

Farol de Combate

*This is how, while darkness
drew my profile with its little finger*

*I have learned to see past as Montale saw it,
The obscure thoughts of God descending*

*among a child's drum beats,
over you, over me, over the lemon trees.*

-Ilya Kaminsky, **Praise**

I.

The rain falls lighter now and I gaze
At the dark descended onto our town.

From this mountain shelter I saw
The old mango tree struck down

By fierce lightning from the east,
Thunder rumbling in the heart

Of the guardian of the land, who thrills
To the meeting of the drought's last sigh

With rush of rain brought by the northerlies
This 9th month of my return to my language.

II.

I will go home to my people, bringing fruits
From hills I had planted to marvelous trees

I had met in my travels in other lands
On this revolving earth: fragrant pears,

Their fresh flushed cheeks, bright lemons,
Yellow and thirst-quenching in hot season.

I will go across the town's old cemetery
Where my ancestors sleep in edgeless night.

I will not wake them in their supreme repose,
I am transient like them, simply passing through.

III.

I trust that beside the well which had been dug
By my elders, a storm lamp had been placed,

Lighting up the path towards home, the lamp-
Lighter minding the first law of neighborliness:

To help one another as best as one can in daily
acts of living, for if the lamp were put out, unlit,

Someone passing by might stumble or slide,
Fall into the neighborhood well and die.

When I pass by the well I will draw water and drink,
Give thanks to my unseen neighbor for the light.

(for Marc)

Marjorie Evasco (Trans. from her original *Balak sa Binisayà*)