



Eileen R. Tabios reading at the Library of Congress

Eileen R. Tabios -- Five Poems

From Sculptures of Reproductions of Emptiness

(AFTER 2 A.M.)

Rain slid like a sheet

Sometimes love

simply leaves me

replete

Past 2 a.m.: you know

what is signified

...struggling in sweat-soaked sheets:

Who is drowning?

But in the subsequent mourning
blood on the walls
rally for gilt frames

...would love to penetrate
a rainforest
with you, to save you from
the bloodletting of mosquitoes
Fed on milk, my veins
are always sweet

Are you laughing
behind your closed door?
Do your palms lift themselves
(of their own accord)
to lie against
the cool walls of
your monastery?

My heart maintains its own
armor. My blood is blue.
Reach for the brass
blocking that keyhole

(PROFILES

A lone tree rose like an empty flagpole

I detested my attempt to measure intimacy

Boulevards are best at night—dimness

caresses anyone. I could walk forever

until I am eating a mango in Harlem

where I avoid women's eyes

as they always make me cry

I recall Manila—its lost generation

hugging ashed corners of hopeless streets

where women no longer wear their hair up...

Oh, Eileen, why step on fallen

branches, their sounds cracking air

like the edges of blades against eggs?

Mothers *must* let go ...

(NAMING LUCIDITY

...wind continues—

the universe shakes from its formless assault

a tree loses a limb

another limb traps a silk, scarlet scarf—it whips

through the air like a student clamoring for attention

in a still-standing house, a stranger

turns on a light: “in that sudden luminosity

leashed tears glint”

Years before a man learned a mirror

can birth a deeply-held flinch

he seated her before cream damask

laden with crystal and silver—

he asked her to close her eyes

for a whispered “just a moment”—

within a welcomed dimness she felt

the scent of jasmine as an embrace

she felt silk tantalize her naked throat

when she opened her eyes

she saw skeins flattening rubies

to drape over her breasts

she lifted her eyes to his gaze smiling

as if reproductions can deliver on promises

(THE COLOR OF A SCRATCH IN METAL

Imagine the taste of silver, nickel, chrome...

Imagine the taste of a scratch in mercury...

Which would melt black Tahitian pearls—
chemicals or emotion? The question
quivers her fingers into stroking a raven,
its throat, its wings, its throat...

If a pear was a color, she feels
it would be how shadows glide
across his unshaven chin

If passion was a color, she feels
it would be black sand encasing
a hidden beach behind a cave
wall kissing a sunlit ocean...

“What is seeing?”

It *is* how he saw her notice
the strain of his effort
not to touch her nearby pulse

but remained sculpture

so that the price he would extract

later amidst twisted bed sheets

would be radically high—

as unforgiving as a sniper's eye...

(EULOGY

...consistently wear city skylines as necklace, bracelets, tiara...

to feel stars as close to me as the speed of light is intimate—

you are an embrace I glean across an archipelago

: there is no edge between us

not even mortality

We shared vitello tomato in a Roman courtyard

the milky-white sauce camouflaging a peppery bite—

You smiled when my fingers lined through the calm Ganges

as pilgrims raised their eyes to dawn—

When I saw daylight ripple silver across the Lonoan Strait

I longed for you in Boston staring through snowflakes—

“I could feel your heartbeat against the palm

I raised, askance, to block the sun”

Once, a man raised a sword at an enemy made visible

by the curvature of the vessel—you loved the disappearance

of conflict when your hands turned the pot

to a shift in emphasis focused instead on a dancer

continuing to dance despite the presence of a warrior

: *memory is a controlling agent*—

your finger traced a vein, its protrusion helpless...

“Radiation seduces me by bleaching bones

into light”

You said you met yourself in the dark moss

climbing the pink walls of Alhambra

surrounded by ancient hills whose people

have perfected suffering. I say,

A blind member of the French resistance

insisted on learning dance to obviate

the strange rhythm of strangers’ boots

and unfamiliar tobacco colonizing

the stones of Paris—

a sunlit sensibility

can pervade reality instead of dreams

Now, *let us be fearless...*

Eileen R. Tabios has released 19 print, four electronic and 1 CD poetry collections, an art essay collection, a “collected novels” book, a poetry essay/interview anthology, and a short story collection. Recent releases include *the relational elations of ORPHANED ALGEBRA* with j/j hastain (Marsh Hawk Press, 2012), *SILK EGG: Collected Novels* (Shearsman Books, 2011) and

THE THORN ROSARY: Selected Prose Poems (1998-2010, Marsh Hawk Press, 2011). Her poems have been translated into Spanish, Italian, Tagalog, Japanese, Portuguese, Polish, Greek, computer-generated hybrid languages, Paintings, Video, Drawings, Visual Poetry, Mixed Media Collages, Kali Martial Arts, Music, Modern Dance and Sculpture. She's also edited, co-edited or conceptualized nine anthologies of poetry, fiction and essays. She blogs as the "Chatelaine" at <http://angelicpoker.blogspot.com>; edits *Galatea Resurrects*, a popular poetry review journal at <http://galatearesurrects.blogspot.com>; and curates the POETS ON ___ series with two themes to date—on Adoption at <http://poetsonadoption.blogspot.com> and on the Great Recession at <http://poetsonrecession.blogspot.com>