FRAGMENTS OF IMPOSSIBILITY

B.B.P. Hosmillo
Rumatá Artspace
bryphosmillo@yahoo.com

About the Author

B.B.P. Hosmillo is a Filipino poet writing in English. He received the JENESYS Invitation for Graduate Student Research Fellowship in 2011 and the National University of Singapore—Asia Research Institute Graduate Student Fellowship in 2012. His poetry was shortlisted for VOID poetry competition by *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal,* Hong Kong's premiere literary establishment. Currently, he is based in South Sulawesi, Indonesia where he is completing a collection of poetry. Recent work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal, Quarterly Literary Review Singapore, Far Enough East Journal, Mascara Literary Review, Sundog Lit, Alice Blue Review, Kenning Journal, Nude Bruce Review*, and *Ellipsis…literature & art,* among others.

© Ateneo de Manila University

"…in weakness they have fled before the pursuer."
—*Lamentations* 1:6

XV.

Suppose breakfast's done, or the time for it and we've read the epitaph
miseries of our idols, a species both blasphemed and praised
in the epilogue of HIV research, they are our friends
even if we don't know who infected them, we know what's not
going to happen, in fact, we suffer so much because we know a lot about it,
we call the names of our bruises, they don't respond and so we're sure
it's really them and we're not sure if we're really happening.
Do we just continue calling their names until we forget they're bruises?
Do we not want to know first what our names are and why these names
are given to us and why it is true they are forever?
Because this room is cloistered like a reflector of light and is locked
by the Unknown who made this by force, the answer wouldn't come
like a package delivery we have to get from the theologizing world outside us.
It will not surprise us. It will not disclose any sender whom should we thank,
whom should we say to *This gift is all I need.* Because this body is breaking
my weight before it falls toward into something I could depend on.

Let's say I have you. Let's say I really have you like the slope of my hips.
Let's say HIV is just a bruise in history. Let's say tomorrow is a nice picnic
episode. And let's say you are telling me you will not die in a peopled park
where the sun a blaze display counterfeits hell. Shall I give you another site
of outbreak, Jeremiah? Shall I tell you the warmest part of my concave back
where to submerge your teeth in? Shall I still prepare dinner tonight
and pretend there's so much use in eating that I love to repeat it?
Jeremiah, I miss you a lot, but I don't want to see you struggling not to die.
Yes: all I want is your death, honey, it means forgiveness, and it's the balcony
where we see unsettling people leaving a grave and although from disparate
street stories they surpass the gate of mercy with one denouement in their
minds while stitching you takes place in their hearts which are, of course, made
to resemble the problem of the Sphinx *Will we ever accept our bad work?*
The black ribbon pinned on your father's chest says *You have indeed lived.*
It is enough about your death.

XIV.

Because a Jeremiah who desires a man almost named Jeremiah is
an impossible Jeremiah—this is not why God refuses the ground

© Ateneo de Manila University

which the scent of your neck breaks. We've just accepted, been informed
by fatherly sextons who made that half-wood, half-gloss cross—emptied
by our birth—that it's impossible for God to live with us.
But we like randomizing impossibility, right, dear?
We want the sun to fill up our mouths with light,
and on your tongue is the taste of oil gland, the taste of excessive salt,
the taste of other tongues that shirked their duty to perceive you.
All those misperceptions have wrapped your collar tightly
around your neck and breathing is a massacre of faith.

The window still manages to be opened despite your glare
that refuses things to be seen. Your monastic room still nearby
the sea a molten silver spoon with a kind of breezy air that feels
the tip of your nose, and the feeling sends a simple part of you
close to your face as if saying *You've come this far bad man, this far
bad face* a grubby hole in your body and your hands, sensitive
to ghosts, can touch what's happening there: it's a factory of
disposable clothes. *How strange* I silently whisper and I hear Jeremiah
talking to a saleslady dressed up like a nun. *He takes everything
that is given to him*, free is free and I think I need it too: a hand-
sewn pale cardigan its full length opening exposes the marks
of teeth night lovers left for us to think about, a cotton sweater
with an embossed print on it *Nowhere*—the pseudonym God uses
when he prefers not telling he's eating right beside impossible people
like us. This kind of cardigan was permanently buttoned
the same time God had given all the other animals he created a fabric
of shelter, but Jeremiah tried to wear it, tried to be created by God,
tried to be shooed away and be sacrificed like a ram. And you
see it: there's no right opening, no right ending, nothing that lets
the head find its body clothed without deformity. This is the great visibility
of what God didn't want to create. Now, I consider God's stitches are broken,
this bad needlework in the camouflage of skin; a deception and
Jeremiah feels he has to be unclothed forever, naked forever, and
as such, he remains open to heat.

Just stay naked, honey. Just learn to be cold.

Sorry body, you are Israel—the delight of fierce gentiles.
Sorry body, you are the city frustrated by desire, and are worn-out,
and are bound to wear anything, and are finding Jeremiah for warmth.
Sorry body, I don't know whose possession you are.

© Ateneo de Manila University

XIII.

Without a shoelace that Jeremiah can run for another mile is the reason
his cancer or maybe not a cancer or maybe not a decoy of HIV,
his jaundice nails and post-prescription letters love him.
And as I also do: think of me when locusts of syringe retract from
his betrayed veins and an emergency room light loops my legs around
his neck as though he can suck my dick despite his oxygen mask-covered
mouth. This hospital is the venom of this dream, its hands are emboldened
for green squalling mosses and mushrooms in its elbows surprise us
with a growth of poison our antibodies could no longer attack.
There is no healing here, but Jeremiah's dream is not inclined to tell this.

Upon waking up, Jeremiah walks toward a ditch and jilts a litter bag
in which my life is gathered lest he will break it in the hope of seeing it
unwonted to death. This is the time when aberrance speaks *Baby, I made you
to hope.* Jeremiah winnows out the reality in which the failure of God
is bolstered like a punishing wind against the curtain of an expensive
rehabilitation house and I guess leaving love unexposed to the sun
is a form of prayer, a prayer that repairs nothing in the present
for it to suggest a certain miracle to come—another skin, a sun-resistant,
irreducible by the theory of the most mortal body. *Listen. This is for you,
too. I'm only giving you life*—lines which follow the unspeakable
paragraph in the lamentations that mention children, a family bungalow,
a kitchen with a ten-year dinner plan, a dog that only barks when somebody
realizes another normal pregnancy. I tell you *we've spent a lot for this damn house!*
This house that bereaves him of lust, unmusical accompaniment, sessions
of the skin flaking away bit by bit—an engaged loss to respond to the costs
of buying an exile life. Can this be a revolution? Can this be that scary track
where home is seen by imagining it? Can this be the endless because we make
nothing enough for us? The cue to say *somewhere in our ballooning stomach is
a pathetic supplication, which is to say: HIV is a little percent
of the undateable, unromantic future and mostly fear born into a world
of beauty any kind of fear disavows.*

XII.

But should you, the last of Jeremiahs, choose to erupt and say
the body is over, let me take the obligation of forcefully forgetting
the boundary that sets you apart from me, let me love you
as if you are forgiveness, let me vomit some calligraphic red ink
and deconstruct how you took away the name of each man

© Ateneo de Manila University

who wanted everything about pleasure, except its shadow, of each man
who fooled you and celebrated it, of each lover who promised to begin
a life of loving at the climax of moaning onto your sweaty chest
where blood, by tough nails, triggered its stir, let me be that final sound
you heard *I understand why you can't do this every day* after each of them
took a shower and joined the leaving train, let me be that ride that will take
you where you will see all of them again, your brothers their bodies adopted
by your gluttony, stalking that light from your mouth. And some of them
again, somehow survivors, stalking a different light, a borrowed
light like the moon only possibly attractive at condom-deficient night.

XI.

Tonight, there must be a fairy tale outside the body, outside desire,
something characteristically simple and memorably sweet, something
dangerous, yet escapable. None of us could easily identify what moment
in memory guises what the body may have felt, *we only have interpretations of places*, another Jeremiah adds. Because this is cloistered I'd like to think
I'm still talking to the man who met me at the airport. Because we are
in a position to contain only what comes out from us and we don't have to
explain it. Because this is in between what breaks when gathered
and what breaks when loosened except it depends on whose body
my weight falls toward into and by the time of falling I need a little
versatility: there's the third Jeremiah, the only man who knows how to chain,
entering me from behind and I, not sure which I of me, tell him
I've been waiting for you to come inside me.

X.

It's a beautiful day, the feeling of waking up earlier than the strumpet
Jeremiah and getting the chance to think of an excuse why I couldn't wait
for him. It works and it doesn't. It works and leaving is not really
sure what sort of prayer it would waste the time for. *Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?* a vague effect of Jeremiah shouts, scattering words
in a street like pins to puncture a foot, to delay walking. And because this is
cloistered my sound gets deep through his internality like an iron rod
piercing the wholeness of a pig, from its mouth to its anus, and I think
the strumpet Jeremiah is now awake and will eat something left-over.
Let him read my card *Please keep in touch.* Because this is in between
what breaks when gathered and what breaks when loosened except
it depends on whose body my weight falls toward into and as my heaviness
has fallen like an asteroid somewhere far from my new apartment,

© Ateneo de Manila University

the Strumpet Jeremiah will get his phone and he will not find me there.
Consider ringing the bell. Consider bawling in advance that some of me
will not matter so much.

IX.

Perhaps you hear it too, how silence separates the last Jeremiah
from his erection and it seems to him I've always needed my father
to know who I am. Well, there are records of myself that don't belong to me.
I never chose my name. Jeremiah is not even convinced *God Will Uplift.*
Is there a way I could call him now? Does he even know I know his name?
But because this is cloistered he might tell me eventually he would move
in, then move out to someplace where a similarity of winter doesn't succeed
in making the body torpid. Because we are in a position to contain only
what comes out from us and you can always say it doesn't harm anyone
even if it's dirty implying, of course, that I am not one. I am not a part
of the group that realizes pain, am I? Because this is in between what breaks
when gathered and what breaks when loosened in the landscape of desire,
which is the body and from which all Jeremiahs are always served mannishly.
To see this center is to be at my service, to be a complete asshole, a victim
as me, to follow me: I want you to open that old secret window now under that
empty buffet table and examine the giant copper monument across. I want you
to say *I'm seeing a giant cock—a red and a cooked and a crowned and a colonizer.*
I want you to remember how heroes in history were told as the struggling
creatures.
I want you to touch me the way you mean there's really something special
about taking everything hard, that punishing, truth-revealing love from behind.

VIII.

From behind means looking back. Looking back means slitting the eyes
with an open mouth, speaking the inveigher's plea *Come closer.*
Weigh in your sharp, sweet knife. A call, a past, a resurrection and
it's the handsome face of a minor. We call him *the first outbreak*.
Do you know him, tongueless Jeremiah revolving around the lips
of a distant planet? When your eyes shut all signs his blackened face is
the light you see: he was called many times, the far extent of memory,
he was called *fuck*, he was called in many names: a trick, a doorknob,
a technique, a remote control, a handle of a danger his only lover couldn't see
in pleasurable grotesqueness, his only lover couldn't find except
the broken joints of his rib cage that kept the heart from being touched,
his only lover couldn't sketch except his shadow, his lightlessness

© Ateneo de Manila University

down and spread across the floor where he was being caressed
and was dramatically tearing up like February cherry blossoms.
Because this is cloistered you will say you know him *It's you*,
then you will kiss me, the exact child you brought before
the slaughterhouse of sunshine, the morning that plotted how you left.
Because paradise is we're back in our old room and I can't stop looking
forward into this paradise, you will say *It's you again* and I wouldn't know
what else to do about the sun rising up above my mangled shoulders,
but to just accept the sun as the mirror of violence—it helps me
to see myself as much as to see you. This means you will say
without any sound you hadn't known how to talk to me and how to keep
the talking about love. Because this is in between what breaks
when gathered and what breaks when loosened, memory is the body's
center: an arena of muteness built by the topmost Jeremiah, not
the streetwise I will later meet, not the strumpet who couldn't call me,
just you Jeremiah who left a child outside an airport hotel's smoking room
where no child will ever grow up without pollution, without suffocation.

The feeling of unfeeling, memory is innocence—the ground of hell,
the absence in our mouths we are free to masticate.

Remember the fruit in the paradise-interpreted garden. You know this,
the forbidden, a kind of dialogue that, once started, leaves no means
of stopping. You don't have to be reminded: what we cannot entirely spew
forth can only be swallowed. Don't worry; I'm only talking to myself.

VII.

Suppose I'm having dinner: on the table is a Chinese takeaway box
full of fusion and I don't have to worry if I'm literally incomplete.
This is a well-lighted room. This is a vacating space. This is
a gathering of desperation and we make borrowed places ours.
There's a cabinet of silverware, sexy vessels in which welcome
ales are steeped, their hips bent and exhausted, but have never been used
to serve guests, which means we've come to the point when we don't
have to bend our heads forward to know there are other people in this room.
The burst of alcohol scent is enough for the brain to recognize spirits
and these spirits will possess us, will make us talk a perverse language
we have to speak forever, a streetwise Jeremiah wants to say, but never
does out of hesitance. Because this is cloistered, it's possible to easily notice
the wrong. Because we are in a position to contain only what comes out
from us: the insanity fundamental to who we are, the asphyxiated kiss

© Ateneo de Manila University

that tirelessly finds the lips it comes from, the disasters, the revenges
all against nature. Because this is in between what breaks when gathered
and what breaks when loosened except it depends on whose body
my weight falls toward into. I say I know where this center
transcends: you telling me what you want streetwise Jeremiah
and I want it, too. I say without saying it there's no bed in my house
for street smarts. I say and now saying it I'm readying another bed,
the transparent pool to be emptied out of water the next morning,
the morning that will never end unless its light shows us where the scent
of burning brass comes from.

VI.

It is from blood. It is from between my corpulent legs. It is an account
of my borrowed triumph that goes like this: you want to build
a career and you are taking a food test, an assessment of how
improved your body is against toxins and microbes so you may or may not
transfer to your dream university—*Open your mouth then fill the blank*—
and you realize you have nothing to give: all questions are experiential
and your past is as little and raw as when someone named Jeremiah locked you
inside his mouth like a gum he never chewed underneath his tongue.
Meanwhile, you see the cloistered view outside, numerous trees
gathered like saints at Mt. Sinai and each has a signage *Do Not Loiter*,
galloping birds as if clouds are just below their muddy feet, unmindful
steps of current students who are unaware that walking is as painful as
the Unknown and so they pursue walking, they pursue what their strengths
build up when dreaming and they are your answers, you want to write
down each of them and call them your own, created and experienced.
Oh how they don't need to be for the right set of questions.
Oh how one Jeremiah would be that enough to get a lifetime answer
utterly incorrect. Oh how one Jeremiah is one flabbergasting lie
of how you experience the body.

Please, you exam-taker, don't blunder liberation for a self against its own
psychiatry: a Sunday dawn and a knot on your Jesus feet, a sore, a spot for
an impossible man to manumit himself naked, tied and tied and you feel
your body in cohesion, a hurt, a pain that wants to be something more,
a bind that never dreams beyond sleep, a sentence not enough, a sentence
incomplete, a sentence taken away from a larger intuitive sphere, a death
language, a scream of *I love you*. This is what must be the repetition
of the world. This is the-everything-said empty of definition.
This is the recentness of everything gathered and loosened: the hope to still

© Ateneo de Manila University

be counted.

Now, ask the following because you can finally ask about the result: Jeremiah,
where were you when you screamed that? Were you asking?
And when I answered, which fragment did you hear first, my body or love?
And when you heard what you heard from me, did you lie again to test me?
Did you not swallow me whole until I became woven in your tight denim?
Did you not get inside me through a peppered crocodile tongue to get
your play pebble worn down and bottomed?

V.

Inside me is a room, a cloistered room where life talks
to all the fragments of us. I believe it says something
about livability: we are in a position, the particular of death and we have
the weight to make it significant: a name of a planet, a name of a car,
a name of an aphrodisiac dish, a name of a disease, a name better
than saying *Open your mouth like you're seeing the most wonderful*.
It's not an accident that everyone in this room is named Jeremiah.
We've abandoned the idea of making chances the statistics of who eats
and who starves since we've known that all Jeremiah mouths have always
been *this* open. We are in a room, a cloistered room and our position reminds
us of a soccer match: no other goal but to see a trapped ball.
Is one of the Jeremiahs pursuing me? Does love walk on craters
without grieving a presentiment of pain? Let's all scream! Let's undress
our white jerseys and put a sign on its back beside our real names, now
smudged, now grassed. At one point, all of us have won.
Peaks and ejaculations. Blown down, the wall of our mystery. And try it.
More and so much more. Kick Jeremiah harder against engulfment. Kick him
with grace. Kick him out of your house because he's an incessant leech
nesting on a body. And when I try touching my mirrored face against which God
sees himself is the point life leaves the room with a question: can you
do it to yourself, you Jeremiah effect, the aftermath of a bad prophecy?
Torque your torso counterclockwise? Then hold your own hand tightly
as if intending a self-serving clasp and walk forward and surrender
to a pause for a minute? Blink all you can? Breathe like a dog? Then?

Will you still be able to enter the asylum you drag behind you?

IV.

Approaching through the misty disembodiment you are a hundred-year-old

© Ateneo de Manila University

refusal, a blankness, a nowhere map. You say sorry, but sorry Jeremiah
I can't hear apologies anymore. You ask *What am I to you, love, after all?*
But what you really want to ask is:

If we get to come back from a region surveyed by the will to kill
each other (and this shall be felt by the water skin of the stronger,
less naked eyes, that vision that never decided to see) as the greatest
reward of defeat or the chance to elope without consent the way we force
our desire in a sundial or the hope to feed on the ambivalence of sex
for a miracle to not ever be a miracle anymore (but a destiny
of emptiness—that is, the sufficiency when hunger is recognized as such),
what is more of strength (if not the impossibility that we are) do we need
in order to survive the soul we mistake for a kiss?

III.

There's nobody able to answer here because in this episode, a harbinger
of all seductions in a stadium-sized cylindrical litter can. Maybe we can
invent that the men we trashed are unaccountable to our impossible legacy,
and their lizarding stench has nothing more to pursue in the aluminum box,
a reflector of light, we emptied that night while two or more fabricated
Jeremiahs, two or more streetwise and young male prostitutes encased
their crooked bodies freely altogether in an embezzled grave they called
respite, unperformed, undone, untied to gravity. This separation is to form
a double mouth in a single face light hollows out completely: one is for
the biblical food that doesn't turn red when cooked, the other is for us.

This separation—is this not a welled-up enemy, the best despiser
of our trailed bodies? Is this not the falsehood that desire hates so much
that desire kills? All I want to say is *stay here, stay where I can locate you.*
Stay here Jeremiah where you can be far from the other prophets who
are only to tell why they will have to darn your mouth, that feared and
alarmingly beautiful eye that sees the golden paradise, and makes it a wet
blanket that thirst comprehends so much. Stay inside me where God is
unavailable.

II.

And then drink the foul turn-over, slice the wasted, dip it into a flavorless
wassail, wring its arms, its hair, its human tentacles and the dense
of all edible compassion becomes a humidor of evil a spine that bends
to our untamed searches for God. Honey, don't ask me what happens

© Ateneo de Manila University

if you abandon God because you know what you can't live without.

In any weather, Jeremiah kneels over me. A reversal, a bedroll in the last dream before a spillage of hearts corners the motionlessness of morning; a decomposition; a tale's revelation of how a revelation comes: in this collapse, Jeremiah either waits for a monster or a trembling surrenders to him. This is how we are pursued, and then succeeded by impossibility: his thighs to my buttocks, his pulse to my body, his breathing to my left ear, his head to my toes, his neck to my legs, his penis to my heart: all beating translates to connection inseparable from the enigmas of our remote needs, the unfathered children, the marriageable yellow and brown women, the houses for sale, the told and created better of our otherness, all the possible pursuers who make him not Jeremiah and me not the lover of Jeremiah.

Then after, always, is a buffet table placed between myriad in-takes that enables a dialogue, then Jeremiah inside me, Jeremiah on the ceiling of my body, the same love on the roof of my mouth, the same man calling my name, Jeremiah, of all mortals, giving me breath while losing his in a clay bed that keeps the trace of how deformed we can really be: survival is that where we cannot be sovereign. Let this be a cry. Let this keep Jeremiah crying all night because he wants so much of survival, that trusted deformity that had to stop somewhere. This gives us a sense of distinction: a terminal base and a takeoff from it. Bring the robbed. Bring the panic. Withdraw from the airport that made you into what you have robbed. Withdraw from coming.

Can withdrawal necessarily be an ending? Can weeping not be storied? Can you see what is inside my mouth? Can you give it a taste, a tongue whose ruminant stomach catches everything we are to lose? Can you say it is memory because everything in its cavity is what we are to get back? Can these little intermittent lights that fly away from your mouth be given away again? Can you beg *please retrieve*? Is it still swallowable?

I.

Suppose I'm preparing dinner on a long table centered by an overhead orange light: a kitchen knife and, through a secret window, a comprehensive glass built underneath where light crawls like a rattlesnake, everyone is waiting in excitement, ready to gape, looking at my apronless and bare and greasy body—the wholeness of a breakability-thinned, fuzzy-skinned peach—their bladed eyes want to cut into portions they could laugh at. Suppose I'm preparing dinner: a kitchen knife and every tongue is stuck out like a looting beggar's

© Ateneo de Manila University

hand for a coin. Suppose I'm preparing dinner: a kitchen knife and
everybody, weakened, is a handgun without a bullet.
Suppose I'm preparing dinner: a kitchen knife and the only Jeremiah
left crying holds my hand and dissolves in it like the remains of soap, now
the slough of my skin. Suppose I'm preparing dinner and I'm asking him
to get back to life and eat with me. Suppose I'm preparing an endless
dinner: a kitchen knife and homing abilities which empower many Jeremiahs
to return and, thankfully, the best of them returns, the man who left me
possessed, ruined by light outside an airport— where bodies in constant
movement are gathered to be loosened into eating *Goodbye Goodbye*.
Suppose I'm preparing dinner to begin its endlessness with whom I can't
cook without and he stabs me four times in my chest, four times in my ass and
he cuts me open like a fiesta chicken because I'm a red, red meat.
Suppose I still want to finish preparing this dinner for it not to end because,
anyway, my life overtaken by love, conquered by a man who can't help
but be impossible with me, is death that is not really death, but defiance
to light, the light that will occasion me sometimes though will never remain
unless I choose not to die anymore. *But I was decided to die long
before I was born* is the common fate of all us impossible and to want
the much of it.

There's a parable about a temple for the dying, for the determined
heroes: who, by signals of oracles, turns dough into a body, turns breakage
into a relief is just one part of death—the hunger to form— and the rest
of it—the hunger to dissipate—is the conversion of Jeremiah into a thing
he can escape with, a body precisely, along the course of a mouthful
prayer—what a frugivorous bat revolts about the sun that blinds it.
Through this epiphany, the overwhelming: he believes in the alterity
of God, he teaches a lie, a compulsion to tell any truth how to get
accustomed, he carefully hides his name, his status and his every
irreversible creature underneath my skin's linoleum, then licks up with his lips
the sugar of tears in my ruddy, ruddy face, saying *I'm not guilty anymore,*
feeling the undramatic whisk of blood in his eyebrow, accelerating,
filling an earlobe that is not blood-filled yet.

Suppose I'm nearly done preparing dinner, which means we can only be
hungry. Lying again on the red waxed floor, rubbing my back against it
is Jeremiah saying *we can only do so much to stop*. He means: the silent
outbreak of desire like the Heavenly Father walking over our bodies, picking
up flowering lights that their bad stitches trail out. Dear God, here is Jeremiah
stopping you. Dear God, here is Jeremiah getting his appetite back, separating
from taste, striving after you. Holy Father, the best of us are not yours anymore.

© Ateneo de Manila University

The basic instinct. The blood that morning sees as the room love can make.
The reflector of light. The body you didn't want to create. The light inside it.
The dialogue in a bed that is not a transparent pool. The ambivalent root names.
The memory that is not cloistered anymore. The empty meanings that make
the face of a good morning. The morning withdrawn from its asylum.
The landscape here and there. The kisses here and there. The mouth that craves.
The mouth that sees us beautiful. Because we sustain a thing together.
Because we know what redness means. Because we cannot stop redness.
We cannot separate. Because the body is a word, too. Because we cannot stop
the weakness. Because we separate what redness means from weakness.
We taste what we cannot separate from. Because we don't stop when we stop.
Because we separate from all the words we know. We sustain a thing together
when we know we cannot.

© Ateneo de Manila University