

i watch your laughter fill the sky with song  
i watch your snores stir the stars into orbit  
i try to write you into every poem  
so that i can remember this folklore

my throat is raw with  
the ruins of language  
i've swallowed countless ghosts,  
hoping that a story would surface

i find it funny how we have to *make* love like it's some  
slab of clay on a wheel; we wait to see where it spins  
into, how it forms; if it turns out pretty & empty like a  
bowl or a vase; if it becomes flesh that bends, bleeds,  
breathes; if it turns to fragments in the heat of the kiln;  
love is a civilization & we are all just clumsy little gods

we are not lovers, we are **lalang**. we set  
ourselves on fire without telling anyone.  
it is not enough to invent something.  
sayang means to survive. to burgeon  
even after the blaze.

i'm sitting in the back of a cab  
with long nails & a painted face.  
the driver has seen the ending  
of this film before. but he does not  
see the garden of welts you watered  
across my torso. he has not seen  
the ending to a film where desire is  
an unnamed horror, where you & i  
were always already ashes.

there is a room. it is dark. there are candles. there is  
a party of friends. sitting in a circle, they take turns  
telling each other stories. stories of the strange,  
stories found in the gaps of your sofa, stories  
trickling through your fingers, stories that your  
grandma folded into your pillowcase. at the end of  
each story, a candle breathes its last. it is said that  
when the last candle goes out, the window to another  
world will be opened. flame by dying flame, the  
room became filled with stories, with shadows, with  
stillness. no one speaks. it is the last candle. no one  
moves to snuff it out. there was a room. it was dark.

i'm afraid of being loud. i'm afraid  
of being greedy. i'm afraid of  
waking up. i'm afraid of forgetting  
your name. your name finds a place  
within my ribs. i whisper your name  
until it becomes another name. did  
you know? they made a list with all  
your names. here it is. i'm not afraid  
of death. i'm afraid of the day when  
all these names look the same to me.  
to be named dead is better than to be  
nameless.

in this story, they'll cut open  
my belly & find a nest of tresses.  
in another story, the locks sink  
deeper into a landscape of grief.  
in your story, you sweep strands  
off the pillows & sheets. you string  
them into a shoreline so that  
each night, i may return to you  
in waves.

who will grieve for the worlds  
that do not exist?  
that could have?

wound:  
noun/verb  
thread/trauma  
season/suture  
coil/clot  
tale/telling  
my/self

why is there a process of  
making why form why  
content why struggle why  
craft what is the point why  
can't we simply exist why  
hands & gears why arms &  
axles why the need to  
package to manufacture to  
sculpture where do we go  
when we are solidified