

Lazarus

By Jonel Abellanos

John 11:1-43

Imagine my wonder as mist cleared,
The mind knowing it woke to a dream.
My head felt light, absence of weight
A peaceful air filled.

Sand blazed like scroll. Tree casting
Dappled shades. The sea and its
Living breaths, foams shoreward
Like sighs. The rock's pale

Shadow on shore golden to the sun's
Touch. I sat for what would be days
In ordinary time, listening to water.
If I were alone, the question

Never rose from the deep.
No glint of passage between
Eyes and sky, no mood shifts, no brevity.
Only the unmoved holding.

But then lightning struck the horizon
And thunder called: *Lazarus, come forth!*
Fear seized me. I slid in a black void,
Stars streaking like arrows of recall.

I was weighted once more, linen
Strips swathing my weariness as if I were
A mummy. I heard my sisters, Mary
And Martha, outside the tomb.

It was very hard to stand again,
My legs numb with surrender.
But who could withstand love?
I followed the light past the rolled stone.

Higher

By Jonel Abellanos

Underwater hum of aircon – the room's navel.
Spine like rod for bolt of illumination.

Middle finger meets thumb: breathe in mint.
White, how the scalp blooms, as if an updraft

Sweeps clouds in the head, as if a small flame
Between ears. Hold the curl of air in stomach

Then breathe out. Mind leaping like dolphin
If eyes fully close: let gaze slip through

To recall's white wall: star, pulsar, nebula
Of earlier hours: cappuccino, ice cubes,

Jane Shore's *Happy Family*. Feel pointillist
Sparks in the brain: left and right hemispheres

Looking from above like seahorses, forehead
To forehead, tail to tail. Itch and saliva tilt

Radiance, tremor of eels from knee-wrapped
Constrictions, glissando of fins from the floor

Up the backbone. Return in the measured ebb,
The repetitive flow. Black-crowned night

Hérons home to the island sanctuary where
Flocks of insights winter then head north

To a season made of paper – poems
As fledglings learning to lift from page.

Returning, I yield to the column of air
Rising, one day at a time: celestial stupa

Lament of the Cello's Scroll

By Jonel Abellanos

Scroll (*noun*): the curved head of a violin or cello

I couldn't carry
His body like
The endpin

Weight
Balanced between
His knees

I couldn't transcribe
His longings
Like the fingerboard

Nor his heart's
Language
Like the bow could

The belly and arc
Under the purfling
Curve the sound

Slipping through
S-shaped holes
Supple and pure,

Finding
Our listener's
Heart like a bird

Pegbox and tailpiece
Hold strings,
Silence stretched

What am I but
Ornament carved
Like a rolled parchment?

He draws us
To his bosom's
Music

But he sees me only
If he's cleaning us,
Rubbing meditatively

I couldn't feel or smell
His touch, as he does it
With a scented cloth

Aubade

By Jonel Abellanos

After my fifth lucid dream.
These blueberries scribbling
Sour notes on my tongue.
Sudden wind speaking
With coconut fronds, boding
Storm habits of our sky
Blueing, setting aside
Night's moonless blanket.
I linger, looking for a place
In shades. Under the street
Lamp my shadow deepens.
Beyond the arc of light
Its version lengthens, blends,
The eternal in impermanence,
The fleeting breaking like dawn.
I want to remain, but the wind
Leads me back inside. I dwell
In these moments, brewing coffee,
Inhaling bitter-sweet aroma.
The sun will gaze on unread
Books, pen and notebook.

Science

By Jonel Abellanos

Transience, as I ponder the gradual
Ashes. The seeing spirit knows it isn't fire
But heat, not color but the invisible
Underneath. Thoughts stray to essential
Likelihoods, impermanence of wind
Anticipating ground shifts under this acacia.

Remains fade from my mug, my hands
Assure me. I prefer the lukewarm,
Sipping and inhaling the bittersweet,
Assuming nothing is moving

Of Another Kind

By Jonel Abellanos

Sundered, looms of light, sincerity and
Aurora, tight, borealis in the bottle,
Mandala of missed sky. I smile.
After the absent rain, not quite gray,
Doorway of the mind, place to place.
Hybrid silence if I see more closely
Inward till I don't feel my body

Ode to Aloe Vera

By Jonel Abellanos

Among pots of green harmony*
Between shadow and light, like
Cactus, solitary aloe vera. I
Don't seclude this part of me,
Every daybreak peering,
Finding it cooled and sheltered,
Granted centered space like a
Heart. They say it heals,
Insoul balm to wounds, its
Juice like oil to rubbing. I
Keep watching it sometimes,
Leaving concerns to trance,
Moirés of thoughtlessness.
Nothing voices its endurance, its
Organic lissome to living.
Particulars don't detail how
Quiet it yields to my devotion,
Rainfall. I measure how it
Survives by dawn's
Transience, the day's
Undoing, its benevolence and
Verity; and I anoint with
Water, reaching in. I take
Extra care to cultivate,
Yarning in loam, dew, roots,
Zephyr or worsted of light

**Green Harmony is another name for Gynura Procumbens*

Sacred Geometry

By Jonel Abellanos

Each other is the young morning's idea
Of light and water. Ask a leaf in the shade
And the answer is always yes, regardless of time.
Time, yes, curling clues as it passes.
Dews hold the ocean's memory. To know
It is to entrust the forgetting act to the river,
Which comes by noon as desire to sink
In silence when trees lend shadows.
The wind shuffles. A depth of sadness,
As if the world were a giant bowl, empty
But not long after. Move, thus, with the afternoon
And embrace the gloaming. Reserve three
Spaces for the night: wish, love and dream.
Your heart will hold the promise, like the moon
Those twinkles in constellations of ever after.