



PRISM '11

SPRING

OSU'S ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE

PROVOST'S POETRY WINNER: KAYUMUNGGI

My skin is brown

Out of mercy and protection from Kabunian

My skin is the copper

my people melted into plates

with inscriptions in unknown languages

My skin is the mark of diasporas,

centuries harvesting rice and mangoes

under the hot sun of an endless summer,

the memory of the jungle

long journeys between scattered islands

A record of history in the flesh

It speaks of death threats and guerrilla warfare disguised as dances

gong music and rooster blood spilt to name sultans we call datu

and healers we call hilot

Strong brown fingers in joyful and solemn prayer,

twisting necklaces of fragrant white blossoms,

thick with the heavenly scent of sampaguita

Strong brown hands catching fish awaiting the fryer

and lime juice mixed with soy sauce

Skillful hands mixing concoctions of spices, sour fruits, and meat

into large bubbling pots

Dancing, eating, sleeping, breathing, praying, and dying

on the tops of volcanoes

Hands proudly hauling rainwater to boil tea and clean the home
Hands breathing life into ancient stories by moonlight,
 stories of angry mothers turning their daughters into pineapples,
 of why there are stars in the sky and how the mountain gods gave us rice
The weathered fingers of grandmothers tracing palms to tell fortunes
 scrutinizing the bumps in our skulls, the drops of residue left in tea cups
 for stories

We are the past and the future
Amber, wild, and beautiful
 not to be exoticized,
 commercialized,
 assimilated,
 with your cultural appropriation
 a weak imitation of a brave culture that resists slavery and genocide
 a culture, a people, that would not die

I name myself
My name is Ilokana, Tagalog, Kalinga
 Maranao, Tiboli, Yakan, Pangasinan,
 Waray-Waray, Aeta, Hanoo....
 Bicol, Bontoc, Igorot
 Bisayan, Mangyan, Bagobo

I name myself
My name is Malaya
 FREEDOM