

Is It the Kingfisher?

Marjorie Evasco¹
The Philippines

This is how I desire god on this island
With you today: basic and blue
As the sea that softens our feet with salt
And brings the living wave to our mouths
Playing with sounds of a primary language.

“God is blue,” sang the poet Juan Ramon Jimenez,
Drunk with desiring, his hair, eyebrows,
Eyelashes turned blue as the kingfisher’s wings.
It is this bird that greets us as we come
Round the eastern bend of this island;

Tells us the hairbreadth boundary between us
Is transient as the air, permeable to the blue
Of tropic skies and mountain gentian.
Where we sit on this rock covered with seaweeds,
I suddenly feel the blueness embrace us,

This rock, this island, this changed air,
The distance between us and the Self
We have longed to be. A bolt of burning blue
Lights in my brain, gives the answer
We’ve pursued this whole day:

Seawaves sing it, the kingfisher flies in it,
This island is rooted in it. Desiring
God is transparent blue—the color
Which makes our souls visible.

¹ Marjorie Evasco was born on September 21, 1953 on the island of Bohol in the Philippines and is considered as one of the earliest Filipina feminist poets. She is a bilingual writer who writes in English and Cebuano-Visayan. A recipient of many writing awards, Evasco was also the 2010 recipient of SEA Write Award.

Solsequiem

(After Pablo Picasso's *Maternidad*, 1905)

Marjorie Evasco

She had known ever since she felt
the miracle of his heart quickening in her,
it would end the way it began: her arms
gathering his hurt body again and again
into her indigo mantle, the shield of her love
bringing the world to complete silence.

Today, when the boy limped into the room
of her mending, she laid the ball of thread,
needle and pair of scissors on the footstool
near her ebony chair, and held him close,
right hand tilting his face for her blessing,
her left covering his, cupping a ball,

red and small as his heart upon
his lightsome shoulder. As she bent
to soothe him, death quietly slipped out
and into the world's double horizon
of sienna and cyan, cyan and cerulean,
primary hues of earth meeting sea,

and sea meeting sky. Anchoring this vision
on the woman at the centre of a room
mending a child's heart, Picasso tends
to the world before it completely shatters,
his hands shaping a small blue universe
illuminating the script, enfleshing the Word.

In Baclayon, Reading Levertov's "For Those Whom the Gods Love Less"

Marjorie Evasco

Perhaps it is now the other way around,
and I have become an almost-perfect lover,
caring little that the Gods love poets less.

I am begun again anew, listening
from the open window to the old tambis tree
drop red bells of fruit onto the grass & roof.

In this humid May afternoon in Baclayon,
the guava redolent on the branch meets the sun-
bird's praise, both scent & song passing through me,

as though I have turned into all-embracing air
in this keep of grace, Levertov's radiant wings
decanting shadows, urging the only way to let love.