POEMS

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About the Author
Allan Popa obtained his BA in Creative Writing in Filipino at the University of the Philippines-Diliman and MFA in Creative Writing at De La Salle University-Manila. He is the author of six books of poetry, two of which won the Manila Critics Circle National Book Award for Poetry (Morpo in 2001 and Samsara in 2002). He received the Philippines Free Press Literary Award for Poetry in 1998-1999. He teaches at the Ateneo de Manila University.

THE KNOT

There was no sure way to know which kind would not cut too deep so he wound each one around his wrist as tight as he could and read the marks they left on his skin like Braille.

He was careful to select which one would not give from his weight, which one would hold his breath long enough and never let go again. He took time acquainting himself with knots.

Finally a connoisseur of ropes he chose well: how satisfied he must have felt as he mounted a stool to tie one end of the rope to the house he was leaving, the fine blue noose around his neck.

How does one talk now about his protruding tongue, how close his feet were to the ground when he was found, the air that hissed from his body as the rope was cut, the knot we could not untie.
THE OTHER END

I pity that your imagination too could reach
only as far as the noose at the end of my rope,

a rope you see me groping for in the dark
endlessly as it frays without end—as if I would

still cling to some promise of passage after
I had let go: a punishment that, to your mind

I now inhabit; but really it is you who are tethered
to a hope of seeing beyond, a rope hanging

from nothing but your urge to climb out.