

# Transcolonial Poem

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# Accidental Invaders

lately it's been hard to come by company | i make do | with stink bugs |

who | stowed away on packing crates | hitched a ride from the orient to the mid atlantic | who now  
terrorize | the crop | the economy | the cotton the tobacco the soybeans | who now invade accidentally  
| the homes of those invaders who | believe | belonging | a thing | to be bought here |

invaders who | squash the blue goo | blood of the bug | all over | the imported marble counter who |  
complain of the afterodor | of their murder |

easier to make friends of stink bugs | than of my neighbors | throwing patriotic parties | during  
pandemics | fourth of july parties | throughout uprisings | continuing to live their normal | lives  
lamenting | an imagined loss |

anyway | stink bugs are more my kin | the way they arrived here | the way they didn't ask to be here | the  
way they make do | live on scrap |

the way they left one infested land | for another | the way there was no other way | how they now |  
proliferate | here | in apology | tell themselves | *don't mind the neighbors* | *their attempts to squash us* |

what if instead of the child | of an immigrant i am the | child of an accidental invader | whose islands  
invaded by | empire after empire, left one | infested land for another?

the way bodies are moved. | the way they make do | in search of scrap | the way they  
destroy | the economy | the way i could no longer afford to live |  
in the city i grew up in the way it wasn't me | who created | the destroyed | economy |

the way bodies are moved | the fluke of stranding here | in montgomery county | the way the stinkbug |  
scutters across my body |

homing |

| the way it attaches to scrap

# When walking alone in the nature preserve you have to say hello

back

to the middle aged white man wearing camo  
hunting jacket,  
american flag baseball cap,  
probably,  
a conceal-and-carry—

beautiful day, he says  
as U.S. Steel spews hexavalent chromium into Lake  
Michigan as the coal plant chimneys puffff fffffff fffffff  
arrhythmically as Hammond Meat Packing wafts a bologna aroma  
into the Ford Automotive air

as the man scratches the bulge at his  
hip as he calls back his German  
shepherd  
as even the nature here is  
not natural  
afterthought planted atop  
ghosts

I don't know, do trees become ghosts?  
Do prairies become ghosts?  
It is Miami and Potawatomi land here

and if we're speaking of ghosts  
how many of U.S. Steel's workers fell to their deaths before it closed?  
and the residents down the road  
how many of them poisoned by pet coke?

No, it is not the man's  
fault alone that further  
down the road the  
monoculture

corn grows  
solely

to fatten  
the factory  
pigs to be  
hanged by  
ankle single-  
file  
split  
open  
solitar  
y

to be processed into sheets of lunch  
meat piled warmly  
one atop the other

not his fault alone that he and I meet  
on this  
single  
strip  
of land  
not  
optimized for  
profit  
that even the ghosts have evacuated.

\*

I used to go to the nature preserve  
to find some peace—

It's just that growing up everyone was always saying I was so  
depressing that there was no reason for me to be  
that wasn't my mother from a backward country  
and didn't we get lucky?

When the man in camo and american flag  
cap says hello

I want to know

What stocks he owns  
how many cars, how many homes  
which breeder he bought his german shepherd from  
did they drown their unsalable puppies  
did he train at the police academy  
which wars in the third world did he support or participate in

is he wondering if I'm legal here  
what's the gun for?

Does he ever worry he won't make his mortgage  
payment does he ever worry that this  
has long already been apocalypse?

Aren't you so  
tired? I want to ask  
him

Tired of  
beautiful days?

## Archipelago Aporia | Gender Dysphoria

The problem is I have so much love inside me  
and I know not who it's for.

Rather—I know not who to give it to.

Rather—I've handed love out like free money to anyone who'd put up with me.

Unplaced love can be calamitous as any displaced anger.

If you don't believe me ask any island or woman who used to believe  
the advances of a stranger was a love story.

Maybe I am unplaced in love because I am displaced in this country.

I have tried to expatriate—they say you can never really escape the place you're from—I was born here.

But what if my only reason for return was to be among a foreignness more familiar?

They say I exaggerate but really when was the last time I knew anyone who belonged *here*?

My mother and I are estranged. She loves her shows, going shopping, being surrounded  
by pristine strangers at Lincolnwood Shopping Center—  
she is grateful.

Maybe I could be loved if I could find a way to be grateful.

She loves to buy me ten dollar dresses from Forever 21 and Charlotte Russe  
send home gargantuan Balikbayan boxes at Christmas  
ripe with nylons and plastic trinkets, packaged and dyed high fructose corn syrup pellets  
bracelets made of  
seashells...

*Return to the people* is how I  
with my                      alien tongue  
would translate balikbayan  
to English.

| *I could fit inside*

*a balikbayan box*

*I could fit inside one.* |

Balik means fish in Turkish and bayan means lady  
I only know because I once tried to make a home in a land far away from here

only to discover myself a woe  
man——just as much gill in air.

When I think of balikbayan I think of home  
I think of mermaids

When I think of home I think of nylons and plastics whirling around in the ocean

of waterlogged care packages  
dropped from the sky  
suspended between  
destinations

I think of the narrow distance between all those islands  
so close as if to be touching.

Return this mermaid to her people my love,—  
Return this woman to sea

*return mer—*

*her?*

*mermer mermer mermer merman murmurmurmur*

Return this            balik

to sea

# Gender Reveal

When the gender is assigned at birth, branded onto the birth certificate  
the skyscrapers light up red white and blue

A pink or blue cannon is shot toward an uncolonized genderless territory

Every soldier of imperial gender knows the exact moment the gender is branded onto the birth certificate —  
in global synchronicity they stand at attention, salute.

A soon-to-be dad kills himself by accident forging an explosive device for his baby's gender reveal party (or  
is it by accident?)

A border patrol agent sets 45,000 acres of nature preserve on fire by accident for his baby's gender reveal  
party (or is it by accident?) (the desert alights in blue smoke)

Two parents crash their gender reveal plane into the Gulf of Mexico (they were going to spill pink water  
into the Gulf of Mexico to reveal their baby's gender) (who's to say it wasn't blood coloring the water  
pink?)

The red white and blue of the imperial gender state, if they were blended, if they were paint,  
would result in a color closer to the softness of lavender

# **Transcolonial Poem, or while contemplating double mastectomy I remember Columbus believed the world was shaped like a boob<sup>1</sup>**

OK so say we're little pilgrims, little explorers, settler colonizers  
circumnavigating the nipple whorl round and round on the Niña the Pinta  
the Santa Maria the Mayflower the USS Philippine Sea (CG-58) the USS  
Missouri there are little US Army men pawing at my tits sharp ship bows  
jabbing at the lymph the little men are unloading their wares and shipping  
containers full of trash, they're laying landmines and dynamite to civilize  
my tits they're building roads and military bases, churches and missionary  
encampments and call centers and textile factories they're digging and  
fracking and separating metal from the earth of my tits with mercury,  
they're traveling down my belly and impregnating me expecting me to feed  
their little kids when they latch onto my nips little american flags come out  
the two orifices and a couple bibles the US constitution and of course  
Manifest Destiny and the 1700 pages of the North American Free Trade  
Agreement my tits are so sore little paper cuts and bite marks all over them  
they're pocked and sagging. No one wants to build new churches or roads  
on them anymore.

---

<sup>1</sup> "I found it (the world) was not round . . . but pear shaped, round where it has a nipple, for there it is taller, or as if one had a round ball and, on one side, it should be like a woman's breast, and this nipple part is the highest and closest to Heaven."

-Christopher Columbus, Log of his third voyage

# Sift

Would give all my garbage memories of Civ gilmore girls & video cassettes & slap on bracelets  
& iPhone lithium & Wikipedia & Boeing 737s & the NO<sub>2</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> part and parcel to  
paper

Would give all the Goosebump books and kiddie pools and roller skates & glitter glue  
& all the balls in all the McDonald's play pits & all the ribbons of arcade tickets & all the little plastic  
trinkets they purchased & my discman & the plastic wrappers on my Pop Ices & the hot pink syn  
thetic fabric distractions the bricks of buildings \*built to last\*

built to last for what again?

Would give all their fantasy back

Easy Easy our landfills are (a mouth)full

Would give all of civilization back all  
the Walgreens, Duane Reades, the pop up sock shops in abandon  
ed strip malls what of their Civ I wouldn't give  
for a single incarcerated body to walk out a prison thru a TSA body scanner  
pull a disappearing act arrive  
on the other side of the border

Would give all my cracked sidewalk memories of Civ  
for stolen life to live again

Would give all the drive-thru's the lithium breath  
of Elon Musk's inhale  
would give all the blue passports back  
the maps their petty margins

would give charts of stars—No Colonizers On Mars.

Would give up my multicultural heritage the multi and the cult  
(i) went to shit when a kid i flipped

the tags of my bargain  
t-shirts elastic pants saw etched the name of the motherland

told I should thank God for their Civ to be here not there in syn thetic factory in typhoon  
land but never believed in gods or mothers

Would give rivers  
if they were mine to give

Would give public  
land, Nature, ur  
trails are not enough  
Nature,

Ur trails dwindled arteries, ur territories swindled passages

Would give nuclear power & meat packing plants,  
monoculture corn fields

Would give it all if it were  
mine to give

This body not much to give

Not much to traffic in:

Will not relinquish pleasure  
Will not { } productive  
Will not [ ] be extracted  
Will not sprout a single seed  
this body all debt no profit  
it's not a protest its exhaust  
- i - on - my- stupid factory body is defunct -  
won't connect to the power grid  
off to the landfill with it

Would give my body if it were mine to give I live to please to labor to pay this rent to live to keep  
this body in working order to labor to live to sometimes call my friends on the weekends to  
selfcare in order to labor again to barely live

would give all of Civ back if  
it were anything to give  
to give Civ back to those who were civ'd

sieved  
like regifting parasitic { }  
all the world's garbage patches back

sift through the wreckage then what

**Ode to having grown up with no heroes sheroes gods or masters** and no representation in the media /  
no half white mongrel filipinas who were born antiwar and against America on Thursday night WGN  
somber dramedies / no angsty little brown girl autists / on HBO

who don't know they're autists and don't know they're trans / who just keep fucking and fighting man  
after man getting fucked by man after man / trying to fuse with one to become one / no white father  
marathon watching John Wayne movies to numb sleep / so daughter can't watch tv / no sad island  
mothers / euphoric and forgetting / in the promised land of Xanax /

no imperialized immigrant islanders demanding equal rights / to those settler whites / on this stolen land /  
because we are / a nation of immigrants / or some shit / and all deserve the opportunity / etc / to exploit  
the land / barring those we steal the land from

no overachieving children / easily traumatized / by their smelly ethnic bag lunches but / who / will /  
persevere / become / rainbow girl bosses or ceos / not sea or prairie / who do not run off to coke den  
cum garage at 13 / because they're convince / if they can / just / get / out / from underneath their family's  
lawful fist / be free / they could become prairie or sea /

who instead of becoming sea prairie children / are groomed into docile young women / women who  
grow cement for skin / shale heart / stone liver / children who if they had grown up seeing themselves on  
tv / would never have learned to astral project out their bodies and watch themselves / watch myself,  
watch myself /

Ode to my pain not being displayed / displaced / to television / for someone else's / entertainment / if  
i'd been represented the series would've / inevitably ended / and the world would still / go on / as it goes  
on / instead i'll get to keep inventing myself / to the very last moment

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