

# Cultural Daily – Independent Voices, New Perspectives.

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Pamela K. Santos: Three Poems

Pamela K. Santos · Thursday, March 10th, 2022

### Notes on Impermanence: Or, Automonoamory In The Dark

before you begin your nightly ritual  
to quit your conscious thoughts to quit thinking  
for the day you roll your face to the side  
any side revel in how good your hair  
smells on puffy pillows newly purchased  
you revel roll become your own lover  
close friends know of your procrasturbation  
on days souped together from depression

even your sweat unwashed you-ness your hair  
makes you smile close your eyes inhale longer  
you ask your friends is something wrong with you  
it's embarrassing to be this lonely  
wholly holy aroused you smell too good  
no match for old lovers on old pillows

you don't like sleeping alone one-bodied  
insomnia your nightly ritual  
don't like your loneliness has become  
your only exception to impermanence

•

there is a memory of a feeling you had of someone you loved within arms'  
reach beside you in bed the feeling of reaching out to this person you loved in spite  
of how hot their body was at night especially under covers you don't mind heat  
radiating from raw skin the temperature discomfort a small thing what you miss is  
the feeling of permanence that someone's presence at night would not vanish that  
the body you loved would callously rebel against the rule of impermanence  
governing all of life all that you know because that body of the person you loved  
would love you so dangerously so deeply that they had no choice but to void the rule  
that all things perish and do not last that the person who loved you only you  
would want to be the permanent body beside your permanent body in the morning

\*

## Court Me

ligawan mo ako *like one of your*  
 miss universes *in your kundimans /*  
 sinta, haharanahin mo ba 'ko  
 bitbit ng esteryo *like lloyd dobler,*  
*as if you burned for me as simon burned*  
*for daphne? patawarin mo 'ko, love,*  
*if i sound like i'm reblogging a meme,*  
*tweeting algorithms / how am i to*  
*know what is TL, what is true love, babe,*  
*and not some celluloid shadow, mirage,*

*macguffin, mimicked montage made from mass*

*hysteria, more mimesis than life?*  
*after all, never have I ever been*  
*voyeur to even one open-mouthed kiss*  
*between my parents, one declaration,*  
*one precious gesture of affection, hands*  
*clasped in public / what evidence had i*  
*of their youth-full love: faded kodak matte*  
*prints, a baronged groom, baby-blue-chiffoned*  
*bride, both veiled/corded/coined/candled as one?*  
*what shade, shape, sangsang, taste, tunog of their*

*love binuhay before ceremony,*

*what kalandian, kilig, thrills had they*  
*ever narrated to me? all I knew*  
*of their romansa: their pagtatanan*  
*bago sila nagpakasal, kodak-*  
*captured wedding sandwiched between sticky*  
*pages and plastic page covers / complete*  
*story in two words: "we eloped"/ too short*  
*for me so I fictioned a drama from*  
*a single typewritten truth, an answer*  
*box on my birth certificate, scripted*

*a hidden pregnancy, prequel to my*

*premiere as the firstborn grandchild: they have*  
*a word for it: call it pikot, as in*  
*napikot ang lalake, napikot*  
*ang dalaga, Binibini before*  
*becoming Mother / forgive me, mahal,*  
*that i don't have a model for romance*  
*in my own childhood except for pikot*

*fanfic, in other words, baby-trapping  
i've headcanoned out of a hospital  
document, hard to read response below*

**“How many fetal deaths (fetuses born  
dead any time after conception)?”: Two**

*(2) / in other words, imagined ates*

*or kuyas binding my loveless parents.*

\*

## **SZA SZN**

I fold over each night's memory over the other  
a paper crane I keep safe in a pocket, for luck  
U had come to my hotel, curious after 7 years, &  
*All up in your city, lookin for you, uhhhh / Searchin for you like love*  
NYC never seemed so willing to swallow me whole  
until ur mouth became the Q I A'ed  
I think about when u said I could put milk in ur coffee !-&- ! stir the cup  
a line I've never forgotten, long after we stopped texting

*All up in your city, lookin for you, uhhhh / Searchin for you like love*  
Uninterested tho I may have been in ur life outside my suite  
I pantomimed intimacy inhaled the BK swagger on ur breath out of habit  
cursed cherrypits tumbled from my throat which is to say  
grief&desire shuffled back&forth in our reunion playlist  
Both of us swallowed back the *I need u's* whole

Straddled over u I wolfed u & all ur monologues in 1 long gulp  
I folded each memory of ur skin over my other  
while a line from somewhere I'd forgotten poured into my conscious —  
*meat is a seasoning, not a meal.*

*Note: Lines borrowed from Kim Ly Bui-Burton's My Father's Pho and, of course, SZA.*

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