

# LITTLE HUNGER // DONDO-YAKI AND OTHER POEMS

Raphael Coronel

## Little Hunger // Dondo-Yaki

Anything worth keeping  
can burn

a little hunger in my belly  
asks for flesh to become  
my flesh, we settled on Japanese

temple fields where dolls are set  
on fire where their shape turns  
to light where history fades into

our small talk about a wig  
that resembled your hair  
you keep cutting short

prayers and rising smoke greet  
the new year and spirits  
that dwells in their homes

## Iridescent

The street is a river,  
a refracting flood -  
slick iridescent mix of  
rain, oil, mud, trembling,  
my shins are cold,  
towards your place, cars  
on hold, half submerged,  
red lights dancing, curved  
of course, there are birds descending,  
a ground dove with a bleeding heart  
weighs on a telephone wire,  
a vendor's scale suffers orange  
rust, are you awake, waiting,  
creasing your sheets, I'm still  
walking, sticky, my feet are forming  
waves, yellowed leaves, a green light  
the scent of gasoline  
burns, I'm near you, slide  
the chain off the lock, my  
lips are blue, darker,  
are you sleeping, I'm at your door,  
what do you see, where  
in the light do you wander

## Side Effects

### I.

Every morning, I'll swallow pink and yellow, pink: fish swimming upstream, or trapped in a farm, either way to grow and roam longer than they should, pink: serotonin, norepinephrine, my brain accepts it as it is, a ripe pile of clothes worn days before beside me, my room sticky with heat, there's no reason to get out of bed, this has to be fiction, we're three weeks into the quarantine, and you tell me I'm starting to look different, your voice doesn't wake me anymore, I'll lie here, forget how to keep my head above water, most of the is blanket is spilling onto the floor, on my phone are the dead, an apparition, as numbers swelling up, patients, doctors, severe cases involve forgetting how to breathe, there is weight and sweat on me, up the river, they'll follow the scent to the location of their birth, it will wear them out, maybe in the next hour I'll start moving, its pamphlet tells me its side effects: make them lose interest and leave, the salmon dies from exhaustion shortly after making it home, some of them won't, and they'll say goodbye though their phones, you don't pray for this kind of light, praying is owning up to what you left ignored, yellow: an anticonvulsant used to treat seizures, flopping around, farmed and manmade in the murky water their lungs grew around, yellow: tiny flowers from Narra trees line the cracks of the streets, briefly, I thought I missed you, yellow: a synthetic compound which may result in a reduction of pain-related transmission of signals along nerve fibers, it's the start of holy week, they're not choosing to be hungry, yellow: associated with the development of motor tics, when you open a door and step through, discontinuance disfigures on a molecular level, soon, you'll see it too, there isn't a normal to go back to, angry at our discontent, the government devolves to a man with his own late-night show about shooting as self-defense, yellow: ripe mangoes fall by themselves and rot for the earth to open and swallow, a positive-strand RNA virus, causes less and less hemoglobin that carry oxygen and carbon dioxide, lungs that look like they've inhaled ground glass, crystalizing my hate, lodged in my arteries, the scans are increasing in opacity, once fluid, passing though, farmed in freshwater tanks then transferred to cages along the seashore, grown to maturity, on pesticides and antibiotics, we're slowly dissolved and washed away, I'm losing weight and start to feel my joints

sticking out, there's a bone stuck in my throat and it sinks deeper when I speak, both are slow-release tablets working steadily in my bloodstream, this week is for tidying up our rooms and throwing away old things thick with dust, old toys I played with before the surgery, there's hope it stays this way, to be seen is to be told that they prefer how you looked before, I can't match your enthusiasm, my ears are heavy with mud, in the market, they buy what remains and the scale reads as heavy as a lost child crying for its parents, the pharmacy tells me they're out of stock, I'm buoyant, permeable, floating in place, time is wild and slow.

## II.

pink: fish swimming upstream,  
to grow pink: serotonin,  
ripe days before  
to get out of bed,  
you tell me I'm starting to  
to keep my head above water,  
spilling onto the an apparition,  
  
up the river, they'll follow the scent to the location of their birth,  
maybe in the next hour I'll start moving, making it  
home,  
praying is owning up to what you left  
to treat  
tiny flowers from Narra trees  
I missed you, yellow: a synthetic compound a reduction of  
pain-related transmission  
yellow: associated with the development  
when you open a door and step through, you'll see it  
too,  
a man with his own late-night show  
to open positive- causes  
crystalizing  
in freshwater  
along the seashore, grown to maturity,  
and start to feel my joints  
  
this week is for tidying up our rooms and  
there's hope it stays this  
way, to be seen is to match your  
enthusiasm,  
as a child  
wild and slow

yellow  
 to grow and roam longer than they should  
 my brain accepts it as it is, a ripe pile of  
 fiction,  
 you tell me I'm starting to look different, your voice  
 doesn't wake me anymore, I'll lie , forget  
 the dead, an apparition,  
 forgetting how to breathe, there is  
 the river, the location of their birth, it will  
 wear them out, its pamphlet tells me its side effects:  
 make them lose interest and leave, from exhaustion shortly  
 they'll say goodbye don't pray  
 yellow:  
 the murky water their lungs  
 grew around, yellow:  
 a synthetic compound a reduction of pain-  
 related signals along nerve fibers,  
 hungry, motor tics,  
 disfigures a  
 our discontent, the government devolves to  
 a  
 virus,  
 they've  
 inhaled ground glass, hate lodged in arteries,  
 then transferred to cages  
 along the seashore, we're slowly dissolved  
 and washed away, I'm losing  
 my old  
 things thick with dust,  
 to be seen is to be told that they prefer your  
 enthusiasm,

# Spirited Away

No electricity tonight coiling  
   up copper,  
 this phone booth  
   rusted over  
   I hear *askals* sleeping  
   a ring ring, piercing my ears   *I called*  
 You, through the mouthpiece, breathing  
   I'm shaking like a dog out  
   here in your province  
 where the Japanese held you  
   hostage; you were less  
   than my age  
   remember?

Hold on  
Had to put another coin  
in. I still hear you

and karaoke singing,  
remember the sound of  
your body slipping in the  
bathtub  
remember thinking  
if the vein had burst blood  
in your abdomen  
remember orange  
curtains in the ambulance,  
the scans  
telling you  
you don't have much

Time-  
I put another coin in

Do you remember going  
                        blind the next night  
Were you dreaming black sand,  
                        low tide, fish

out in the moonless sky  
your eyes waveless, still  
starring resilience,  
or did your dream *kundiman* cause the quieting,  
the deafening,  
to no electricity that night

I hear you breathing, still



## Stations

Let faces appear as petals or ghosts  
blurring along trains that leave at times set  
bodies in the metro – remembering hosts

are patients, bodies in coats, diagnosed  
with a shortness, of time, covered in sweat,  
let faces appear as petals or ghosts

you were a prayer from a past life, most  
hum with rusted steel whistling in rain – wet  
bodies in the metro – remembering hosts

I've seen, this face, and these limbs, where do most  
souls rest, does energy rest when trains reset,  
let faces appear as petals or ghosts

do boughs grow with sunlight off the coast,  
does the wind let go the smell of salt left  
on bodies in the metro – remembering hosts

do these stations echo stories that boast  
a rebirth, a wind, a space kept,  
let faces appear as petals or ghosts  
bodies in the metro – remembering hosts