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**Poems from 'I Look at My Body and See the Source of My Shame:
Ecstasy Facsimile ('My favorite saint tells me I complain too often
about my soul's shortcomings' and 'We own none of it')**

Mark Anthony Cayanan

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

By Mark Anthony Cayanan | 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 Cayanan. Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Mark Anthony Cayanan 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 *Foglifter*, *Dreginald*, *Kritika Kultura*, *The Spectacle*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and *Lana Turner*. A recipient of fellowships to Civitella Ranieri and Villa Sarkia, they teach literature and creative writing at the Ateneo de Manila University.

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