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Poems from “I Look at My Body and See the Source of My Shame: Ecstasy Facsimile”

By Mark Anthony Cayanán | 16 August 2019

1

My favorite saint tells me I complain too often about my soul's shortcomings, I'm grateful

2

for the dreams I remember, W— pushes apart my thighs and asks in Punjabi when I'll finish, nothing in this world more beautiful than its share of tenderness

3

your body is denied, O soul, you're the sum of tragedies I've had to invent

4

to circumvent the ones we inhabit, I need you because I'm the only loss

5

I'm comfortable with, you're either something I must overcome or something I've already failed to, I can't

6

so I don't think of you in the present, I lack the imagination

7

to change, what my favorite saint says I believe, although the soul knows its wretchedness and knows what we are is

8

wickedness, what a great favor the Lord does us by sending us this distress the soul must be occupied with

9

when I say I'm too simple-minded to understand your mysteries, I want you to tell me

10

I'm being disingenuous, you manifest most frequently when I awake with a puffy face and a hangover

11

in the morning every regret is that one opening through which

12

the heavens belch a riot of blond cherubs, I can only think of my life as a sequence of crucial refusals, cracks

13

down a wine glass, a line of riot shields too ready for me to overlook, tomorrow a rainbow so faint it won't register in pictures, I browse through a list of victims to practice my outrage, without feeling, the world you've made

14

shall give me the next simile that conveys with poetic precision how little I think of myself: I look around to make sure someone's overheard me.

This entry was posted in 92: NO THEME VIII and tagged Mark Anthony Cayan. Bookmark the permalink.

Mark Anthony Cayan is from the Philippines. They obtained an MFA from the University of Wisconsin in Madison and are a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide. Among their publications are the poetry books Narcissus (Ateneo de Manila UP, 2011) and Except you enthrall me (U of the Philippines P, 2013); recent work has appeared in forthcoming in Foglifter, Dreginald, Kritika Kultura, The Spectacle, Crab Orchard Review, and Lana Turner. A recipient of fellowships to Civitella Ranieri and Villa Sarkia, teach literature and creative writing at the Ateneo de Manila University.

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