

A Self in Thirds

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Part I: *excuse for a gaze*

Once
in a sea of strangers
souls submerged
in a social soiree
An outburst overpowered the others:
 I have a Filipino friend
 who looks
 just like you!

This curious cacophony
was followed to a fellow
whose mouth in that moment
was meant for *her*

But she had not asked
nor made herself known
with intention
just yet

Without a sound,
only in stillness,
a conclave of consciousnesses convened
the mouth's gangrened gong
of prejudiced excitement
ringing between them

Pockets of silence
made room for
her booming bell, her clanging chorus
 Take your outburst
 your excuse for a gaze
 and Turn to me *fully*
 next time you wish to address me.

Part II: *not a mirror*

Mama gives me
A sheet of glass
“Do you like it?”

I nod yes
To make her smile
I smash the sheet
To make me smile.

Warmth yields in my hands
A shapeshifting cloth
Of sanguine syrup
An oozing lava

From where
Does it ooze?
Am I a volcano?
Have I erupted?

The sheet of glass
Would assert to know
To tell me
To decide
What I am

That is why
I killed it.

And feel
so warm now,
so warm.

Part III: *remember yourself*

Surely, that is beastly
Certainly, that is monstrous
Really, that is dangerous

You look at its eyes, peering at you. Can it do that, even?

You are unwavering when you spit out the words,

 You
 are
 a
 that.

But *your that* does not hear you

Your message does not move in the way you hoped it would

Instead it sits there,
between you and your that,
floating, swimming, going nowhere and everywhere at once

Your that does not budge, with eyes fixed on you

And you? What are you doing?

You feel yourself sinking into your skin and melting into dust

Surely, you have sunk
Certainly, you have melted
Really, you can melt into dust

The same confidence that gave you a that,
has now made you a this

What is left, between your this and that,
is your message dancing to and fro
Both nothing and everything at once
you cannot catch it, cannot reach it, even

Frantic, you search for your that
You find it twisting, molding
into a portrait
of you

Grimacing, you remember yourself
A dusty, molten mess

Remember yourself, *remember yourself*