



Defying
Trumplandia
Pithy Peminist Poetry

MELINDA LUISA DE JESUS

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NB: Poems 3-7, 9 & 11 are **hay(na)ku**, a poetic form created by Filipina American poet Eileen Tabios.

An Engineer's Dream

*For Srinivas Kuchibhotla, murdered by a
racist on February 23, 2017, and my father,
Jose Maria de Jesús (1930-1999)*

1.

I tried to avoid
this news
it was
too close to home/heart
The child of brown emigrants knows
danger is always around the corner
no matter the dreams
degrees
politics
one's parents held
All Amerikkka sees is
 brown/black = alien/other

2.

My father had an American dream
a dream of coal and steel and "progress,"
 as he liked to say
an engineering dream, to be exact
His own father told him, in order to be a successful
 engineer,
he'd have to leave the Philippines for the States
So my father made his way, on his own terms,
to Lehigh University, in deepest Pennsylvania

*His fashionable but thin khaki balmacaan
is no use against the autumn chill
of a Sunday evening in early October 1954
his dark curly hair ever unruly
slide ruler in his pocket
leather briefcase at his side*

*standing before the Alumni Memorial
Building
the canopy of yellow leaves glowing in the
dimming light
the clock in the chapel striking six
I'm finally here, he breathes, satisfied.*

3.

I imagine him walking briskly across
the Hill to Hill bridge
marveling at the Bethlehem Steel plant
slung dark and low
prowling all along the Lehigh
the railroad lines astride it
the trains chugging into infinity
the clamor of industry
fire and smoke
clanging,
singing a song of
Man over Nature
Man versus Time
Man versus Decline
A song of progress
 where men of every color labor together
 in the mill
 making the steel
 that makes
 America

Oh, the possibilities it offered--
1954 and America is still filled
with love for its *little brown brothers*:
 "Remember Bataan!"
needing highways and bridges and steel
and civil engineers to make it all happen

My dad was supposed to leave upon graduation
But Industry enabled him to stay
Letter after letter from his professors
Ads in Baltimore papers attesting to his prowess
He was on his way to green card and citizenship

4.
My father saw opportunities
and made them his
Then he made us, his large family
 also raised in Bethlehem
 four of us at Lehigh, too
A Filipino family sown in Lenape soil

But Srinivas Kuchibhotla won't have this same chance
His American dream stopped by the bullet
of a drunk violent racist man
who saw Srinivas' dark skin and concluded
 not
 *H-1B aerospace engineer with MSc from
 Texas*

 but
 *Middle Eastern
 other
 terrorist*

All of this to say
Srinivas could have been
 my father
He, who built America
and highways and bridges you travel on daily
who believed in the promise of America

as he was taught in English before the war
as it was brought to him by the GI's who
liberated Manila
as it was sown in those engineering textbooks
he memorized

5.
We, the brown and well educated
immigrants and children of emigrants
keep to ourselves
because we know the tenacity
and the fragility of these dreams
we know America's welcome is always conditional
we may be successful but are always uneasy
we know those bullets
are always
meant
for
us.

Dear Betsy DeVos
Jim Crow made “school choice” happen.
You should look him up.

Lessons from Fawn Hall & Kellyanne

Sometimes
we are
above the law.

On A Milk Carton: for the DNC

Have
you seen
this lost spine?

**Neocolonial Brainwash: for my fellow
Pilipinxs who voted for 45**

imperialist
washing machine
loaded with Filipinos

set
to “white”
watch us spin

add
extra bleach
cycle now complete

Trumpcare I

Republican
death panels
Paul Ryan laughing

Trumpcare II

"An
act of
mercy." Jesus wept.

The Kingdom of Heaven

The
poor are
not blessed here.

The
rich scoff
at their plight

from
their limos
and private planes

laughing
as they
transfer funds offshore

they
have iPhones
AND health care

they
love vouchers
and trickle down

But
one day
that will change.

“Camel--
won't fit--
the needle's eye--”

they'll
scream. Jesus
laughs. “Told ya.”

Patriarchy

If
you'd kept
your legs together

If
you weren't
so fucking frigid

If
you'd just
stop demanding respect

If
you'd learn
to be respectable

If
you'd just
shut up already

If
only you'd
listened to me

If
you'd stop
whining and yelling

If
you weren't
such a doormat

If
you really
believed in God

If
you'd stop
thinking you're smart

If
only you'd
be more grateful

If
if if
bitch whore cunt

If
you'd been
paying attention, girl

You'd
know it's
all *your* fault.

Now
make me
a fucking sandwich.

Haikus for Senator Steve King

*"Culture and demographics are our destiny,"
King wrote. "We can't restore our civilization
with somebody else's babies."*

Dear Senator King
Whose civilization are
you referring to?

Why can't those babies
help out? 'Murrica,
it made these babies

When it invaded
Hawaii, the Philippines,
stole native lands and

declared Africans
5/8ths of a person. Are
you for real, stupid

fuckwit? Know your damn
history before you make
such ridiculous

assertions. *Culture
is our destiny.* Mongrel
culture mixed culture

new cultures beyond
your narrow white entitled
male racist worldviews.

The old world ends and
monsters appear. Hybrids like
us adapt and change.

Tricksters, we're here then
not or maybe we're behind
you, or cleaning your

house, teaching your kids,
fucking your mistresses and
they love it love it.

White man, you're replaced
by browner smarter hybrids
making 21st

century cultures
intersectional cultures
beautiful cultures

you can't imagine.
We'll archive your hateful, mean
racist sexist small

xenophobic and
transphobic climate denying
ways for our children,

examples of how
Republican fiends, grifters,
tried to destroy our

nation and almost
got away with it. We'll teach
them that compassion

understanding and
revolutionary love
is our culture now

is our destiny.

At 50 Days

Synagogues,
mosques burn;
Ivanna's brand sells.

Drumpf
golfs, appointees
lies, witches' spells.

About Melinda Luisa de Jesús

I was born and raised in Pennsylvania; my parents were emigrants from the Philippines. Growing up brown in a predominantly white steel town has shaped me in ways I'm constantly exploring in my writing. I identify primarily as a feminist of color. Professionally I teach and write about critical race theory, girlhood and monsters. I'm also a classically-trained mezzo-soprano who dreams of singing in a funk band, an Aquarian, and a mother of two. I drink hard liquor and love Hello Kitty.

I believe, as did the ancients, that a poem can change the world.

More about me at: <http://peminist.com>

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Locofo Chaps

2017

Eileen Tabios – *To Be An Empire Is To Burn*

Charles Perrone – *A CAPacious Act*

Francesco Levato – *A Continuum of Force*

Joel Chace – *America's Tin*

John Goodman – *Twenty Moments that Changed the World*

Donna Kuhn – *Don't Say His Name*

Eileen Tabios (ed.) – *Puñeta: Political Pilipinx Poetry*

Gabriel Gudding – *Bed From Government*

mIEKAL aND – *Manifesto of the Moment*

Garin Cycholl – *Country Musics 20/20*

Mary Kasimor – *The Prometheus Collage*

Iars palm – *case*

Reijo Valta – *Truth and Truthmp*

Andrew Peterson – *The Big Game is Every Night*

Romeo Alcala Cruz – *Archaeoteryx*

John Lowther – *18 of 555*

Jorge Sánchez – *Now Sing*

Alex Gildzen – *Disco Naps & Odd Nods*

Barbara Janes Reyes – *Puñeta: Political Pilipinx Poetry, vol. 2*

Luisa A. Igloria – *Puñeta: Political Pilipinx Poetry, vol. 3*

Tom Bamford – *The Gag Reel*

Melinda Luisa de Jesús – *Humpty Drumpfty and Other Poems*

Allen Bramhall – *Bleak Like Me*

Kristian Carlsson – *The United World of War*

Roy Bentley – *Men, Death, Lies*

Travis Macdonald – *How to Zing the Government*

Kristian Carlsson – *Dhaka Poems*

Barbara Jane Reyes – *Nevertheless, #She Persisted*

Martha Deed – *We Should Have Seen This Coming*

Matt Hill – *Yet Another Blunted Ascent*

Patricia Roth Schwartz – *Know Better*

Melinda Luisa de Jesús – *Petty Poetry for SCROTUS' Girls, with poems for Elizabeth Warren and Michelle Obama*

Freke Rähkä – *Explanation model for 'Virus'*

Eileen R. Tabios – *Immigrant*

Ronald Mars Lintz – *Orange Crust & Light*

John Bloomberg-Rissman – *In These Days of Rage*

Colin Dardis – *Post-Truth Blues*
Leah Mueller – *Political Apnea*
Naomi Buck Palagi – *Imagine Renaissance*
John Bloomberg-Rissman and Eileen Tabios – *Comprehending
Mortality*
Dan Ryan – *Swamp Tales*
Sheri Reda – *Stubborn*
Christine Stoddard — *Chica/Mujer*
Aileen Ibardaloza, Paul Cassinetta, and Wesley St. Jo – *No Names*
Nicholas Michael Ravnika – *Liberal elite media rag. SAD!*
Mark Young – *The Waitstaff of Mar-a-Largo*
Howard Yosha – *Stop Armageddon*
Andrew and Donora Rihn – *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*
Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt – *Extreme Vetting*
Michael Dickel – *Breakfast at the End of Capitalism*
Tom Hibbard – *Poems of Innocence and Guilt*
Eileen Tabios (ed.) – *Menopausal Hay(na)ku
For P-Grubbers*
Aileen Cassinetta – *Tweet*

More information on Locofo Chaps can be found at
www.moriapoetry.com.