

LITERARY SECTION

POEMS

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About the contributor

Mookie Katigbak-Lacuesta obtained an MFA from the New School University in New York City. Her first book of poetry, *The Proxy Eros*, was published in 2008. She has won Palanca and Philippines Free Press awards for her work, and sometimes teaches at the Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University. She is also the editor of *Metro Serye*, a chapbook/zine that features new poetry and fiction.

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Many poems have been written
about the stilted landscape.

Take, for example, the one
with the man and the absent

lover ghosting the sands
of a stilted landscape.

The man is Carlos Angeles.
Across him, the sun “spills

a peacock stain across the sands,”
and “murdered rocks refuse to die.”

The truth is, the rocks aren’t
alive enough to refuse to die.

They may be alive if what we've
thought of as "alive" is a certain

presence called forth to assume
a form. Let's say a sunset, or

a sunset spilling over some rocks,
its glowing embers ghosting

the scene like a house shaken
by rain. In the swell of evening,

all is space and more space.
Crickets go darting the night

to alliterate a face. They scree
a name there are only broken

vowels for, broken words,
broken music. Absence,

slip him a phrase for each
of her hair's dark speeches.

The color of each astonish-
ment we prod into our English.

PASAWAY

And can you do what you are sorry for?

-John Berryman

What others paid for in tears,
you paid for in salt. Kneeling
long minutes, the skin raw

where brine met bone.
In the room beside, pitch
and scree: *Your* daughter,

Your daughter, though you
were both theirs. In time,
the words were nicks so slight,

mosquito bites were war
wounds. You gloried in the corner:
What did one wall say to the other?

As your temples blared
a trombone solo from God
knows where, all buff and brass,

then biblical fear: *Will I turn
too into a pillar of salt?*
Each minute an inkling

of sanction and sin: the grate
of salt shook a stiff lip and
bled a bone. How long was

enough? They knelt you down
and called that love. What
is wrong with this picture—

Why are you crying?