Memory - Philippines

Youthful eyes peek
As delicate strands of vibrant yellow
Remain suspended in the air like glass chandeliers
Light performs its sprightly dance
Through the intimate twist and tangle
Of thick silver-lit limbs
Of the wise Narra trees

Black lined fingernails scratch letters
Into the chalk dust earth
Soft eyes illuminated with a diamond sparkle
Rose spirited cheeks flushed with burning fervour
In the distance she hears
The crisp chirp
And quick clicking tongues
Of flame breasted fruit doves

Thin white fabric feeling sticky
Lifting, peeling occasionally
Like yanked strips of adhesive tape
Sweat beads gleaming in the insides of her thighs
Feeling lukewarm moist against papery skin
Like pancake syrup and tepid bath water

The speckled curve of her shoulders
Scalded from the moist, sweltering heat
Burnt brown red like onion peelings
That hisses and sizzles with a splat of oil
The air is a seething pot of sluggish smoke
With the pungent smell of soy sauce and sour vinegar

Stuck to the brick and tar of the road
Along the toothpaste gush of sewage flow
A swift whirr of violent arcing colour
Of blood sun ripe tomato reds
Warm pumpkin orange and cumin yellows
Of kwek kwek, round penoy
Or mottled pugo

Among the thick choking haze
Pumping clouds of kettle steam
Beyond spoon rattling clatter of pans
Clashing pincer tongs and steam whistles
Is the spit and sputter
Of frying squid balls and crunchy pork knuckles
Bobbing like buoys in a sea of oil

Half empty glasses
Of gulaman or halo-halo
Ice cool sensations in her throat
Fading like the screeching tyres
Of tricycles zooming past
Limbs draping over roof tops
Heads sticking out of windows
Like floating tapioca balls

Jema Samonte