Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Pamela K. Santos: Three Poems

Pamela K. Santos · Thursday, March 10th, 2022

Notes on Impermanence: Or, Automonoamory In The Dark

before you begin your nightly ritual
to quit your conscious thoughts to quit thinking
for the day you roll your face to the side
any side revel in how good your hair
smells on puffy pillows newly purchased
you revel roll become your own lover
close friends know of your procrasturbation
on days souped together from depression

even your sweat unwashed you-ness your hair
makes you smile close your eyes inhale longer
you ask your friends is something wrong with you
it's embarrassing to be this lonely
wholly holy aroused you smell too good
no match for old lovers on old pillows

you don't like sleeping alone one-bodied
insomnia your nightly ritual
don't like your loneliness has become
your only exception to impermanence

•

there is a memory of a feeling you had of someone you loved within arms'
reach beside you in bed the feeling of reaching out to this person you loved in spite
of how hot their body was at night especially under covers you don't mind heat
radiating from raw skin the temperature discomfort a small thing what you miss is
the feeling of permanence that someone's presence at night would not vanish that
the body you loved would callously rebel against the rule of impermanence
governing all of life all that you know because that body of the person you loved
would love you so dangerously so deeply that they had no choice but to void the rule
that all things perish and do not last that the person who loved you only you
would want to be the permanent body beside your permanent body in the morning

*

Court Me

ligawan mo ako *like one of your*
miss universes *in your* kundimans /
sinta, haharanahin mo ba ‘ko
bitbit ng esteryo *like* lloyd dobler,
as if you burned for me as simon *burned*
for daphne*?* patawarin mo ‘ko, love,
if i sound like i’m reblogging a meme,
tweeting algorithms / how am i to
know what is TL, *what is true love,* babe,
and not some celluloid shadow, mirage,

macguffin, mimicked montage made from mass

hysteria, more mimesis than life?
after all, never have I ever been
voyeur to even one open-mouthed kiss
between my parents, one declaration,
one precious gesture of affection, hands
clasped in public / what evidence had i
of their youth-full love: faded kodak matte
prints, a baronged *groom, baby-blue-chiffoned*
bride, both veiled/corded/coined/candled as one?
what shade, shape, sangsang*, taste,* tunog *of their*

love binuhay *before ceremony,*

what kalandian, kilig*, thrills had they*
ever narrated to me? all I knew
of their romansa*: their* pagtatanan
bago sila nagpakasal, *kodak-*
captured wedding sandwiched between sticky
pages and plastic page covers / complete
story in two words: “we eloped”/ too short
for me so I fictioned a drama from
a single typewritten truth, an answer
box on my birth certificate, scripted

a hidden pregnancy, prequel to my

premiere as the firstborn grandchild: they have
a word for it: call it pikot*, as in*
napikot ang lalake, napikot
ang dalaga, Binibini *before*
becoming Mother / *forgive me,* mahal,
that i don’t have a model for romance
in my own childhood except for pikot

fanfic, in other words, baby-trapping
i've headcanoned out of a hospital
document, hard to read response below

"**How many fetal deaths (fetuses born**

dead any time after conception)?": **Two**

(2) / *in other words, imagined* ates

or kuyas *binding my loveless parents.*

*

SZA SZN

I fold over each night's memory over the other
a paper crane I keep safe in a pocket, for luck
U had come to my hotel, curious after 7 years, &
All up in your city, lookin for you, uhhhh / Searchin for you like love
NYC never seemed so willing to swallow me whole
until ur mouth became the Q I A'ed
I think about when u said I could put milk in ur coffee ! -&- ! stir the cup
a line I've never forgotten, long after we stopped texting

All up in your city, lookin for you, uhhhh / Searchin for you like love
Uninterested tho I may have been in ur life outside my suite
I pantomimed intimacy inhaled the BK swagger on ur breath out of habit
cursed cherrypits tumbled from my throat which is to say
grief&desire shuffled back&forth in our reunion playlist
Both of us swallowed back the *I need u*'s whole

Straddled over u I wolfed u & all ur monologues in 1 long gulp
I folded each memory of ur skin over my other
while a line from somewhere I'd forgotten poured into my conscious —
meat is a seasoning, not a meal.

Note: Lines borrowed from Kim Ly Bui-Burton's My Father's Pho *and, of course, SZA.*

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