

44 Resurrections

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E·RATIO

44 Resurrections

E·ratio Editions

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*for Tom Beckett
who I remember
once wrote*

“Writing is an advanced form of forgetting”

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IN THE BEGINNING, BEFORE WORDS THERE WAS POETRY

I forgot I was a connoisseur of alleys.

I forgot the grandfather who willingly faced a fire, fist trembling at the indifferent sky.

I forgot love is always haggled.

I forgot you were the altar that made me stay.

I forgot you wanted to see her seeing herself...

I forgot, for him, she released milk to orphaned baby birds.

I forgot I yearned for amnesia—

I forgot the joy of eliding the vocabulary found in margins.

I forgot the zoo with retired cages.

I forgot the (fair) air of Vanity.

I forgot ~~the difficulty in dying~~ the world saw me as a humpback.

I forgot the world is never unclad, ~~despite Cezanne's wish~~.

I forgot when memory became a colander with generous holes.

I forgot the fair where I learned loud carnies overpower reason.

I forgot she was not the wind. Not then.

I forgot steel will bend to form a heart.

I forgot the waves rolling away from Asia to storm even the Americas.

I forgot the interior, from the beginning, was stone.

I forgot the musk of evenings.

I forgot there are keys to everything, even handcuffs missing their rabbit fur linings.

I forgot the child soldiers.

I forgot other boys like Samuel and Elwin whose bones became transparent.

I Forgot.

I forgot the mysterious Chinese girl who slipped syphilis to Van Gogh.

[]

I forgot love stutters over a lifetime.

TWICE, I FORGOT (1-20)

I forgot once longing for an intermission. But love is also a source of difficulty.

I forgot the pillow still shielding a stray tooth because someone believed in a fairy tale.

**

I forgot the brother who gave me a rainbow trapped within enamel.

I forgot, for him, she released milk to orphaned baby birds.

**

I forgot it was not a blood teardrop—simply, the last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall.

I forgot soldiers whispering by a paltry stream, their eyes locked on the slimness of my ankles revealed through ripped cotton.

**

I forgot why lovers destroy children to parse the philosophy of separation—

I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds—

**

I forgot discovering the limited utility of calm seas—

I forgot a man revealing a pristine white cuff as he raised his wrist to check a steel Movado watch—

**

I forgot those days of unremitting brightness from ignoring all ancestors to stare directly at the sun, only to discover myself clasped by the cool dimness of a cathedral where hands penetrated marble bowls for holy water whose oily musk lingered on my filigreed fingers as if to sheathe my flesh—

I forgot the luxury of appointments—

**

I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.

I forgot the liberating anonymity allowed by travel: *Mindanao, Berlin, Melbourne, Amsterdam, Istanbul* became hours requiring no count.

**

I forgot you dreaming I saw myself seeing myself. Objectively, I saw the obscure flowers of my forgotten birthland: *damas de noche*, named after a long-haired woman afflicted into paleness by the verb of *feel*-ing.

I forgot the green stalks holding up *ylang-ylang* orchids—how their thin limbs refused to break from the weight of lush petals and overly-fertile stamen.

**

I forgot the rice fields, sometimes melancholy at dusk, sometimes a rippling mirror of a sunset's maidenly blush.

I forgot the damp eyes were mine.

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I forgot I knew the back alleys of this neighborhood, where beggars made their beds, whose cats stole their food, which doorways provided for or grabbed the fragile into a hold of cruelty.

I forgot the grandfather who stood before the fire rushing through a legacy untouched by 300 years of Spanish colonialism.

**

I forgot truth is disembodied.

I forgot the spine bent willingly for a stranger's whip.

**

I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.

I forgot water becoming like love: miserable and lovely.

**

I yearned for amnesia when I saw dragonflies off-kilter, shoving through
air like husbands with bruised eyes—

I forgot the Jessamine wafting over the paddock.

**

I forgot the gorilla's fingerprint forming the outline of your face.

I forgot Lexus engineers.

**

I forgot your hands paused before my black brassiere.

I forgot the white velvet ribbon stripped from a negligee to remember
the last page read.

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I forgot not remembering that trembling seacoast city.

I forgot the stench of spilled wine.

**

I forgot surveying bone resigned to an impending break.

I forgot wax will freeze to form a heart.

**

I forgot the pulse of waves echoing heels—two dozen pounding on wood floors, pulsing to a flamenco beat.

I forgot that stone was the compromise defining the absence of void.

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I forgot the blossoming of desk lamps.

I forgot everything about Catullus except his scurrilous invective.

**

I forgot preening over a labyrinth.

I forgot he learned her body as a white finger holding back starlight.

COUNTDOWN *EN COMPAS!*

10.

I forgot a poem with a certain flickering light—not bright, *fragile*, but one senses its dependability for never dying into dark.

I forgot the present is thin, and the past thick...

I forgot Rimbaud who said the bears are dancing but what we had wanted to do was move the stars to pity.

I forgot—as did everyone else in the universe—the name of Seurat’s mistress: Madeleine Knobloch.

I forgot that a painting fails when it images the fall of an apple instead of its shattered aftermath, or survival within an unexpected catch-and-hold.

I forgot how you smeared caviar across my breasts.

I forgot pausing to scratch with a missing finger.

I forgot no one else noticing the diminishing moon’s tiptoe across the night sky.

I forgot cool breezes coiling milky skeins around pine trees. It was Baguio City before every inch of its hills became slathered with shanties.

I forgot Pushkin: “while beauty lives, so long will live my power to grieve.”

9.

I forgot the winter ballroom where tuxedos prevailed.

I forgot a well-used whip tucked into his left boot.

I forgot a girl singing forth her benedictions: May you never grow intimate with cold ashes and burlap. May you never feel tar and black feathers. May you know what I saw through flames: a star leaving night to sunder cerulean sky and hover as *Hope*.

I forgot a wooden door in Ulan Ude, cracked in places, a wash of faded blue paint tattooed by pale green diamonds. I forgot it reminded me of an island in the Sulu Sea, an emerald floating on lapis lazuli staining, too, the sky.

I forgot that, once, I was woken by a whisper to see a red chair tipped on its side upon a white shag carpet—when they finally found you, it was the heart of winter and the only witnesses were stripped trees bent by old winds, their muteness ancient and forever.

I forgot it was impossible to avoid the rain of black crows plummeting from the bullets of hidden hunters with soft hands.

I forgot large fists bunched on her back, hunched from reined-in wings.

I forgot the blood in the Sangria was my mother's.

I forgot how exile can salvage.

8.

I forgot waiting for Etel Adnan's new form of absence: "exile from exile."

I forgot rain does not truly forgive.

I forgot her poverty at spatial relationships—in sympathy, one of us pawed at air.

I forgot a detective looking at me with encyclopedias as eyes.

I forgot the Frenchman cooking horsemeat in blood, wine and garlic while lecturing on techniques for making plastique.

I forgot the carcass of a small animal, enchanting behind blue glass.

I forgot a lady in Florence, violets in her hair, who avoided sunlight.

I forgot dungeons waste marble.

7.

I forgot regret is a Kingdom with unknown borders.

I forgot symmetries shaped by memory lapses.

I forgot a white azalea quieting shade into a girl.

I forgot a silver platter on the beach. I forgot a platter serving sunlight.

I forgot surfers with white ponytails.

I forgot lurking forever in a red telephone booth to look up at rain and your window.

I forgot the “Ideal Violet” whose petals blush during the lemonade days of summer.

6.

I forgot foregoing milk for *tapey* rice wine as I preferred my tongue sodden—I forgot meticulousness in preserving memory as proof that someone will always remember you and me.

I forgot nights lactating morphine, roses rebelling against the aftermath of blooming, and vampires about to sin.

I forgot the flock with tin feathers.

I forgot Burkina Faso.

I forgot how Beauty dislocates.

I forgot you whispered an apology. ~~I forgot you continued anyway. I forgot you continued *helplessly*...~~

5.

I forgot jade's cousin: the green of Antarctic berg ice discovered as a lost emerald rib broken and floating away from a maternal continent.

I forgot the cocoon hanging from a tree like a tender promise. I forgot deferring judgment.

I forgot the rice cooker flirting with its lid.

I forgot appreciating a *delicadeza* moonlight as much as any long-haired maiden.

I forgot children learning to trick hunger with cups of weak tea.

4.

I forgot abandoning misery until it became mere concept, then poem.

I forgot how gazes can drop like debris.

After the door opened to his destination, I forgot I'd hoped the slight swagger in his steps, the loss of his trepidation, were placed by me there.

All around the border of this place, the desert is a forever. I forgot how no mountains, no trees, no tomb markers—nor memories perfumed by jasmine—interrupted the horizon.

3.

I forgot that to return bore no relationship to survival, which instead has to do with you whose path crossed mine in a new land.

I forgot how my grandmother's house stood solidly on a ground ever shifting, bereft of gutters, dams and other structures to mitigate nature's tantrums or tears from a gentle rain.

I forgot the bottle emptying until another day gave way.

2.

I forgot truth is disembodied.

I forgot love is always haggled.

1.

I forgot aching for fiction that would not chasten my days.

THRICE, I FORGOT (1-20)

I forgot moths as the sun disappeared—“the flutter of wings as they teased a dim porch light.”

I forgot entrancement with the layered auras of decay.

I forgot a water lily forms instantaneously.

I forgot releasing breath solely to describe milk transformed by your scent.

I forgot Tequila Corazon de Agave alchemized from the heart of blue agave bred in the rich, red soil of the “Highlands” in Arandas, Jalisco, Mexico.

I forgot “Mutual Funds” is an oxymoron.

I forgot the seduction of wet cobblestones.

I forgot the blinding whiteness of a thick porcelain mug sunning itself on your windowsill.

I forgot *those* dolls—for a moment, their eyes had relaxed.

I forgot how dusk enhanced conversations—

I forgot the seams caused by bindings—

I forgot the perfume of fresh bread as we passed a *panetteria*, the vinegary tang floating out of a wine shop, heaven as the scent of roasting coffee from a grocer, and the necessary reminder of those different from us through the stench of street drains—

I forgot the conundrums of evacuating mornings—

I forgot Clementina stuffing Rosa with candied chestnuts in a brandy syrup, perfectly grilled sardines, and the most tender, marinated octopus—

I forgot a girl singing as if Heaven was a mere breath away—

I forgot that, under his left eye, there lurked a scar people did not acknowledge but always culled from memory—

(I swiftly forgot “the 40 shades of grey” because before its utterance ended it was already a cliché.)

I forgot the dwarf Toulouse-Lautrec defining paradise as “a world of female odors and nerve endings”—

I forgot to freeze the spiral that is memory's perspective.

I forgot you losing all Alleluias.

I forgot Andalusia, where *duende* also insisted on "living life as if dreaming."

I forgot we accepted a colonizer's alphabet in exchange for electricity.

I forgot the classic contents of the Filipino Balikbayan Box:

Dove soap

L'Oreal shampoo

Colgate ("has to be Colgate, not Crest") toothpaste

SPAM corned beef

Set of *Encyclopedia Britannica* from the 1970s

Nestle's Quick chocolate

Folger's (nowadays, Walmart house brand) coffee

Snickers

M&Ms

Irish Spring soap

Libby's corned beef

Costco Vitamin B-12

See's chocolates

Back issues of *Conde Nast Traveler*, *The New Yorker*, *Marie Claire*,

Entertainment Weekly, Newsweek, Glamour

Oil of Olay lotion

Almay lotion

Ziploc plastic bags

Nutella

Reynolds aluminum foil and saran wrap

Campbell's soups

Nine West and Liz Claiborne purses ("from factory outlets")

Parker pens with refills

Osh Kosh playsuit

Baby Gap, Old Navy and Fisher Price onesies

Bayer aspirin

Carnation instant creamer

Nail polish: "L'Oreal for family, Maybelline or Wet n Wild for the servants"

Shampoo: "Pantene for family, Suave for neighbors"

I forgot the incomplete narratives of remnants not yet borne away by birds, tiny animals, wind ...

I forgot wandering among the alleys of statistics for the *objectivity* lacking, claimed a dictator's daughter, in the criticism of her father.

I forgot ocean mirrors nothing but ocean.

I forgot the second-greatest among losses is disillusion.

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I forgot the glint from the fang of a wild boar as he lurked behind even the most infinitesimal of shadows in a land where it only takes one domino to fall.

I forgot the elders, shoulders sagged to ruin, dropping gazes like debris instead of accommodating a world that drove them to treasure trees for providing shade that cost nothing.

I forgot mahogany dining tables whose royal lengths still failed to include me.

I forgot clutching the wet mane of a panicked horse.

~~Surely you walked through the spaces I hollowed from air and left behind in anticipation of you.~~

I forgot memory contains an underbrush.

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I forgot black dimes interrupting the sun's glare, an experience familiar to travelers visiting "Namibia in search of pure light"—

I forgot you spilling vermouth on the sky.

I forgot ceasing our hurtle through the fragile chill of the Milky Way.

I forgot life defined through the credit card.

I forgot you reminding, "Honey, angels may fall but they never die."

I forgot lace.

I forgot that *piccola città* replete with hyphens.

I forgot the bare arms that defined “summer browned.”

I forgot her red-rimmed eyes denoted the exhausted pace of a replicating light-year.

I forgot ink will flow to form a heart.

I forgot flamenco’s First of Ten Commandments: *Dame la verdad*, Tell the Truth!

I forgot that when a stone hand cracks, its pieces will not be caught.

I forgot I wanted to make memories, not simply press petals between pages of expendable books.

I forgot the trip wire, leering as it hid in the shimmer of summer heat.

I forgot that “rehabilitation” meant he could accompany her smile that slid mirrors away from her eyes of blue sapphires.

I forgot a sea where I was immersed until, chin just topping salty water, my head became attached to the entire planet.

I forgot the color of your eyes which is grey.

I forgot Michelangelo possessed incomparable draftsmanship except as regards breasts, despite having been weaned by a daughter and wife of stone masons.

I forgot that meditation, if conducted deeply, must harvest pain.

All around the border of this place, the desert is a forever. I forgot how no mountains, no trees, no tomb markers—nor memories perfumed by jasmine—interrupted the horizon.

I forgot an archipelago where spaces between what are visible are as real as your body whose hands had raised my wedding veil.

I forgot prominent breasts sculpted on immobilized Virgin Marys.

I forgot how one begins marking time from a lover's utterance of *Farewell*.

I forgot we once stood unknowingly in the same room of this city of numerous rooms—did you frequent its space without knowing until now why you always looked intently at each face?

I forgot laughter is not comprised of stars.

I forgot the typhoon failing to decimate a landscape brimming with violet lilies, snapping turtles and fragile dandelions—

I forgot the neighbor hiding behind a curtain as he wrote a haiku about a thief tangoing with his shadow when the moon appeared.

“WHAT WAS MISSING”

I forgot the medicinal nature of tango.

I forgot how you never washed your paint-ridden jeans and I thought that charismatic.

I forgot his intellect was a scratchy wool coat.

I forgot Juana the Mad living her truth—flamenco’s First Commandment—even as reality snuffed the votive lights in her eyes.

I forgot October mornings with their light of gold and blue so stark they resuscitated anyone.

I forgot the bride wore a red veil, alerting him to flames she painted with kohl against her inner thighs.

I forgot I envied scout bees charged with discovering new supplies of food—how I coveted their eyes like a series of mirrors able to split light:
“the trigonometrical bee will always / be able to trace the route from flower // to hive by taking a reading from the sun.”

I forgot memorizing the marks of animals pawing as they hunt.

I forgot how trains always evoke a life-long desire for journeys to far-off places to discover what was missing in the commonplace around me.

END TO BEGIN: An Autobiography

I will always remember how, as I sensed the rumble of another train departing, I stood in anticipation of the world you would bring to me, obviating my need to keep on taking the longest way around.

I forgot it need not take more than one person to bring the world to ruin—for my mother, that person was me.

I forgot I began drowning in air.

I forgot the capacity to feel you in the breeze lifting my hair from the shy nape of my neck.

I forgot you dreaming I saw myself seeing myself. Objectively, I saw the obscure flowers of my forgotten birthland: *damas de noche*, named after a long-haired woman afflicted into paleness by the verb of *feel*-ing.

I forgot your mouth became a cave stuffed with another woman's hair.

I forgot you today looking at the same sky of luminous sapphire whose gap from earth she had erased with her singing, and

I forgot releasing breath solely to describe milk transformed by your scent.

I forgot the giftbox was the gift.

I forgot Mohammed welcoming Jews and Christians for they, too, are "People of the Book."

I forgot magenta *does* exist in Geneva.

I forgot the fate of clay pigeons.

I forgot curtains.

I forgot Andalusia, where *duende* also insisted on “living life as if dreaming.”

I forgot my father: Ferdinand Edralin Marcos.

I forgot the angel with rust in his voice teaching, *There is no madness. There is only a woman brutishly in love.*

I forgot how much I treasured your nightingale blood, infinite ink for composing my our songs.

I forgot Heaven could be ... a breath away.

I forgot Poor Persius, whose full name I kept snorting forth as Aulus. Persius. Flaccid.

I forgot how Poetry is unlike the poet: *Poetry always knows.*

I forgot a coil that previously bowed without much purpose—it began to be lubricated for an intent to revise.

But I will never forget that we walk on the same planet and breathe from the same atmosphere. I will never forget that the same sun shines on us both. Thank you for this legacy: *No one is a stranger to me.*

I forgot who insisted to you reading this from another continent that rupture is not rupture but a widening of capacity.

[]

I forgot my poetry is going to change the world. I forgot my words are healing. I forgot my words are apples infused with cheerful cinnamon. I forgot my words are holy. I forgot my words are going to lift you—all of you!—towards *Joy*.

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Eileen R. Tabios has released over 20 print, three electronic and 1 CD poetry collections; an art essay collection; a “collected novels” book; a poetry essay/interview anthology; a short story collection; and an experimental biography. Her most recent release is *147 MILLION ORPHANS (MMXI-MML)* from gradient books (Finland). Forthcoming is her multi-genre collection *SUN STIGMATA (Sculpture Poems)* from Marsh Hawk Press (Fall, 2014). She blogs at *Eileen Verbs Books* at <http://angelicpoker.blogspot.com>; edits *Galatea Resurrects*, a popular poetry review journal at <http://galatearesurrects.blogspot.com>; and curates a number of online projects such as *Link In To Poetry*, a list of recommended contemporary poetry publications at <http://linkedinpoetry.blogspot.com>.

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