

Buhok

I put down roots
where the water meets the earth.
where mango-scented seafoam
polishes the alabaster shore
where colonizer's rays
and an iron's graze
might scald, might destroy
her facade of second generation pride.

For today
I am a trophy.
a forest of pure black gold
whose oriental beauty unrestrained
whips back the heads of men,
their greedy fingers yet untrained
–to be entangled
to be blessed–
to be dominant onto
but a few strands left behind;
a keepsake of her radiance
her innocence
her unsplit obedience
on their frigid morning pillows.

For someday
I may be fragile.
someday
I may split in twain
my numbers once proud
my colors once hoisted
once spilled over shoulders
as wings on the hawk eagle's back
may dwindle may tarnish
like Skyflake tins or milkfish bones
or a once unscathed people
forever lost to the test of time.

For tomorrow
I am vanity's banner.
my sun and stars alight melanin soldiers
and keratin borders
heralding names yet growing beyond
who suffered the tide before us.

Radiant am I
the testament of change
bottled, sold, and uprooted
Matatag siya
the bane of the american dream
who put down roots
where the water meets the earth.