THROMBUS

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About the Author
Ben Aguilar graduated with a degree in Health Sciences and a Minor in Creative Writing from the Ateneo de Manila University, where he received the Loyola Schools Award for the Arts for poetry. He was a fellow for the Iligan National Writers Workshop. He is currently taking up a degree in medicine at Xavier University – Dr. Jose P. Rizal School of Medicine, Cagayan de Oro City. His poems have appeared in *Heights* and *Rambutan Literary*. 
NEWS

We were born searching &
    Found water on mars

Faced a heart
    The rice boiled over while
    my father stopped wearing a turban
    Cut his hair & beard
    & at work we numb
Ourselves against
    Fax machines spewing
Modafinil & existential
    Questions here & there

A model approach
    non-invasive
    Defense mechanism
    Doubled down making
Action figures pirouette
    Their plot devices
    We drop paper napkins
On the faces of babies

Handpicking our rosaries
Out of ice cream
    Boxes plastered with graffiti
Wisdom listed down
On old slippers  
& scratch hallmark cards

While PCSO ambulances & multicabs  
Playing campaign

Jingles define trickle down  
Economics of scale

We swallow our recreational  
Candle wax horoscopes

O patron saint of contact sports we  
Tried to win at

We mostly cheered quietly  
We weighed in titanic & our

Understanding of icebergs  
Changed drastically
ANATOMY

We close our eyes and begin: a syncytium without the benefit
of unison or force. Word for word, then, the incision: just below
the jugular. We run our fingers along the throat. Our elbows dig into
each other’s sides, holding us back. We find ashes and stones
among the man’s veins, our gloves the only thing between us and
desperation. Mine are torn and I haven’t even noticed. I wash the front
and back of my hands I don’t know. Stick to the facts:
what did he say, what did I tell you you would find
Here. Spelled out between sinew and bone and nerves
harbouring something we have all refused asylum along the
borders of our skin, riding on the backs of words we were told to speak
before trying to bleed, right here, do you see it—
Do you see all of who this was unfolding in your hands.
DISCOURSE

is X times Y.
His helmet was on his elbow,
quite clearly. Forgetting is a necessary evil;
everything that follows
is speculation. Pass by with the windows rolled down,
and tell me what you see.
I swear it will all hit you like a brick.

The blank screen, you say,
is not new, why wait. I will not say anything to the likes of you
I will not I will
not there is nothing I must say,
not for us. What is as much
a construct of the imagination as my face is cupped in my hands—
the explanation sifting through— coming out
garbled— Meant to be a prayer
not for us— Over the years.
Still the smell of gasoline follows me like a ghost.
I have lived in myself for too long that I have forgotten
what I sound like,

speculation: the numbers speak
more than all I can say.

What must I sound like, I refuse
to talk about myself but
I refuse to talk about anything but. No you cannot hear
anything else, don't call out to

anyone,
don't dial me, you will hear yourself
listening for radio static. Tell me there is no one outside the windows
bullet-proofed not for us—

The front wheel in the air, still turning—

—for what is on the other side.
You have a way with words and
the windows are not word-proof. Like a bomb
wipes ideas from the walls. Lacerations breaking the surface of the paint. If I were to guess,
I would look
check his temple

look at his head. Your face pressed in your hands—

Check his wrists

In speculation— Your fingers the only bars you ever really felt.

Do you see that?—
—what is that?—

Nothing follows. I keep writing on top of old words I cannot be bothered to erase. This is telling.— Over the rest of the afternoons, how much. The numbers to you a refusal. —a string of hearsays daily: X people Y times shows how much we must still rely on numbers to fill our pages and hands, both sides— —I cannot erase.

Channel X, news at Y.

A rhyme never found anyone on the right side. He was nowhere to be found, and I have looked in every word X times,

Y ways.
speeches were never fast enough,

and what is left. The drinking glass, still spilt on the table, the ink blotting on the page I cannot be bothered—

That smell again—this time from Tip scraping against the grain of the wooden desk— the paper running out and then I will find my lighter as I

write again. What is there to tell. Everything that follows is speculation.
2X2

please rate how you are feeling right now—
— to sound natural I
mouth
the words with a hollow
throat. no hurt. hurts little bit, hurts more, face four please—
I practice what I must say, excuse me.
do you feel it here?
pinned to your hands.
let me get back to you on that.
try trace for yourself with whatever implement you have with
you right now,
and see where the center lands—
please rate on a scale of 1 to 10,
you decide.
it already took you half a day to get here;
for how long you are willing
to try/wait. the line is here to there.
go there.
now, memorize that number. no,
the other one— on your back, point to it— if you close
your eyes and count to whenever we can make it go away.
god I wish we could make it go away.
discomfort can be
5. Normal—

— fall in line please. yes, what seems to be the problem,
you said nothing—

stupidly I mouth the words out of practice. I start from what I
know to be true and work my way back— excuse me,
if you’d please—
these clever little lines
with their turns-of-self—

I know they know themselves,

look at how right they are in their exactness.

this is all I know.
this certainty of meaning
is exactly what you need, let me get that for you. certainly you cannot understand a.) being
b.) scale c.) try/wait
any other way. any other way is wrong, you are not wrong, but what you say—
my words have already risen on me, and I have nothing else with me right now. I have seen his hands—no, the other one—at that time there was not much else to see except skin and veins, and the artery sticking out of his arm like a noodle a power line loose rope.

like I rehearsed it:

please face what you feel like crossing out from 1 to 10, four hurts a little more right now. we were told to lean forward and speak slowly, our ignorant hands in front of us. open and aimless. yes, what seems to be 1. Superficial 2. Background 3. Variable 4. Stable 5. Normal—what can we all do with ourselves except hold our own breath in our hands and wait in line, excuse me.