

JOURNEY TO MORAZÁN

Scavengers

The vultures made their beds outside my door
while we were too busy working on each other.

I fell asleep still listening to the leaves rustling in their beaks,
how they gnawed on pinecones, and the way they wished
each other good night by flapping their wings in unison.

I fed them cough drops and multivitamins next morning
with the hope that they'd stay healthy.

Awake

It was four or five sleepless nights
that ruffled and soiled your pillows,
like sweaty stretch marks you felt up
and drew your face away from in shame.

It was the falling snow outside our rooms
which lit up the paths to your dreams,
but the cold got a numb grip of your toes
until the tracks were all blurred by your shivers.

It was hope which pressed your ear to the bed
listening for the echoes of whispers, moans,
and strange hymns you made with your tossing and turning
like the forlorn croaks of a muzzled toad in a college dorm.

It was the sharp moment of fear when you noticed
the incomplete letter you scribbled all over your sheets,
a sense of futile violence lurking behind each lonely word
and so your eyes remained closed to escape from the blindness.

The Sentinel

All you ever needed was a cup of black coffee and a small mirror.
Now you have monologues scribbled on flight itineraries and used napkins.
Was it worth it?

Does your brain have thunderstorms when your eyes are shut?
Do you dream of walking on silver rooftops when the rain pours down
so you can hold up your kite made of folded up love letters?

Have you checked your bed for all your fallen pens?
Did the blue stains on your sheets leave bite marks the following morning?

Did you itch until ink dripped from your thighs to your knees,
across the landscapes of your legs until your socks were all wet?

Did you ask for a giant hourglass filled with fireflies
just to keep track of your most feverish dreams?

Did you wake up in tears to find them all sleeping inside
and let out a sigh thinking of how
you've lost sight of the shadows and flickers of time?

Seagulls

We once whistled over the pearly curves of a naked island,
grazing its emerald curls with the tips of our wings.

We turned into graceless flamingos with our childish blushes
as we were tickled sensuously by the ocean's soothing breeze.

We got lost and landed at the nearest airport motel,
gliding senselessly into a suburban cage padded by mirrors.

We were trapped in the queen sized beds of air conditioned rooms
with dirty linen, soggy pillows, and free continental breakfasts.

We fell asleep to the drone of late night television,
haunted and dizzied by our own distant reflections.

We escaped by perching on top of a light rail train
and filled our lungs with a weightless air that stood still inside us.

We are seagulls, stranded and silent on Lake Michigan's shores,
frozen in midair and afraid of flying into the water's stampede.

Morazán '81

You heard rumors from a local radio transmission
of palm trees that sneezed thanks to the ashes the wind blew,
bullets resting inside sacks of black beans,
churchyards where white weeds grew every morning,
crickets that chirped only in midair,
and men who believed in the freedom of land.

Remember how you crossed the green hill crests
with a steel wool kite tied around your ankles,
the string was a long thorny ribbon
painting red dots with its pricks while frantically chasing
the scent of an underground fire you thought was long gone?

The view from above kept you quiet
as you inhaled the clouds
getting high on those things
that darkened the sky.

You fell and landed flat on your back
head facing up, softening the blow
with the stories you carried that were written in song.

You walked through the trails of Perquín with nothing but your toes,
while softly humming that you had been here before.