palaog sa sadiri
dai minaluwas, sagkod dai napaonrahan.

Huna ninda habo ko sana magkakan
o pigtutuyo kong maghelang.
Sa hadit kan magurang, bibakalan ako
kinaagahan. Muya ko nang magadan
ta maski paburubalintukon ko su kawatan
dai ko na mamuyahan.

Sa pagdakula ko, nagdakula man su kawatan:
su oro-awto nagin kotse,
su harong-harong nagin babayi.
Madalion pating tangadon,
pano hararayuon.

Arog kan enot, ako naghagad, ako natawan.
Arog kan enot sa kada pagtao sakuya
nawawara an siram.
Puon kaito an matawan
nagin sarong takot,
buda an pagmawot
nagin pagkamuot.

Kaya pagminatamong na an diklom
sa bilog na lugar,
pag dai na ki masabutan na itsura
sa hibog kan itom,
pag an kinaban sarong plato
ki mga daing namit na kakanon,
minasirip na ako sa mga lenteng
nakapuntok sa harayo: sa mga kalag kan bituon,
sa mga dai kayang kuwaon. Minatangad ako.
Sigurado ako na dai matatawan. Matangad akong daing katapusan.

*

Puwedeng man hilingon na garo ini pagbadil
ki mga bayong sa banggi.
Sablok, bako sa kamawotan
na maka-igo, kundi garo sa haratihit
kan tanglay kan paghalat buda pag-asinta
kan habo man buda dai man makukua.

English:

I have grown used to looking upward.
It started from the toys playmates
have gotten from aguinaldos or birthdays.

Whenever I ask for these but not given
I crawl inward to myself
refusing to come out until the wish is granted.

They'd think it's just a stunt, my wanting not to eat
or I'm deliberately making myself sick.
To my parent's misery, they'd buy what I wanted
the next day. I want to die
for whichever way I try to look at the toy
I couldn't make myself want it.

As I grew older, the toys got bigger
the battery-operated became gas-runners
the playhouse became girls.
For these the upward look had never been easier
for they had become even more distant.

As in the past, I ask, I am given
as before, every time I receive
I lose taste.
From then on, to have
became a terror
and to want
became an affection.

So when darkness blankets
the entire place
when in the thickness of black, no shape
can be conceived
when the world is a plate
of flavorless food,
I look into my lenses
aimed at far away: to the ghosts of stars,
to those we can never have. I look upward.
I'm sure I will never be given. I look up without end.

*

This can also be taken
as shooting birds at night
ravenous not for the desire
to hit something, but as if for the burning sting
of the strain of waiting and aiming
for something unwanted and impossible to have.

Tagalog:

Kinalakhan ko na ang pagtingala.
Nag-umpisa sa mga laruan ng kalaro
na nakuha sa aginaldo o kaarawan.

Pag ako humingi ngunit di binigyan
sumusuot ako papasok sa sarili
di na lumalabas, hanggang hindi napagbibigyan.

Akala nila ayoko lang kumain
o sinasadya kong magkasakit.
Sa pag-aalala ng magulang binibilhan ako
kinabukasan. Nais ko nang mamatay
dahil kahit saan ko tingnan ang laruan
di ko na ito magustuhan.

Sa paglaki ko, lumaki rin ang mga laruan:
yung oto-oto naging kotse,
yung bahay-bahayan naging babae.
Ang dali pating tingalain,
kasi napakalayo.

Tulad nuon, ako humingi, ako nabigyan.

Tulad nuon sa bawat pagbigay sa akin
nawawala ang sarap.
Mula nuon ang mabigyan
ay naging takot,
at ang pagnasa
ay naging pag-ibig.

Kaya kapag kumukumot na ng dilim
ang buong lugar,
pag wala nang maintindihang hitsura
sa kapal ng itim,
pag ang mundo isang plato
ng walang lasang pagkain,
sumisilip na ako sa mga lenteng
nakatutok sa malayo: sa mga kaluluwa ng bituin,
sa mga hindi kayang kunin. Tumitingala ako.
Sigurado akong di mabibigyan. Tumitingala akong walang katapusan

*

Maaari ring tingnan na parang pagbaril
ng mga ibon sa gabi.
Hayok, hindi sa kagustuhan
na maka-sapul, kundi parang sa kirot
ng ngalay ng pag-antay at pag-asinta
sa ayaw naman at di naman makukuha.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Dai Labot / The Unconcerned

Ini an mga oras
na nagsa-sign-off na an radyo.
Isipon mo an banggi sa luwas
an kadaehan na ribok
na pigaapod tang katoninungan
nagsasalak
na garo pades ki kamot
ki mag-ilusyon
nagsasaro sa sarong kaputan
na higot.

An mga turog na lawas
sa irarom kan mga atop
an bituon buda itom na langit
sa itaas ninda, kaipuhan gibuhon giraray
sa saindang turog na isip.

Buda an gabos tang hinampang
na garo may laog buda kantidad
kan an liwanag yaon pa
ngonian sarong hewas
na an laog dai ta na kayang sabuton,
saparon. Diklom sana
buda mga harong, ogis na ilaw,
winalat kan mga turog na kadsadiri.

Aram ko igwa man
ki naghihiriro sa irarom kan diklom
sa luwas.
Pigsasabat an lipot
na garo pag-sabot buda pag-ako,
pigkukugos an sadiri, pigsasapar an sadiri.
Yaon sa luwas, sindang harayo sa imbong:
batok kan ayam, dangan arual
agrutong kan makina, pawara
parani sa harayo.

Pagnadadangog ta sinda
mas minasiram an lumoy

kan maimbong na ulunan
mas ilubong ta an sadiri
sa hibog kan tamong.

English:

This is the hour
when the radio signs off.
Think of the night outside
the noiselessness
which we call peace
combining
like lover's
pair of hands
fusing to one tight
hold.

The slumbering bodies
under the roofs
the stars and the dark sky
above them, needs to be recreated
in their sleeping minds.

And all that we have faced
which we thought had content
when the light was still here
are now one breadth
whose substance we can no longer understand,
suffer. Only the dark
and the houses, white light,
left by the sleeping owner.

I know there are also
movements beneath the darkness
outside.
Meeting the cold
like knowing and acceptance,
embracing oneself, suffering oneself.
There outside, are those away from warmth:
barking of dogs, then howling
groan of machines, fading
nearer to far away.

When we hear them
more comfy, the softness
of the warm pillow becomes
deeper to the thick sheets
ourselves we burry.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Dalan Kan Sinayumahan / The Way Of The Rejected

Hunaon ta an hurop-hurop kan sinayumahan, mantang pigdadara kaini an sadiri sa ulian.

Hihidalion niya an paghali sa pinangyarihan, kun hain an saiya nagpahali; muya niyang masampot tulos an sarong sirungan.

Mala sa gubot na dai niya masabutan sa laog, muya niyang masampot tulos an madali masabot.

An hurop-hurop kan sinayumahan, hunaon ta, mantang sa madiklom na agihan pigmamati niya an dalan. Sa saiyang timak saralak an gapo buda awot, pero anas panas an saiyang namit, an saiyang tanda, puros tunok.

Sa pandong kan mga patente kan banggi an brilyanteng nabibilog sa saiyang mata pigrarayo niya an silyab.

Pigtatais an saiyang lambang lakad kan tarom kan tipak na mga batiris. Pigsususog niya sa batak sa paril an pasa sa saiyang laog.

Dawa anong dali-dali, halaba ining banggi arog kan pagtagbo kan dai na makakaagi. Dai tulos matatapos an muya nang matapos, dulo na maduso an haldat na pigitios.

An muyang lingawan lalo an linaw sa piyong, sa diklom dulo an libong, dulo an pagtalibong sa puon.

English:

Let us approximate the thoughts of the rejected, as he carries himself home.

Quickly, he will leave the place where it happened, the place where the one who left is in; he wants to arrive at a shelter immediately.

Because inside is a tangle he cannot undo, he likes to quickly reach something easy to know.

Let us approximate the thoughts of the rejected, while in the dark path he feels for the way. In his every step stones and grass combine, but all he can taste is sharpness, all he remembers are thorns.

Under the canopy of night lights, he veils the brilliance of the gem that is forming in his eyes.

His every step is grounded by the blade of broken pebbles; he traces in the concrete cracks the shards within him.

No matter how he hastens, the night is long like meeting one who will not arrive. What is brought to a stop hurriedly will not end, the sting of injuries will ache more while suffered.

The clarity of what is to be forgotten intensifies in the closing of eyes,

perplexity increases in the darkness, one circles around the beginning even more.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Estranghero / The Stranger

Sa tahaw kan paoro-otro nindang piggigibo
nag-abot su estranghero.

Arog an lagapak kan sarong gabat
sa dai naghahangos na tubig. Guminibo
ining singsing ki pagmuklat.

Pinalibutan ninda siya sa talimon
kan saindang pagmaan
arog an nadudurat na ayam.

Mala sa pandok niya an pinilaan na labod
kan ogma na aram nindang gibo sana
kan sarong bulawan na panahon
na dai na ninda naabutan.

Muya garo nindang hapruson
an lawas niyang ibidensiya
kan sarong suanoy na osipon
pero takot na magduot
ta garo pakpak kan kalibambang
baka marunot.

Para sa osipon na ini
sa daghan ninda duminaguso
an sarong dayong pagmate: pagmawot.
Dai ninda aram kun ano an dapat gibuhon
kaya pinadagos ninda ini—siya.
Dangan sa lambang saro
naghanap ki pandok
na baka lamang makamidbid
o makarumdom kan mga gawi
na bako naman sainda.

Bako para saiya
kundi sa tataramon niya
kaya tinao muna ninda an tukawan
kan kagurangnan.
Dinulot saiya an mga pagkaon
na mga batala sana an nagkakakan.

Pinadurog saiya an mga babaying
dai pa nadudutan.
Dangan dai man ninda sierto
pero garo kaipuhan,
nag-ogma sinda, nagtaong atang,
bako para saiya
kundi sa saiyang itataram.

Kan nahubas na su mga dulay
na pigkakaturugan kan alak
para ki Gugurang,
kan dai nang bunuon
sa gastadong kadlagan,
kan su aning tinagama
kan pirang henerasyon
naluwag na sa tuludan,
su lugar na nawalat
pagkatapos kan kaogmahan
guminabat sa paghalat.

Maalangaangon sa dakol na iuran
su bangging nagtiripon sa mga tawo
sa estranghero.
Sa dampog hirigot
su mga kikilat
na nagkasarabod
na garing mga ugat.

Su katoninungan
arog kan paghalat na maglaylay
su bitis kan bibitayon.
Su mga duli-duling kinadakulaan
na an paghuni dai naghuni
ta garo may tataramon na importante.

Dangan
hali sa estranghero
kuminamang su Tataramon
na garo bangog
kan ngimot na haloy na nakasara
pasiring sa mga tawong nagkamurungnan.

Haluyon sinda duman mga estatwang laman.
Kun dai niyani huminugpa su uran
dai sinda maburuklusan
pasiring sa saindang lambang kubo.
Duman gabos sinda nakahiling sa baba
garo mga naumayan na gadan
mantang pigrurunot su daga
kan mapanason na uran.

English:

In the middle of things they have always been doing
the stranger arrived.
Like the crash of a weight
on breathless water. It made rings of awakening.

They surrounded him in a circle
made by their stares
like dogs in heat.

For in his face were lash-scars
of an ecstasy they know possible only
in a golden age
which they have not seen.
Perhaps, they wanted to caress
his body which is proof
of an ancient tale
but dared not to touch
for like the wings of butterflies
it would seem that he'd crumble.

For this tale
in their chests surged
a foreign feeling: yearning.
They didn't know what to do
so they just welcomed this—him.
Then they searched each other's faces
hoping one amongst them might know
or remember the rites of old
which is no longer theirs.

Not for him

but for what he's going to tell,
they seated him to the throne
of Kagurangnan, The Oldest.
They offered him the food
only a batala, god, is allowed to eat.
They have laid with him women
no one has ever touched.
And though they were uncertain
yet seem to think as appropriate,
they celebrated, they sacrificed,
not for him,
but for what he was going to tell.

When the jars where the wine for Gugurang, The Ancient, sleeps
became dry,
when there was nothing left to slaughter
in the exhausted wilderness,
when the harvests kept for generations to come
were served,
the place left behind by the festivities
grew heavy with waiting.

Humid with expectancy of rain
was the night the people gathered
around the stranger.
In the clouds
the lightning were tight
tangled like veins.

The silence
was like the waiting
for the feet of the hanged
to dangle.
The crickets who are used to chirping
did not chirp
for as if something important was about to be said.

Then
from the stranger
The Word crawled out
like a foulness
from a mouth long shut

to the people who were stunned.

For a long time, they were there, statues of flesh.

If the rain hadn't fallen

they will not flee

for their huts.

Here they were all stooped down

gazing like resurrected dead

while the earth is being crushed

by the sharp rain.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Istorya Kan Sarong Awot/ A Story Of A Weed

Kan nilaog siya sa harong
arog kan awot na ginabot sa magapo
dangan tinanom sa maray na daga,
kan su sinaray niyang isog nawaran ki kamugtakan,
nagadan na man su pagmawot niyang mabuhay.

Sa imbong kan mga lanob
na daing lipot na pigpapalaog
luminatang su saiyang tulang
na napupungaw sa pangangaipo
ki paglakop.

Su lawas niyang dai na nahihigot
ki punaw buda pakig-agaw,
huminewas sa rasay
kan ubos na mga laogan.
Ta hali digdi kuminamang
an dakol na burak kan buru-banggi
niyang pag-utob
sinurop su saiyang sapog.
Natada saiya an masakrot
na duga kan pag-alang.

Dangan siya buda an bintana
pagturog na an gabos
pigsasapar an haldat kan imon
sa layas na mga bituon.
Saro siyang awot
na ginibong tinanom.

Tabang saiya an panahon
na maako an saiyang pagkatanom.
An saiyang ogma mga ngipon
kun kaipuhan niyang pahilingon.

Naubos na
su saiyang mga ngipon.
Sa balkon kan saiyang pagsulnop,
pighiling niya su laog kan saiyang kamot.

Pigsusog duman su mga dalan kan salog.
Punas na kan haloy na dai pagmawot.

Bago abutan kan diklom
luminuwas siya sa harong.
Naglakaw na daing kiling,
na garo dai nang kikilingan
sagkod maabot
an lugar na daing kasiguruhan.
An kadlagan
kun sain sana siya may kasiguruhan.
Duman an paghangos
na haloy pinugol
giraray pinunan.

Enero 10,2007. Pawa.

Tagalog:

ANG KWENTO NG ISANG DAMO

Nang ipinasok siya sa bahay
tulad ng damong binunot sa batuhan
at itinanim sa mabuting lupa,
nang ang inimpok niyang bangis ay nawalan na ng saysay,
namatay na rin ang pagnasa niyang mabuhay.

Sa ligamgam ng mga lanib
na walang lamig na itinatagos
lumuwang ang kanyang mga butong
hanap ang pangangailangan
na lumaganap.

Sa katawan niyang di na nahihigpit
ng gutom at pakiki-agaw,
lumuwag sa dausdos
ng mga lalagyang ubos.
Dahil mula rito gumapang
ang maraming yumi ng gabi-gabi
niyang pagsunod

hinigop ang kanyang gata.
Natira sa kanya ang mapaklang
katas ng pagtuyo.

At siya at ang bintana
sa tulog ng lahat
dinarama ang kirot ng inggit
sa mga bituin sa bangis.
Isa siyang damong
ginawang halaman.

Tulong sa kanya ang panahon
na matanggap ang kanyang pagkabaon.
Mga ngipin ang kanyang ligaya
kung kailangan niyang ipakita.

Naubos na
ang kanyang mga ngipin.
Sa balkon ng kanyang dapit-hapon,
minamasdan niya ang loob ng kanyang palad.
Binabakas duon ang mga daan ng ilog.
Nabura na sa matagal na pagnais.

Bago abutan ng dilim
lumabas siya sa tahanan.
Lumakad na walang lingon,
na tila wala nang lilingunin
hanggang sa maaratnan
ang lugar na walang katiyakan.

Ang kagubatan
kung saan lang siya may katiyakan.
Duon ang paghinga
na matagal pinigil
muling sinimulan.

English:

When she was housed
like a weed pulled from rocks
then planted on fertile soil,

when her kept wildness lost its sense,
death came to her will to live.

Under the warmth of walls
which allow no coldness
her bones became lacy
longing for the need to spread.

No longer tightened
by hunger and competition,
her body loosened in a fall
of empty containers.
For from this crawled
many flowers of her nightly
obedience
sucking her sap.
What was left of her is the bitter
juice of dried-ness.

And when everything is asleep,
she and the window
suffers the burn of jealousy
for the wild stars.
She is a weed
made into a plant.

Time aids her
to accept her plant-ness.
Her happiness are teeth
when she needs to show it.

She lost all her teeth.
In the porch of her setting,
she stares at the inside of her palm.
Tracing there river paths.
Erased by the long absence of desire.

Before darkness reaches her
she steps out of the house.
Walks without looking back,
like there's nothing there to look back for
until reaching

a place of uncertainty.
The forest
where she has certainty.
There the breathing
that was long held
is again begun.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Istorya Ninda, An Osipon Ta / Their Historia, Our Osipon

Sa altar baga kan makasuriaw na suriyaw kan puti
sa puting simbahan sinermon ninda satuya
kun ano an kamarayan kan saindang pagdatong.
Napano su simbahan ki mga ragot kan ngipon.
Ta sa dara nindang korona kita an hadi
sa krus, kita su may nakatadok na espada.
Naitaram na ninda an saindang istorya.
Punan ta na man su satong osipon.

Punan ta kan magbuhat sinda
hali sa kama kan lanog tang laman.
Saimo na giraray ini sabi ninda
sa sarong disyerto ki tulang buda paha.
Itaram ta man daw na iba an kinaban
na pigmamaanan kan naaatugan.

Huyan sa labod sa saimong pulso
an halawig tang pagpulugos-pugos
hali sa pagkakalawig sa gadan na sabsaban.
Pugas na an lubid, huni man giraray kita
nagtatalibong sa marang kaawagan.
Sa hampang kaining pasang litrato,
taramon ta man daw an rayo kan pararaot
sa paragibo.

Pasiring na sa tuom na kabasan,
pasiring na sa lati na pigliligidan kan layas.
Puni na an paghidaw. Puni na an pagluwas
hali sa kwartong pano ki luha, puni na
an paghiling sa luwas kan bintana.
Puni na an paghidaw para sa binayaan.
Puni na an pagsulit sa daluging tinimakan.
Puni na an paghidaw sa mga sinugbang utoban.

Uyam na sa istorya kan among may nagdudugong latigo
su osipon naman kan ayam na sa irarom kan lamesa nagdadago.
Ano na su mga suntok sa paril na lanob?

Ano na su suriyaw na tinahuban kan ulunan?

Huni na kita gabos, palibot sa ilaw kan karaba.
Huni na kita gabos. Sa bulod na nagpaparahay,
huni na kita gabos. Rumdumon ta kun sain
kita napundo, kun sisay su hudyan na nag-osip,
huni na kita gabos, padagoson niya na.
Kun dai na siyang maidudugang,
punan na kan iba, basta punan na,
huni na kita gabos, punan na.

English:

In the altar of the blinding scream of white
on a white church they have sermoned to us
the goodness of their arrival.
The church was filled with grounding teeth.
For with the crown they bore we are the king
in the cross, we are the one with the sword-stab.
They have told their historia.
Let's begin with our osipon.

Let's start when they rose
from the bed of our beaten body.
This is yours again, they said
to a desert of bones and thirst.
Let us at least tell them the difference
of the world view of the trampled upon.

There in the scar in your wrist
is our long struggling
from being herded to a dead pasture.
The ropes are cut, still here we are
wandering around the dry clearing.
In front of this broken picture,
let us speak of the distance between the destroyer
and the maker.

Head now to the unforgotten field,
head now to the meadows rolled over by the wild.
Initiate the longing. Start the stepping out
of a room filled with tears, begin

looking out of the window.
Begin the longing for the abandoned.
Start mending the sprouts stepped upon.
Begin the longing for the burned icons.

Fed up with the story of the lord with a bleeding whip
it's time to hear of the dog moaning under the table.
What of the blows on the concrete wall?
What of the wails muffled by the pillow?

Here we are now, around the light of a torch.
Here we are now. In the healing hills,
here we are now. Let us remember where
we had stopped, who was the last teller,
we are here now, let him continue.
If he has nothing to add,
let the others begin, as long as we begin,
here we are now, let us begin.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Kanta Kan Dai Natutunong Na Uran / The Song Of The Ceaseless Rain

Dai ko masawod an dulum
na hinalean ko.
An huhugpaan ko aram kong
dai ako masasabutan.
Bubukahon ninda an mga burak
na gadan an kolor
sasaluhon an pagbulos ko
kan panas
sa tahaw kaini.
Pero dai na ninda ako makukulugan
dai nang laog an buot ko-
matang nakahiling
taros sa mga bagay.

Sapuyunga ako kun mataram kong dai nang kamugtakan!
Sapuyunga ako kun lumuwas an sa ngimot ko;
Nangingiturugan pa ako.

Disyertong daing sagkudan an paha
an nag-iinom sakuya.
Ako an dai natutunong na uran.
Dai ko masawod an dulum
an gabat sa diklom
na nagsugo sakong paoro-otrong
isapurak ko an sadiri
digdi sa daga.

English:
The Song of the Ceaseless Rain

The shade where I came from
is unspeakable.
I will not be understood
by where I will fall down.
They will open the flowers
of dead color
and with its central spears

catch my flowing.
But they will no longer be able to hurt me
with my feelings empty-
while staring
through things.

Hit me if I say there's no more sense!
Hit me if that'll come out of my mouth;
I am still dreaming.

A desert whose thirst is endless
drinks me.
I am the ceaseless rain.
I cannot utter the shade
the weight of the dim
that ordered me
to scatter myself
again and again
on this earth.

Tagalog:
Ang Awit Ng Di Humuhupang Ulan

Di ko mabigkas ang lilim
na pinagmulan ko.
Ang babagsakan ko alam kong
di ako maiintindihan.
Ibubuka nila ang mga bulaklak
na patay ang kulay
sasaluhin ang aking pagdaloy
ng tulis
sa gitna ng mga ito.
Ngunit di na nila ako masasaktan
wala nang laman ang aking kalooban-
habang nakatingin
tagos sa mga bagay.

Sampalin mo ako kung masabi kong wala nang kabuluhan!
Sampalin mo ako kung lumabas yan sa aking bibig;
Nananaginip pa ako.

Disyertong walang hantungan ang uhaw
ang umiinom sa akin.
Ako ang walang humpay na ulan.
Di ko mabigkas ang lilim
ang bigat ng dilim
na nag-utos sa aking paulit-ulit
na isambulat ko ang aking sarili
dito sa lupa.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Ladop / The Dive

Bago su dumog na hiling nag-ikog sa pahaling ambulansya
astang magin alpog sa dalan ki lobo buda estatwang hayop
Bago natunong su pasimbagan kan nakabikini buda sarwal
sa pagpauntol kan bolang bados sa kulor, namamagat na maan
Bago napundo su burukudan, ngurahab kan radyo, ikik kan periko
sa otik na kadlan, bago inunas kan ikos su balon na nabayaan
Bago naka-isip su sarong na hanapon su aki, kan nakua, inubo,
garo bagong mundag, kinugos ki maray ngani bako ika...bako ika

Bago siya pinalibutan kan miron
arog sa pagtipon kan mga ngabil
sa pararom na tahaw kan burak

Bago siya inula sa wash-out na paril
pigpirit su daghan na su laog ikupsit

Bago siya hinawas, tabang manas
sa tubig na nahangos—bago ini gabos,

magayonon munang aldaw.
Daing pirok-pirok an sildang.
Siram sa paros kan pigdarang.
Domingo kan mga pamilyang punaw
sa tapsik buda karapsaw.
Aldaw kan pasiram. Ogma, ogma, ogma.
Buda kawat kan paglukso sa tabla

pasiring sa rarom na sampulong dupa.
Nakadungaw su aki sa nagbubuyog-buyog na tampi
sa baba mga bansag na nagbubusol saiya
na lumampaw. Arogon sinda. Gibuhon an kinaya,
kun dai, kun dai—
aapudon na binabayi!

Saro sana, sa dungan na ibabaw
kan huhulugan, an kayang hilingon kan mata:
an tubig o an salming.

Sa salming nadungawan kan aki na nakatangad siya sa otik

na kalot kan daing dampog na tag-init:
Nakapwesto siya—garo hali sa kalot maturon na halangkaw.
Daing takot. Naghahalat, sasabaton su saiyang paglampaw.

Muya niya na kutang bumaba, gamiton an hagian
umuli sa harong, magkurubong ki tamong,
makikawat sa sadiri, itubay an mga kawatan,
pero kinakan na kan supog kan nabuyo
an gabos na agihan buda paagi.
Pwera kaining tabla buda an paglukso digdi.

Supog, bakong iyo an enot tang kagadanan?
Sa enot tang lakad sa kalot, ini an usol.
Ta ano an paggurang kundi paghawas hali sa pagkabulot.
Kaya kan naghuhugpa siya sa tubig,
sa salming naghahawas man siya hali sa kalot.
An sabatan niyang takyag nakaunat
nag-uumbasan pasiring sa tahaw.
Ta sa tahaw, an nagsalming buda an salming
masabatan sa daing tipwas na hiling.

Nasagkod su tahaw. Napasa su ibabaw.
Mantang nagtutundag siya sa kalot kan maluway na tubig
nakilingan niya su sadiring padagos
na naghahawas, lampas sa tubig pasiring sa paros,
lampas sa tablang kapinunan, lampas sa angog kan kahoy
nagsasalak sa anyil kan kahewasan.

Sa ibabaw, narumpag su langit sa ogma.
Sa pwera kan palakpak, nakadangog giraray su kawali.
Siguradohon bago sindang mahawas hali sa tubig
an bago nindang pag-iriba
pasiring sa kinaban kan mga daing takot.
Pero bago ini, aram nindang siguradong mangawngaw
na garo baka, manuno an sipon, mapungak-pungak na garo mauutsan
su aki pagbutha kaini sa tubig.
Ini na an hudyan niyang paghibi,
pagkatapos kaini bako na siyang aki.
Ta nganing mawara an saiyang supog,
sa hampang kan dakol na tawo
kaipuhan siyang pasupugon.
Ta sa iribahan kan mga maisog

senyal ki takot an masupog.
Ini su palabas na pighahalat. An katapusan kan kawat.
Kaya niyani hinanda na kan ama su kamera.
Su ina pig-arikos na su isasabat saiyang twalya.
Pero su pighahalat baga ninda haloy nang nakahawas.
Itoon na ito sa dahilan kun nata sa banggi, kita nagtatangad.
Kasubago pa tapos ining kawat.
Sa tubig, su dai ninda maaako
padagos na naglulubog sa labog kan bakong makaulok na rarom.

English:

Before the wet look tailed the leaving ambulance
until the path of balloons and animal statues became dust
Before the bouncing dialogue of the color-pregnant ball, the in-heat glances
halted between those in trunks and bikinis
Before the game of tag ceased with the blast of the radio, screech of the parrot
caged in a false jungle, before the cat sneaked into the forgotten food
Before someone remembered to find her child, when found, carried him
like a newborn, embraced with thank God it wasn't you...it wasn't you.

Before the onlookers crowded around him
like a gathering of lips
around the deepening center of a flower
Before he was poured to the washed-out floor
his chest forced to eject its contents

Before he was fished out, bloated fat
with the water he inhaled—before all this

first a beautiful day.
The ray was unblinking.
The air, luscious with the grilled.
Sunday of families hungry
for a splash and horseplay.
A day of leisure. Joy. Joy. Joy.
And the game of jumping from a plank
to a depth of ten arm stretches.
The child looks down on the wobbling brink
below are the nasty names pushing him

to jump. To be like them. To do what they have endured,
if not, if not—
they'd call him a girl!

Only one, on the simultaneous surface
of the landing is visible to the eye:
the water or the mirror.

On the mirror the child sees himself looking up in the false
pit of the cloudless sky:
He is positioned—like from the pit he'll spring high.
Fearless. Waiting, to collide with his fall down.

He already wanted to climb down, use the stairs
go home, hide under the sheets
play with himself, lay with his toys,
but all the possible ways and way out
are eaten by the shame of the one placed on the spot.
Except this plank and the jump from it.

Shame, isn't this our very first death?
In our first step to the grave, this is the push.
For what is aging but climbing out of being stuck in a hole.
That's why while he's plummeting to the water,
in the mirror, he's soaring out of the pit.
His colliding arms are stretched
racing towards the center.
For in the middle, the one looking and the looking-glass
will meet in a fixed stare.

The center is reached. The surface breaks.
While he's sinking to the pit of the slow water
he turned to see himself continuously
surfacing, beyond the water to the wind
beyond the plank where it began, beyond the forehead of the trees
mixing with the indigo of outer space.

In the surface, the sky fell down with the roar of jubilation.
With the force of the applause, the ear of the pan was able to hear again.
They were really sure that from the water will emerge
their new comrade
on its way to the world of those without fear.

But before this, they know that he will weep
like a cow, his nose will run, he'll gasp like a dying man
when he surfaces out of the water.
This will be his last crying,
after this he's no longer a child.
To cure him of his timidity
in front of many people
he needs to be shamed.
For in the brotherhood of the fierce
to be ashamed is a sign of fear.
This is the anticipated show: The end of the game.
That's why the father already readied his camera.
The mother already brought the towel which will meet him.
But the one they've been waiting for had already surfaced a long time ago.
He is already there to the reason why we look up at night.
This game has long been over.
In the water, that which they can't accept
sank steadily to the murk of the unfunny depth.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Pagbutas / Letting Go

Pagnabobotod na
sa paoro-otrong bagay
bakong minawot mo man
na magtukaw
sa tampi kan dagat
isuka an gabos na piot
sa kahewasan
hangoson an kahewasan
muya mong kagan ki dagat
an saimong daghan.

A, pero an pagbutas
garo pagluwas
halis sa nasusulong harong
haloy na tinipon
pasiring sa maawot
na haloy pigraraot.

Paghinampang mo an dagat
digdi sa tampi kan kinaban
tatalikudan mo an mailaw na karnabal
kun sain saro kang sirkerong
nagtutulay sa alambre oru-aldaw.
Pano na su mga palakpak?
Pano na su ngaran
na may patenteng nagkikimat-kimat?
Pero nabobotod ka na sa paoro-otrong bagay
muya mong kagan ki dagat
an saimong daghan.

Kun siring, dangogon mo muna ako
mantang pigpupusak ko an sadiri
sa basud
dangogon mo muna ako
mantang pigpupugulan an ikog ko
kan baybay.

Dangogon mo ako
ta arog ako kaini minagibong kahewasan.

An kada pagbalik sa hinalean
garo enot na pag-abot sa padumanan
an kada paghale garo may babayaan
na dai na babalikan.

An arog kaan na relihiyon
kaipuhan mo munang dangogon.

Bago mo ako mawoton
dangogon mo muna
kun kaya mong ipalis
an dawa sarong tagdo ko
sa saimong daghan
buda pahukulon ining
arog kaini.

English:

Drowning already
on repeating things
didn't you also long
to sit
along the edge of the sea
and vomit all the tightness
to the void
inhale the vastness—
you want to put a sea
in your chest.

Ah, but letting go
is like moving out
of a burning house
long compiled
toward the grass
long despised.

If you'd face the sea
here at the edge of the world
you would be turning your back to the bright carnival
where you are an acrobat
walking the wire everyday.
What will be of the applause?
What will be of the name
with the blinking lights?

But you're already drowning on repeating things
you want to put a sea
in your chest.

If so hear me first
while I dash myself
to the sand
hear me first
while my tail is grabbed
by the shore.

Listen to me
for this is how I create vastness.
Every return to origin
is like the first arrival to a destination
every departure is like leaving someone
without coming back.
That kind of religion
should be heard first.
Before you desire me
first of all listen
whether you can pour
even a dropp of me
to your chest
and make it wave
like this.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Paghiling / Looking

Kun gagamiton mo
an saimong mata
makakahiling ka

pero kun gagamiton mo
an saimong puso
kun gagamiton mo an gabos

mong kinaban
na tinago sa kamunduan
makakahiling ka

kada aga
sa mga awot
sa gilid kan tinampo
ki kadlagan
na dai pa nadudutan

dai mo ini titimakan
ta mahihiling mo
na banal an tunog
sa lambang dahon
dara pa an pandok
kan kasubangging
nagsalming na unгло

English:

If you use
your eyes
you'll see

but if you'll use
your heart
if you'll use all

your world
hidden in sorrow
you'll see

each morning
in the grass
beside the road
a forest
never touched

you'll not step on it
for you'll see
the dew is holy
in each leaf
carrying the face still
of last night's
mirroring ungly, monster.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Parabayong / The Bird-Catcher

Pagdiklom, aram niyang tapos na
an saindang paghanap sa kahewasan.
Basog buda paas sa pagkagrat,
mapuon na an saindang pagkaturog.
Dara niya na man an sakong laogan,
luluway-luwayon an tinuom na dalan
na awot sa diklom, pasiring sa higanteng pili.
Bago sakaton an pigtaguan kan mga salag,
minapatabi siya sa mga dai nahihiling.
Sarong kumpisal ki berdugo
bago an pagsuklob kan itom na gibo.
Pagnakasakat na, saka pa sana papalaadon
an saklay niyang ispat.
Duman su mga malipot na itsura
nakabulukon sa sadiring katuninungan.
An mga balukag toog na mga dagom
sa lawas na turog an pagmati. Sa laog ninda
an kikilat na hiro naglalalayap pa
sa haralangkaw na langit kan pangiturugan.
Sa langit kan mga bayong
kun sain an paglayog daing kasagkudan.
An mga matang nakahiling palaog
mamuklat sa apod kan banaag.

An iba makakalayog
ngani sanang mabangga
sa nagsarabudan na diklom buda sanga.
Dai sinda tuod na makigkig
ta dai sindang takot na midbid.
Paros an saindang parasorog.
Kaya kan pigpudo sinda saro-saro
na garo mga bungang naghahangos,
buka an saindang tuka
sa suriyaw na daing laog,
an muklat na daing nahihiling
kundi an suriaw kan saga.
Pigtukis kan iba su kamot
na pano nang pinilaan ki tinukaan,
ta iyo sana ini an kayang isimbag

kan mga lawas na dinaguso
ki dakol na kangalasan.
Pigpipirit nindang sabuton.
Sa saindang pilik-pilik,
nagbalik an saindang init.
Dai ninda masabutan.

Pagkapano, tinuok niya na su liog
kan sako kan saiyang gugom
nganing dai na maagaw kan paros
su mga bayong.
Dangan luminusad na siya sa diklom.
Huminipa sa iya su mga aninipot
buda silyab sa tarom kan mata
kan naghihiriling na isog.
Pero dai siya nadara.
Huhugasan man sana siya
kan lipot kan banggi.
Buda malilingawan niya na ini
pag inapod na siya kan saiyang agom
para sa pamanggi.

Pagkaaga, su mga bayong
yaon na sa hawlang pininturahan
ki kolor kan kadlagan.
Sa hudyan, sa pag-ako kan mga ini
kan dai ninda masabutan,
mauukudan ninda an pagtadong.
Sa luwas kan eskwelahan
itatangro sinda kan parabayong
sa mga nagngangalas na aki,
arog sainda dai masabutan
kun pano an sarong lawas
na magian pa sa paros
kayang ikaag sa laoman.

English:

As darkness starts, he knows
that their search in the vastness is through.
Well-fed, with voices hoarse with shrieking
they will now begin to sleep.
Meanwhile, he has with him a sack

and will slowly thread a path by memory
to the giant Pili.
Before climbing where the nests are hidden
he offered excuses to the unseen.
An executioner's remorse
before the shroud of the dark deed is worn.
Only after the top-climb is reached will he dare lighting
the flash lamp he carries.
There the cold forms
are curled around their own calmness.
The feathers, stiff needles
on a body with senses asleep. Within them
the flash movements still flies
in the high heavens still dreamed.
In the heaven of the birds
where soaring has no end.
The eyes watching inward
open to the call of the gleam.

Some will be able to fly
only to smash
to the meshed darkness and branches.
They are not used to surprises
for they know no fear.
The wind is their shelter.

So as they were picked one after the other
like breathing fruits,
their beaks were agape
in an empty scream
the stare sees nothing
but the glare of the ray.
Some pecked at the hand
already covered with scars from pecking
for this is the only response
by bodies overwhelmed
by much awe.
They tried to understand.
With their squirming
their warmth returns.
They can not understand.

Already filled, he strangled the neck
of the sack with his clench
to avoid the wind's rescue for the birds.
The he descended to the darkness.
He was ambushed by the fireflies
and the shimmer in the sharp stares
of the watching wild.
But he was not moved.
He will be cleansed
by night's coldness.
And he will forget all of this
when his wife calls him for supper.

In the morning, the birds
are now in a coop painted
with the color of the woods.
In the end, in their acceptance
of that which they can't understand
they will learn meekness.
Outside school
they will be peddled by the bird-catcher
to awe-struck children
like them they can not understand
how a body
lighter than air
can be caged.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

An Tindera / The Storekeeper

Ano an nasa mata kan tindera
sa laog kan rehas na iskrin?
Su pigmamawot daw
kan gabos na paratinda—
kwarta? Bako man gayod
saiya an tindahan na ito.
Saka aram niyang pano na
an kaha. Pero kaipuhan
niyang maghalat. Ibahan
an mga panindang dai pwedeng
mawalat. Baka nalaom siya.
Pero kasubago binuksan niya su pinto,
may tinapok sa basurahan.
Naghiling-hiling pa ngani
sa tinampo, nagpahuruhayahay
sa paros kan kaskas
kan mga awtong pasiring sa kun sain.
Huna ko bumalyo siya sa tinampo,
pero umintras, luminaog giraray
dai nang luwas-luwas.

Dangan, huni na naman siya nakatanaw sa luwas.
Ano man an saiyang pighihiling—
su bakanteng loteng kadlagan
na nagsasabing bawal magtapok ki basura?
Dawa nasa hampang, dai niya naman ini nahihiling.

Kun may parokyanong minahaloy
para sa halipot na huron
ihapot niya pirmi ini kun mapasain.
An iba sa mga harayo maduman.
Gurano karayo, lampas sa arog kaining lugar, mahapot siya.
Lampas pa sa luminampas diyan,
masimbag sinda. Nata, maiba ka?
Rumdumon nindo
ta nag-ulok naman kita ki arog kaini
kun masimbag siya kan pirmi niyang pigtataram:
Dai— tama na ako digdi.

Pirmi sa sarong paaram iwalat an tindera.
An saiyang mata arog an paghagad
kan sarong dai nakakasawod.
Pero aram niya na dai man maitatao,
dai niya man maaako.
Ibayaan siya kairiba
an mga panindang dai puwedeng bayaan.

Sa likod kan pahaling mga nakahuron
nahihiling niya an saiyang buhay—
naglalapag. Pig-aagda siya kaini
pasiring sa mga lugar
na muya niyang maduman—sa lugar
na siya an pigbantayan, may kantidad;
siya an pighahagadan ki mga istorya
kan mga nabayaan—an saiyang buhay, parayo saiya
muyang mawara.

English:

What is in the eyes of the storekeeper
inside the screen cage?
That which all storekeepers desire—
money? But I don't think
the store is hers.
And she knows that the cash box
is already full. But she has to
wait. Attend to
the goods that shouldn't be
left alone. Perhaps she's locked up.
But awhile ago she opened the door,
threw something to the trash.
She even looked around
by the roadside, refreshing herself
with the breeze made by speed
of passing cars heading someplace.
I thought she'd cross the street
but she retreated, went back inside
and stayed there.

Then here she is again looking out
What could she be staring at—

the empty lot of grass
which says don't throw your garbage here?
Even right in front of her, she could no longer see this.

Whenever there are costumers lingering
for a short chat
she'd ask always where they are going.
Some to far places.
How far, beyond this certain place
she'd inquire.
Beyond the place, beyond that certain place,
they'd answer. Why do you wanna come?
Let's not forget
for we've also smiled like this
each time she replies what she always say:
No—I am fine here.
Always with a permission to leave the storekeeper is left.
Her eyes are like the begging
of one who can't pronounce.
And she knows it can never be granted
she'll never be able to accept.
She's left with the goods
which should never be left alone.

Behind those leaving costumers she'd talked with
she can see her life—
tagging along. It is beckoning her
towards the places
she desires—in the places
where she is the one being kept, has a price;
she is the story teller
for the abandoned—her life, moving away from her
wanting to vanish.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

As Adam Is Narcissus

In love only on still waters
I turned away from my face:

Round in my eyes is a world.
Without the water, I have reflected myself

into this: You. But wrong!
for Reflection, I have neither your shapes

Nor your control
Inexact Copy, how is this so?

The thunders ripen the rain.
And they are ripe.

Then, You are the falling that rippled my pond
shattering my Other into spheres:

A sudden butterfly shooting from the gray garden
turning my head towards a yellow trail of light

From my vain mirror, away
Had my forgotten face in revenge, turned away in return?

Or resumed loving even in unrequited pain?
Only the frogs knew

Which later, when the Great Voice yawned
all dived to bury their warts into the water.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Bantayi Na Ako Mantang Nagkakaturug / Watch Over Me As I Sleep

Bantayi na ako mantang nagkakaturug
mantang bukas an ilaw,
arog kan gadan na piglalamayan.
Mantang buhay pa ako,
mantang an katurug ko
igwa pang gimata.

Dawa dai mo na lugod ako alingon
basta igwa sanang mata sa taning ko
mantang nagbubuntog an sakong pagkaisi
sa tubig kan pangiturugan,
sa dai pagkaaram, sa dai aram;
mantang bukas an sakong lawas
sa atake kan mga dai hiling na armas;
mantang nagdudungaw ako sa hampas
na lalakadan ko pag-abot kan oras.

Marso 24,gahan.

English:

Watch over me as I sleep
while the lights are on
like the dead in a wake.
While I'm still alive,
while my sleep
still has waking.

I don't need you to nurse me
as long as there's someone alive at my side
while my knowing submerges
to the waters of sleep-images,
to the not knowing, to the unknown;
while my body is open
to the attacks of unseen weapons;
while I stoop down from the cliff
where I will step off when the time comes.

Tagalog:

Samahan mo ako habang natutulog
habang bukas ang ilaw,
tulad ng patay na nilalamayan.
Habang buhay pa ako,
habang ang tulog ko
mayroon pang pag-gising.

Kahit di mo na ako arugain
basta merong gising na nakatabi sa akin
habang hinihila ang aking malay
tungo sa tubig ng panaginip,
sa walang kamalayan, sa hindi alam;
habang bukas ang aking katawan
sa atake ng mga hindi kitang armas;
habang nakadungaw ako sa talampas
na lalakaran ko pagdating ng oras.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Children

Isn't the greatest life to follow, children's?
They who fear only what they don't see,
and everything, yes, everything is holy.
What is order to them but the unnatural
intention of afternoons to put them to sleep
and divorce them from their play.
They with the courage to fly without proving
the reality of their wings.
And after the rains, how many ships have they sailed
to the infinite, to harvest the grains of time
and stopping it in pickle jars.
Their nations depend on the trees
and on how much shade they can give.
Their wars are deathless
against the Night
and the monsters it breeds beneath the bed
The thunders, that loosen the shadows to the world
against the oppressive bars of rain
against our wills, our reasons, our alien size
They experience their God's close
intimate as their hands
dipped on the waters of their body
And god themselves
for making the stones
speak, the dark bite
And the stars, how correct they name
the stars! Either the streetlights of heaven
or the footprints of clouds.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Duwang Rawitdawit Para Sa Nobela / Two Poems For A Novel

1

Sa banggi, sa irarom kan mga limpoy
na pagkaaga mga kahoy, may burak
na minabuskad sa senyal kan patakdag na mga bituon.
Iinum kaini an luha kan nakabantay
sa bintanang daing pirot buda hungok,
minabatad sa mundo kan solamenteng patente,
minaayon sa yakig kan harayong haya
kan gadja, sarong sayaw na labaw
ki pagbalinghaw sa lawas na piot
muyang bikladon, hubaon...

2

Kun bungog ka sa tanog kan pagrarom
kan diklom sa luwas kan bintana
hilingon mo an senyal kan sakong kamot
mantang pig-aagda takang rumani
digdi sa bukas na bintana. Ituturo ko saimo
an rayo na nasagkod na kan banggi
sa pagpasyar kaini sa mga paultanan
kan mga kahoy.
An nagtitimak sa awot na dumog ki tunog
nagsisirip sa kada bintana...

Mayo 14, 2007, Karangahan

Translation:

1

Night. Under the shade
that in the morning are trees, there is a flower
that blooms at the sign of stars falling.
It drinks the tears of the one watching
from the downcast, sleepless window,
exposing to the world its one votive lamp,
obeying the far baying

of dogs, in a dance that struggles
against the narrow dress of flesh
aching to shed it off, tear it apart...

2

If you're deaf to the dark
rising like a river outside the window
watch for my hand signaling you
to approach this open one. I will show you
how far the night has gone
as it wanders towards the borders of the trees.
someone is walking on the grass wet with dew,
eavesdropping on each window...

(translation by Marne L Kilates)

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Hali Sa Treseng Tigsik / From Thirteen Toasts

1

Tinigsik ko ining gapo
an haraphap kong puso
kaito pighagad mo sako
kan pinalumoy ko
dai mo na tig-ako.

8

Tinigsik ko ining daga
daing kintab pero bulawan
bakong daraga
pero pig-iiriwalan.

10

Tinigsik ko ining pili
hararom na babayi
intindiha sana an unit na itom
ta dai ka naggad makakatana
kan natok sa irarom.

11

Tinigsik ko ining iba
gibo kan dai nananara
aram nang an alsum
lampas pa sa ngana
dawa ngororis na
dawa nagroroluha
dai mapundo sagkod dai
napupunggol an dila.

12

Tinigsik ko an pantomina
mahamis na banggi an dara-dara
dawa hinghing na sana
kan uminabot sakuya
iyo man giraray
an sa daghan ko
minarugba.

13

Tinigsik ko an baraylihan
kan mga burak buda ayam
nasa mga ayam sa puon an pagtios
nasa mga burak sa hudyan an pagluyos.

English:

1

I toast to this rock
my rough heart
before, you asked it from me
when I had it softened
you refused it.

8

I toast to a piece of land
without sparkle yet gold
not a maiden but fought over.

10

I toast to this Pili nut
a woman deep
mind only the dark peel
and never will you be able to taste
the juicy sap beneath.

11

I toast to Iba
work of those who never learn
knowing already that the tanginess
is beyond too much
even though grimacing
even though weeping
they will never stop
until their tongues are blunted.

12

I toast to Pantomina
carrier of sweet night
although a whisper

when it reached my ear
it's still the wrecker
of my heart.

13

I toast to the dance
of the dogs and flowers
it is for the dogs at first to suffer
it is for the flowers in the end to wither.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Karanghan

Bulebard, ikang muymuyon na salog
ki gatas buda patenteng nakahungko,
ako ngonian kahurona.

Osipa sakuya, dalan kan banggi
an dago kan mga kabasan
na inilubong sa semento mong
sementeryo.

Minadaruydoy kang tanuson
sa daghan kan Panal buda Bombon
daing hungok an tuklang
kan saimong tagas, kan saimong bulos,
mga sikad kan rapak na sikad-sikad,
halak-hagak kan rogadong mga awto.

Arog kan hiro kan patubig
sa pahang mga paroy
pasiring sa maduging labogan
kan damulag,
kan mga suanoy na kaito
kan ratsada kan nag-oorogmang
mga para-oma.

An gabos na minahampang saimo, masapar
kan gabat kan kurtina kan gabos na anino.

Mala an makagirabong pagpamati
saimo nagpapasyar
pag naluluktusan kan pagreparo
sindang naggururang.

Kaya malaogon saimo an haya
kan mga ayam na namimibi,
nakakapabuskad ki barahibo,
nakakaulakit ki lungsi.

Dalan ka gayod pano
pasiring sa sarong panahon
na naghihibi.

Sa limpoy
kan saimong mga kahoy
an mga harong kan ngonian
dangan an tumatawong multo,
naghihimati.

Nangangagda an mga kamot
kan mga kurtinang puti,
pig-aapod an mga awot
sa sakuyang tikab
na sa mga nilubungan
kan nakaagi, tumalubo.
Duman ito sa mga payag
na itinindog kan marurugi,
sa panahon kan mga pagsulnop
na ihinigot kan mga orasyon, '
bagting kan alas-sais,
pangadyion.

Halas na rimuranon, malamti
sa hapiyap kan mga bitoon,
an mga hinalon mo
dai na mailuluwa,
an itataram mo halaba,
pinugol sa tampi
kan piniripit mong dila
sa saimong karatan, silot iyan
saimo kan kinaban.

Magtaram ka ngonian,
pigsusugo taka.
Dai na pagtipaya
ta dakop ko naman sana
an paggumos kan saimong pandok.
Hali sa dai mapahungok mong lawas,
lumuwas ka.
Sa mga badong isinulot mo
sanlia an saimong kapinunan.
Mari digdi sa taning ko
ta dai akong aram.
Osipani daw ako kan kaito
kan ika sarabaton
kan mga bolang kalayo,
kan mga pading daing payo.

Hunyo 14 2004 Karangahan

English:

Boulevard, you forlorn river
of milk and downcast lights
speak to me now.
Tell me, path of night
the moan of ricefields
buried under your concrete crypts.
You dribble unbrokenly
along the chest of Panal and Bombon
restless is the push
of your hardness, of your flow,
pedalings of the worn out pedicabs,
croaks of tired vehicles.
Like the motion of irrigation
to the thirsty palay
toward the muddy soak-bath
of carabaos,
of the ancient long time agos
of the merry-making farmer's wit.
All those that face you, will suffer
the weight of the curtain of all shadows.
For a chilly presence
in you strolls
whenever the aging
are overlooked.
That's why in you loaded are the howling
of dogs in prayer,
hair-raising,
pale-infecting.

Perhaps because you are a path
toward a time
that mourns.
Under the shade
of your trees
the houses of the present
and their tenant ghosts
are listening.
The arms of the white curtains
are beckoning, calling the weed
in my chest to spring
to the graves of the past.

These are in the huts
erected by bamboos
during the time of sunsets
tightened by chants
chiming of the six o' clock bell,
prayer.

Venomous serpent, ghastly
with the caress of the stars,
what you have swallowed
cannot be spat out
what you want to say is long,
restrained at the tip
of your twisted tongue
for your sins, this is a penalty
to you by the world.

Speak now
I command you.
No need to turn your face
for I have already caught
its crumpling.
Out of your restless body,
step out.
Of the clothes you have worn
wear your origin.
Come to my side
for I know nothing.
Tell me of the past
when you are prone
to balls of fire
and headless priests.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Mantang Nagmamaan... / While Looking...

Garo sa diklom
na ipinandong kan langit
may sadit na luho

Hale digdi
sarong pisi ki sildang
an tisuhon na buminulos

Luhang garo hipidon na busay
paluwas sa mata
kan dagom

Kun sususugon sa baba
su kawatan an hinugpaan kaini
sa daga

Arog baga kan plorerang tubong
an pagtiripon kan burak buda tunok
pinumpon man digdi sa kawatan
an gabos na ogmang binuhian ta
sa kinaban

Garo baga nganing daing sayang
sa mga itinapok ta sinda an puminorot
tinambak digdi kan kamot na masuripot

Hilinga ta su mga sapi-sapi tang
sinambot kan gilyet na paros
digdi palan ruminagalpak

Nangangandam kan satong pangangaipong
bumalik dangan maghanap
sa lubungan kan satong kaluyahan

Garo su aldaw na ito uminabot na sako
mantang naghahalat sa sarong sa mga bangko
masundo sa urulian kan alas-singko
sa lumang eskuwelahan ako napasyar
sa gilid kan kawatan nagtukaw-tukaw

Sinda yaon sa tahaw
matarom pa sa kudal ki tunok
an bilog na pagkaraputan
kan manipis na mga kamot

Sa pauro-otro nindang pagtalibong
pigkukurit ninda sa daga
an itsura kan saindang kinaban:
Matalimon, dai namamaanan

Sa ngarakngak nindang
hiling an tila-tila
nagsisirip an satuyang kaito
na kinaon na kan sadit nindang lawas.

Kaya niyani bintana
an mga nakangangang ngimot
kan hamot kan hilaw na awot.

Kun gabos sana kuta kita
tatao magmaan
makukua ta an nawara

Kun gabos kuta kita
yaon digdi nakahiling
sa paghulpot
kan tursido ki ilaw
hali sa luho
sa diklom na pandong
mataram su iba "luho na an langit"
"dai, " masiring an iba, "may pag-asa."

Hulyo 30,2004. T.S.C.E.S.

English:

As if in the gloom
worn by the sky
there is a small hole

From this

a thread of light
flows falterlessly

A tear like creaseless spring
out of the eye
of a needle

If we'd trace it below
the playground is where
it landed

Just like a vase which grasps
the gathering of flowers and thorns
also gathered here in the playground
are all the joy we've unleashed
to the world

It's like so that nothing would be wasted
they've picked up what we have thrown
piled here by a wise hand

Look, our kites
caught by the blade wind
all crashed here

They are anxious for our need
to return and look for
the graves of our frailty

As if that day has already come to me
while waiting on one of the benches
to fetch the dismissal of 5 o' clock
to the old school I've strayed
at the edge of the playground I've sat

They are there at the center,
sharper than a fence of thorns
is the circle of their thin
chain of hands

In their repeated winding
on the earth they are drawing

the shape of their world:
Round, unseen

In their tonsil-showing
gaping laughter
our past is peeking
swallowed by their small bodies

That's why, windows
are the gaping mouths
of the grass' unripe scent

If only all of us
knows how to see
we will find what was lost

If only all of us
are looking at this
expulsion
of a thread of light
from a hole
in the dark cover
some will say 'the sky is breeched'
'no' some will say 'there's hope.'

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Natunawan

Duluhan na kahadean
sa tunaw na timakan
suanoy na osipon
an harigeng hurandigan
hala-hala kan mga aki
an kudal na sarig
sa hangos na hirarom
su mapa ikinurit.
Hangaw an linderos
turo an muhon
buda su mamunda
haloy nang nakalubong.
An poder kan trono
nakatukaw sa dampog
pigmangno kan moog
na butang bulakog.

Yaon an digdi ngonian
nakatugdok, nakaulakit
sa itsura na taros
pulinas asin padangadang.
Arog kan paros
lipod na sapuyong sa kadahunan.
Siyudad na nalunod
sa pagtaob kan kalingawan.

Lunad sa abaga
kan daing herak na Habagat
nagdudumig an matang
nakamaan sa tangod ta
su gadan na dato
nakapatos pa sa bodyo
kataning su mga oripon
na sa pasaka pinaghugot.

Agosto 10,gahan.

English:

Village kingdom
on vanished land
ancient tales
its lean-on pillars
follies of children
its support walls
in deep breaths
its maps were drawn.
Hearsays are its borders
a pointed finger its mons
and the one with this knowledge
is in the grave long gone.
The domain of the throne
sits at the clouds
tended by the watchtower
wide-eyed blind.

It's here now
erected, co-existing
in the from transparent
faded and arriving.
Like the breeze
invisible slap to the foliage.
A city drowned
by the high tides of forgetting.

Riding the shoulders
of the merciless south wind
teary eyed
looking down to us
the dead datu, king
still wrapped in a bodyo, funeral shroud
beside him are the slaves
which in the pasaka, ritual
were self-slayed.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Negros-Full Moon

How long have I waned?
And took the fate of oceans
upon my hand.
I make tides faithful
to the shore, yet I am
without love, and one faith
guides my circles, that perhaps
a new night pure enough to unfurl
the virgin wraps of night-blooms
tilled by the violet fingers
of answerless waiting will wake
you up despite the tender cloth
clinging upon your breasts, the soft air
breathed by a garden nearby thru your
open window will choke your pink dreams
of castles hazy at the tip of cliffs,
your prince upon a silver horse galloping
upon the bog, and bring your eyes to me
white with craving, hanged on a fragile noose.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Pagbasol / Remorse

Sa impyerno
kun talagang may impyerno
igwang padusang pig-aapod
na daing kasagkudan
na pagkalamos.
Ini igibo sa mga may kagibo
kan sadiring pagka-utsan.
Para saindang dai nang ganang
humangos, mahiwason an dagat
digdi sa impyerno.
An totoo kaan gabos ini dagat.
Kayang ihusto dawa pira pang kinaban.
Garo kahewasan. An totoo kaan
lalawgon ini kan kahewasan
sa sarong salming.
Duman imbes bitoon,
mga nagrolobong kalag
an nagpaparataw-pataw.
Mga planetang gadan.
Padagos na pigpapano an daghan,
kun igwa pa sindang daghan,
ki tubig.

Dawa daing kasagkudan an pagbilang,
an mga kalag igwang pighahalat:
an punto kan pagkapano.
Na kun pwede dai na ninda abuton,
na sa boot ninda
mas marhay na an lunudon
dawa hanggan nuarin,
dai sana mapano.
Hilinga, ta baka nasasala sana ako,
bakong kusang paghagad ini ki padusa
kan pigpapadusahan?
Arog kaini sa impyerno
pigtuturo an pagkamoot.

Ta kaipuhan palupuson giraray
an mga napanong kalag

pag an pakabutog kaini
kadakula na kan kinaban.
Ini su pigdudulagan.
Ta sa oras na ini kaipuhan
nindang marumduman
an kamawotan na mabuhay.
Ta an masunod na kagadanan
sarong pagsungo-sungo
dai na ninda kaipuhan habason
kundi kusang itatao:
sarong hangos.
Saro sana. Bakong tubig
kundi paros
namit kan dating kinuspang
kinaban.

Bakong garo man sana disyerto
an sarong tagdong tubig?
Sa disyerto, an sarong tagdong tubig
bakong sarong maitom na paulok?
Paghinangos ninda ini
bagong malalamos sana sinda
ki pagmawot na patawadon?
Kuguson giraray an hinabuan.
Ata an mismong dagat na ini
bakong ginibo man sana
kan sadiri nindang luha?
Pag nasapar na ninda
kun ano su nawara,
pagnaukdan na ninda
an tataramon na "kanugon",
saka sinda ilulugom giraray
sa midbidon na nindang tubig
buda diklom.

English:

In hell
if there really is hell
there is a punishment called
state of bottomless drowning.
This is done to those who did

their own undoing.
For them who are fed up
with breathing, the sea is vast
here in hell.
In fact it is all sea.
Enough to fit no matter how many worlds.
Like space. In fact
this is the reflection of space
in a mirror.
There, instead of stars,
bloated souls
are drifting.
Dead planets.
Their lungs, if they still have lungs, are filled constantly
with water.

Even though the counting is endless,
the souls here got something to wait for:
the point of fullness.
Which if only they wouldn't reach it,
that deep inside them
to drown forever is better
than be full.
Look, for I may just be mistaken
isn't this a whole-hearted request for punishment
by the punished?
This is how in hell
love is taught.

For the swollen souls
must again be deflated
if they have inflated
as big as the world.
This is what they are avoiding.
For at this point
they need to remember
the desire to live.
For the next death
will be a taunt
they need not steal it
it will be given freely:
one gasp.

Only one. Not water
but air
taste of the old world
they have spat.

Isn't a dropp of water
almost like a desert?
In the desert, isn't a dropp of water
a merciless joke?
If they would breathe this
wouldn't they just drown
with the desire to be forgiven?
To embrace again what was abandoned.
Even this very sea,
isn't it made by their very tears?
Until they have suffered
what was lost,
until they have learned
the words 'regret for the wasted'
only will they be submerged again
to the water and darkness
they well know.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Pagdai Ka / In Your Absence

Pagdai ka daing bunga an paros
na puwedeng rabnuton, pagdai ka
nagkakamang an panahon
sa lugad kan mga dahon, pagdai ka

daing duga an bungang ini
an bangang bulan ngirit
na daing ugma sa ibabaw kan itom.

English:

In your absence

In your absence the wind is fruitless
I have nothing to reap, in your absence
the season crawls
on the wound of the leaves, in your absence

this fruit is sapless
the half moon is a smile
without joy on the surface of black.

Tagalog:

Pagwala ka

Pagwala ka walang bunga ang hangin
na maaaring dukutin, pagwala ka
gumagapang ang panahon
sa sugat ng mga dahon, pagwala ka

walang katas ang bungang ito
ang hating buwan ngiting
walang saya sa ibabaw ng itim.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Pagsiblag / Parting

Nakatalikod na siya kaito (su babayi) . Nakahiling na sa dalan pasiring sa siya sana an nakakaaram. Buda duman sa saiyang padumanan, tibaad may naghahalat, ta ininutan na siya kan saiyang kaogmahan na makaabot duman.

Su saiyang kahampang (su lalaki) nakahiling sana sa talikod niya. An kawaran ki pakiaram pinamati saiya kan kinaban. Naghahanap kuta siyang tabang- mas dulo pa kaiyan, naghahanap siyang katanosan. Pero dawa ngani kamot niya dai siya tinubod na dawa hapruson an likod na nagpupuon nang rumayo.

Sa likod kan kampanaryo, pigtatamong kan maluway na aldaw an itom kan mga kahoy. An mga traysikol, sa gabat, nagsasagyad an lubutan sa daga, nagkakamang na pauli. Gabos naghahali, sagkod an matada sana saiya, siya.

'Kun pwede niya sana kutang suluton an gayon kan saiyang kalag-imbres ining lawas na kinaaatian mo-tibaad mamumutan mo man siya.'

Pero nagtalikod naman su nabayaan. Inda ngani kun su ngimot niya an nagtaram ta ini pirit niyang pigtatahuban, sa pagpuon kan takig na nagyuyugyog sa saiyang daghan. Sa totoo, dai ako mangalas na an mga taramon na ini, sinawod mismo kan kamunduan na iyo man an suminugo sa mga alang na dahon na tambunan an mga dalan kan daing herak.

English:

She was already turned away, looking at the path leading to she alone knows where. And there perhaps someone is waiting, for her joy was already there even before she was.

The man just looked at her turned back. The absence of feeling, of concern was inflicted to him by the world. He was seeking aid-more than that, he was seeking righteousness. But even his hands disobeyed him, to at least touch the turned back, moving away.

Behind the belfry, the slow day blankets itself with the darkness of the trees. The tricycles, in heaviness, scratch their ends to the ground, crawling home. Everything is leaving, until all that remains in him is himself.

'If only he could wear the beauty of his soul-instead of this flesh which sickens you -perhaps you would learn to love him too.'

But the one who was left also turned away. It's not even sure if these words came from his mouth, which he tried to cover, as shivers begin wracking his chest. In truth, I will not be surprised if these words were spoken by Sadness itself, which was also the one who commanded the dry leaves to veil the path of the wicked.

Tagalog:

Nakatalikod na siya nuon (ang babae) . Nakatingin na sa landas patungo sa siya lang ang nakakaalam. At duon sa kanyang patutunguhan, marahil ay may naghihintay, dahil naunahan na siya ng kanyang galak na makarating duon.

Ang kanyang kaharap (ang lalake) nakatingin sa talikod niya. Ang kawalan ng paki-alam pinaranas sa kanya ng mundo. Humahagilap sana siya ng tulong-mas pa diyan, naghahanap siya ng katarungan. Ngunit kahit nga kamay niya di siya sinunod na kahit yapusin ang likod na nagsisimula nang lumayo.

Sa likod ng kampanaryo, kinukumot ng mabagal na araw ang itim ng mga kahoy. Ang mga padyak, sa bigat, sumasadsad ang puwitan sa lupa, gumagapang pauwi. Lahat lumilisan, hanggang ang matira lang sa kanya, siya.

'Kung maaari niya lang sanang isuot ang kagandahan ng kanyang kaluluwa-sa halip itong katawan na kinadidirian mo-marahil mamahalin mo rin siya.'

Ngunit tumalikod na rin yung naiwan. Hindi ko alam kung yung bibig niya ang nag-usal, dahil pilit niya itong binubusalan, sa pagsimula ng nginig na yumuyugyog sa kanyang dibdib. Sa totoo, hindi ako magtataka na ang mga salitang ito'y binigkas mismo ng kalungkutan na siya ring nag-utos sa mga tuyong dahon na ibaon ang mga daan ng di nahabag.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Para Sa Mga Nawarang Obra / To The Lost Works

Arog kan aking nagadan an nawarang obra. Dai pa nahiling kan kinaban; an kinaban kan nawarang obra dai pa nahiling.

Nadiskwido sa salang pagsaray o tuyong bigla na sanang napara, dai na kaipuhan osipon kun pano hinanap, pano hinidaw.

Pasain na an mga ini? Dawa an matris-isip na nagmukna, nagbados, buda naghulpot, naghaman, dai na masusog dawa sa pagmati buda pagrurdom.

An mga taramon na tinukdol sa kawaran nai-uli sa kawaran. Bakong garo magayon na okasyon? Iyo sana an, dai ta na masasapar gilayon an ogma pagkairiba ini. An pigtatao kaini satuyang kamugtakan, pagdai na sinda garo nawawara naman. Apirmasyon kan pagigi tang yaon—pagnapara na, garo dai man kita nagin.

May nagbabasa daw kan nawawarang obra sa balyo kan nasasapar na reyalidad? Ano an mataram na hale sa kamot ko an obrang wara na? Ano an mataram na igwa akong kamot na nagtubong ki panurat para hamanon su obra? Pano matutukar an ideya na an obra yaon na pataw-pataw sa kawaran?

An obrang nahaman, nawara, yaon na sa lugar kun sain an gabos na dai na nakua yaon. An sarayan kan mga bagay na nawara. Arog kan isog o kaakian. Wara nang mataram na nagin satuya an mga ini. Dawa pagrurdom. Arog kan buhay tang diit-diit naaatas. Sagkod sa dai na marumduman kun an lawas tang ini yaon talaga digdi.

* * *

English:

The lost work is a child that has died. He hasn't seen the world; no one has seen the world of the lost work.

Either caught in a mishap of improper keeping or by intention, it vanished in an instant, it is needless to mention how it was sought, how it was missed.

Where are they headed? Even the mind-womb which created it, conceived it, birthed it, and moulded it, cannot track it even in feeling and in memory.

The words sown from nothingness were returned to nothingness. Isn't this a cause for celebration? However, we will never again be able to relish the bliss of being with it. The solace it gives us, goes away too when they are gone. With the disappearance of the affirmation of our being here, it feels we have never been.

Is there someone reading the lost work in the other side of our experienced reality? What will declare that the lost was our handiwork? What will say that I have held a pen and wrote the piece? How can we discuss the idea that the work now floats in the void?

The work that was made and lost is now in where all that was never found

are. The keeper of all that was lost. Like courage or youth. Nothing can tell that these were once ours. Not even remembrance. Like our life which slowly wastes away. Until we can never remember if even our body was really here

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Pista Sa Gadan, Kinaagahan / All Souls Day, The Morning After

Dai mo huhunaon na Nobyembre ining aga.

Agang kinuramos kan paros an tunog.

Arog sa kinaagahan kan katapusan kan kinaban
an mga kalag na naguong sa satong panganoron
gagaboton kan kalamias kan kahewasan.

Mahahanggianan an tikab sa pagsakat kan gabat.

Ta napasain su girabo kan uran
hadok kan ngabil kan mga naghahayang gadan?
Napasala garong panahon, ta mga rignos nakatugdon
sa koryenteng inalambre, nagtatawong alingahot kan Marso
sa mga bulan na benditado na kan lipot, sambay kan bagyo?

Nangngarakngak an kalag ko
ta pigsusurod an sinaringsing sa palitada.
Sa dagang ining parong ki gadan na kandila
nagagango pa man an satuyang papa.
Bako makangalas
na ini aldaw ki Nobyembre?

Maski sa mga atop nagsasangaw
an higos kan udto?
Maski an agrutong kan de mano
hapiyap sa talmag kong boot.
Dangoga, nangngarakngak
an kalag ko.

Nakakasibog daw kita sa panahon
kan satong pagkaaki
pagminaulok na arog kaini?
Sa ikos na pigbugaw an rignos
sa gilid kan pigbalad
sa trangka na buminurikat na daing takot
sa sildang, sa huyop-huyop na kinutaw

sa tubig kan asul na langit.
Sa pagbuklos ta padulag
bakong ini an kasagkoda
kan satuyang pagdalagan?
Kapkapa sa tikab ko,
nangngarakngak an kalag ko.

Nobyembre 2 gahan

English:

You wouldn't suppose this is a November morning.

A morning the wind washed itself with dew.

Like the morning after the world has ended,
the souls stuck in our atmosphere
will be plucked by the arms of the universe.

The chest will be relieved by the ascension of the weight.

For where did the terror of the rain go
kiss of the lips of the trembling dead?
Perhaps a mistaken weather, for sparrows are perching
on electric wires. Haunting heat of March
in the months already anointed by the chill, mistress of storms?

My soul is laughing
for the second sprouting of palay is combed in the pavement.
In this soil with a dead candle scent
we are still able to dry our food.
It's not surprising
this is a day in November?

Even in the roofs reek
the activity of noon.
Even the groan of the tricycle
is caress to my soaked spirit.
Listen, my soul is laughing.

Are we able to withdraw to the time
of our childhood

whenever we chuckle like this?
To the cat that wards off the birds
at the edge of the drying grains
to the gate which opened up without fear
to the ray, to the breeze concocted
in the water of the blue heavens.
In our fleeing retreat
isn't this the dead end
to our running away?
Feel my chest,
my soul is laughing.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Sa Puro Kan Ulok / At The Tip Of A Smile

Hagad kan kinaban
sa ngaran kan pakisaro
na ako makitinuhan
sa kagabsan.

Sa pagsirang, pagsulnop kan aldaw
sa pagtindog, pagrumpag kan antenang halangkaw
sa nasabat, nasulbod na kamidbid
sa waltak na dahon
nalihsan, nasilaod kan sigid
minatino ako, minangirit.

Sa puro ugaring kan ulok
may duon na minasabloy
arog kan sarong magabaton na kahaputan
paokod kan sarong ribong taon
luya na dai uminagi sa kapagalan
hiling sa sarong kahewasan,
sa sarong gadan na linya
minasulit an kinidit na ngimot buda panga
sa pag-atubang sa puro
kaining panggang na kaawagan
sa irarom ko an buot
gugom na minagabot
ki matunukon na awot.

Marso 31,2005 Pawa

English:

The world asks
in the name of harmony
that I greet and make peace
with the many.

To the rising, and setting of the sun
to the raising, and tearing down of a towering antenna,
to the familiar face, encountered, and missed
to the fallen leaf

passed over, and caught by the hard broom
I greet, and smile.

Yet at the tip of the smile
there is a weight that hangs
like a heavy question
riddle of one puzzled age
weakness which skipped exhaustion
a look at a vastness,
to one dead line
the smile strained by the mouth and jaw retracts
in facing the end
of this barren clearing
beneath me, feeling
pulls out, clenching
a thorny weed.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Sain Hali An Diklom Kan Kahewasan? / Whence Come The Plain's Darkling Cover?

Sain hali an diklom kan kahewasan?
Sa kawaran ki liwanag buda lawas
An buta kong kalag nakamaan duman.

Liwanag sa diklom, ihurma an bulan
Malipot na rarom an púro iluwas
Digdi hali an diklom kan kahewasan?

Sa isla kan itom mong alinawnawan
Mamundo sa tahaw kan dagat na gatas
An paha kong kalag minahigop duman.

Sa dungo mong duwang kuwebang istaran
Kan ermitanyong parong, hangos na halas
Minakamang an diklom kan kahewasan.

An ngirit kan yukyok mo an inarugan
Kan palatawan kaining planetang layas
An gadan kong kalag minaladop duman.

Digdi sa hapot ika an kasimbagan
Sa simbag iyo man an walat na ngalas
Simo hali an diklom kan kahewasan
Ilabto ko an bilog kong kalag duman.

(Abril 2,2007, Karanggahan)

Translation:

Whence come the plain's darkling cover?
From the absence of flesh and light,
My blindness opens and sees everything there.

Light, reveal the moon-trails of water,
Out of the depths pour the chill, might
Darkness be born there, the plain to cover?

From the black isle of your eyes peer
Pain in an ocean of milk, sap of white,
My parched, starving soul drinks there.

In your thin, dainty nostrils where
Live the hermit smell, slink the slight
Snake of breath into the plain's darkling cover.

In the soft beneath your arm gather
Stars and planets in this fugitive night,
My lifeless soul sings in the dark water.

To this riddle you are the answer,
Leaving wonder in instant flight;
From you comes the plain's darkling cover,
My soul, dark and entire, plunges there.

(Translation: Marne L. Kilates)

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Sarong Mainit Na Aldaw / A Hot Day

Dakol an naghahagad kan aldaw
na magin arog kaini.

Ini an minapabulawan sa mga tinampo
sa pigbabalad na ani, an minaparambong
kan mga halayhayan sa mga dinurumog
sa paglaba, an minapadagos sa pagbuhos
ki tulang sa mga paa kan mansiyon
na pigtatapos, an minasibot sa sadiyot
na bagting kan pigtitindang palipot.

Gari ka naghihiling
sa bintanang malinawon an salming.
Gari kita pigpapahiling:

Su liwanag arog kan init
na nagmukna sa kinaban.
Hali digdi minahugpa an linaw
sa mga itsura. Rirawon.
Garo ritratong ikinurit ki tarom.

Namamate ko su nahiling ko: Pigsasapna kita—
piggigibo giraray.

Hali satuya minaluwas
an hilaw na lawas—
na nagkurubong sa diklom
sa itsura kan tubig
na natipon sa malipot na panahon.
Siring man sa irarom kan arik-arik
muyang pumaknit kan gayon
hali sa mga dai narereparo
dangan magturon-turon
sa dagang mainiton—sarong sayaw
ki pagpamidbid: Hilinga, huni kami

Hilinga, ta parakua man an init na ini.
An ragit arog an dagit
kan pagbawi. Ano an pigbabawi?
Kalumuyan. Pigbabalik an tagas

sa kinaban nganing mabuhang
mawaran ki kupot
arog kan minapasang marang daga.
Hali digdi makaluwas daw an pisog
kan kapinunan?

Pigbabalo kita kun sagkod sain
an kayang itao. An gibuhon giraray kita
bakong arog kaini kundi daing natok na mga gapo—
magin kaarog kan pigtatangad na mga lawas
na daing digta—purong enerhiya! —
mga lansang buda yelong pataw-pataw
sa kahewasan.

*

Sa kahaluyan
arog kan bagang kinaon kan sadiring isog
suminibog na su init
pasiring sa saiyang kapinunan na rarom—
sa lugar na pigtalikudan kan mga bulod—sa diklom—

o kita an nagrayo sa pagkadaog. Makakarayo daw kita?
Ta dai pa tapos—ta daing kasagkoda—an talimon
ta sa kalayo, sa init na garo dagit, na garo pagkamuot,
na minagibo satuya,
na minaraot satuya.

English:

Many are praying
for a day to be like this.
This turns the roads
golden with the drying harvest,
the clothes line abundant with the washed dripping wet,
this resumes the laying down
of bones to the legs of the unfinished mansion,
excites the tiny ringing of the peddled chill.

It's as if you're looking
through a clear glass-window.
It's like we are being made to look:

The brightness is like the heat
which created the world.
From this, clarity descends
upon the forms: sharply.
Like a picture drawn by a blade.

I am feeling what I am seeing: We are being cooked—
recreated.

From us steps out
the unripe body—
hiding in the dark
in the form of water
accumulated during cold days.
Likewise under the intense heat
Beauty yearns to rip away
from the un-noticed
and hop around—a dance
of introduction: Look, here we are

See, for this heat's also a taker.
The severity is like the rage
of redemption. What is being reclaimed?
Softness. Hardness is being restored
to divide the world
to lose its bond
like smashing dry soil.
From this, will the seed of origin
step out?

We are being tested up to where
we can give. To make us again
not like this but sapless stones—
to be like those stainless bodies
we look at skyward—pure energy! —
steel and ice which float
in space.

*

Eventually
like the ember devoured by its ferocity
the light-heat receded
to the depth where it began—

in the place where mountains have turned their backs—to the dark—

or was it us who retreated in defeat. How far
can we run?

For it isn't over—for it is without end—our orbit
around the fire, around the heat which is like anger, which is like love
which creates us
which destroys us.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

Surprise Quiz /

Kan naitao na su kahaputan
luway-luway na luminuwas
su ribok sa kwarto. Garo pagpundo
kan ngarakngakan
pag may biglang nagadan
sa pilikulang paulok.

Kun ano man na aking ogma
an naghuhurunlakan sa aki nindang isip
kuminilpis pagtuktok kan kahaputan
sa saindang mga pintuan.

Su irinuman pakatapos kan klase
isinuksok muna sa irarom kan ulnan,
su tuparan sa sinehan kan piday pag-urulian
isinalya muna paluwas sa bintana,
hinipid su samok kan isip na gubot
ta su kahaputan hipidon an sulot,
nagaarik-arik an silyab kan sapatos,
malipot arog kan magurang na dai makasabot.

Sa hampang kan kahaputan
ginubot ninda su buhok na haluyon
pinakaray kan sukray (para sa piday) ,
sinanlian su malinawon na isog kan saidang kaakian
ki murusot na nagwagas ki mga talaw na linya.
Sa hampang kan kahaputan
tuminalikod sinda pasiring
sa kwartong saindang pigdudulagan. Sa kwartong ini

nawalat sa mga tukawan
su mga lawas na karamaskamas.
Kamrag pasakat kan nabulot
sa hararom na kalot. Karagnas
kan papel na ginumos.

Makagirabo
an kadaehan na ribok.
Gari arog pag banggi

pag an mga suriyaw
nakalaom sa laog.
Pag an isip
nakikigumulan
sa paros. Sa kawaran
ki laog.

Garo
may nagibo akong
sala.
Garo
may tursidong
nagdara ki gabat
dawa siyerto
an pagpatod.

Kuminagrit su bel.
Saro-saro sindang nagtirindugan.
May pigtitipon sindang paros
gibo kan haralawig na hinangos,
kan pigtitipon ninda sa hampang ko
su mga papel na daing simbag,
dai sinimbagan. Garo mga panyong
gamit buda habo nang gagamiton.

Insigida
pagluwas, pigkalagkalag ninda su saindang tinarapok
kan nakua, pinalaog ninda sa saindang mga payo,
na pano ki paghidaw arog sa nasuway na pagkamoot,
ining mga bagay na muya buda kaya sana nindang isipon.

*

An natada sa kwarto, ako.
Nakahiling na garo igwang lawas
an sakuyang kahaputan
buda an saiyang kasimbagan
na anod-anod na garo dampog
sa ibabaw kan binarayaan na tukawan,
kargado ki enerhiya buda lipot, na pagminasalpukan,
minagibong daludog na ako sana
an nakakadangog.

English:

After the question was given
the ruckus tiptoed out of the classroom. Like the halting
of laughter
during a sudden death
in a funny film.

Whatever juvenile joy
romps around their juvenile minds
thinned out at the rapping of the question
on their doors.

The drinking spree after class
is slipped under the pillow
the rendezvous with the lover at the after class cinema
is thrown outside the window,
they have straightened out the mess in their tangled minds
for the question's clothes are creaseless
intense is the shine of its shoes
cold like a parent who wouldn't understand.

In the face of the question
they ruined their hair
combed for hours (for the lover)
the naked boldness of their youth
is switched with a frown spreading cowardly lines.
In the face of the question
they turned their back to a room
they are running away from. In this room

left on the chairs
are the squirming bodies.
Upward clawing of one which fell
to a deep pit. Racket
of a crumpled paper.

The absence of sound
is hair-raising.
Like during at night
when the screams

are muffled within.
When the mind
wrestles
with air.
With emptiness.

It's as if
I have made
a mistake.
It's as if
a thread
carried a weight
even if snapping
is certain.

The bell shrieked.
One by one they stood up.
They created a breeze
made by their exhalations
while they gather in front of me
papers without answers,
unanswered. Like used
and now unwanted handkerchiefs.

Instantly
when they were outside, they searched for what they had thrown
finding them, they ushered these back to their heads
filled with longing as a separated beloved
these things they want to think of and are only capable
of thinking of.

*

What's left in the room is me.
Staring at, as if with bodies,
my question
and its answer
floating like a cloud
above the abandoned chairs,
charged with energy and coldness,
that whenever they collide
they create a thunder which only me alone
can hear.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

That She May Find Me Among These Distances

The summer beneath her skin
wakes sleeping gardens beneath mine.
Never will I be calm or waters be without ripples.

In grief are many poems about sunsets
but on her cheeks alone bleeding reds twice.
How will I be calm or have waters without ripples?

Notice my hands, her textures
are alive in all my fingers.
Never will aging sing in my tree houses!

Never will I be calm or waters be without ripples
or nights without pillows heavy with songs
of her name, her skin, and the summer beneath.

How can I remember her, when I have not forgotten.
I am empty with her, but without her
the world is filled with Chopin and drowned men.

The waters in our eyes― does it just remind you
how the sea, to take the bruised body back yearns?

I am empty with her, but without her
I trace the bed at night for depths pressed by absent
stars.

And what relief is longing, when it reminds me
she is not here, but here is not with her
and where she is, is not with me, is lost
in the burden of arriving. For the world is heavy
with restraint and Imagination is a muscular horse.

In the unborn days we are times of rapid waters.
I am empty with her, but without her
I repeat her voice until the flute of my throat
is breaking, is telling of wide fields, of enormous skies.

The summer beneath her skin

awaken sleeping gardens beneath mine
never will I be calm or waters be without ripples.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan

To Jewel Birth-Giver To Haraya

Literally a globe in your belly
I `ve never seen any woman so full
How many continents swallowed
with your little mouth? How many
people? How much courage to swallow
it all? All the eyes all the arms
all the testicles combined into one
curling.

How could I ever manage not to burst
from the dreadful trees into the wind
with the engine of a stork when the world
crawls out into a child.

Jaime Jesus Borlagdan