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I Don't Lay Hold of People Anymore Except the Importance of Being Wrong

Twenty-five sorrow-fattened flies have just died in our room
and four others been trying to escape.
I'm done

calling him by my name.
Done convincing him he knows

he must be here. And now

skulking in
the knowing that knowing is always far
from over. A dawn behind bars
that's why I put aside my fucking prison clothes

and sit intimate with my unwashed body.
Knowing
he must be here is when he knows

he is dead.
Knowing I am purely made up of earth and God
tied a sack of stones to my neck
and threw it into the Pasig River—

I chew the first thing I saw in my wallet: a defunct Philippine five peso bill.
Then I swallow
my wallet entirely, every evidence of identity in it, knowing

the laws of the archipelago have mentioned nothing
of my death
or life.

Then I swallow
another red tablet whatever it is and send my shadow
away to run after—what, who?
Knowing *I don't know where to go* could be the sincerest expression after

discovering the world.
I have too much for a phase stood against the morning
light either with old cries to loose or loosened cries
to convince
they need another country since I got no room for them
no more. Knowing

lamentations are patrolling over me, breathing
through large pipes of hopelessness. For a gay man

the dead know gassed chairs wait
since public love and its incorrigible, unintelligible confessions.
Matchsticks never can be obsolete.
Cross-stitched bats pollinating turquoise jade vine disentangle, then burn.
And we know sooner or later the luminous flowers are to be

gnarled by ashes.
Compare this to a reeking which joy is afraid of.
So don't ask

why I don't lay hold of people anymore except the importance of being wrong.
Because people are war planes
filled with reserves for fire. They say
the burning is the Word of God whom not even heaven can find—has it?
And so what.

When I decided to take my body here I carried the words of my mother
what a neon dirt
wrong
profoundly
wrong this thing is so wrong
obtusely wrong referring to my mouth that wanted
 to speak to speak to speak my self: *Long live the rebel!*

That if I were to choose between
 prescribed health and my mouth, I would

scream *Long live the rebel!*
 The chant of every pathologized
 feeling inside me.
 Predicted to bite me when I'm unaware.
 Drugged to mistake my body for ozokerite, a difficult word meaning stench
 so that the only thing they could tell me is
worms have never found boredom in you—

More about pathologized feelings? They have developed a habit of stitching

a cry, weaving thirst
 carving a mouth out of my small freedom.
Worms have never found boredom in you!
Long live the rebel!
Long live the rebel!
 Anywhere inside me
 chaos could be, a flying dagger, sure, a shadow
 being cut into pieces, sure, but that is even calmer, so much calmer
 than the power to offend—
 Inside me is a home
 for the wrong yet defenseless, a black ink in the heart, not at all contemptible.
 Not at all
 though my mother said the Lord will destroy this place nonetheless,

it will be desolate forever.
But nothing disappears,
nothing inside me melts,
once they're inside me they're inside me:

fog
semen sown and dead
the smell of ash
monologue where worms have so many ways to enter and exit and enter
obsession to gentleness
thirst that has never quite measured the length of thirst
the irresistible memory of choosing to live
my surrender to *self*—the word I have been using to replace *evil*
in my mother's last letter.

I lean my head
over
the shoulder of my own twenty-nine-story ruin, silently
sipping cold

water from a glass of incomplete loss, knowing
I should call him again by my name, again, by my name,
and he will say yes.