Poetry Series

Eddie Roa

- poems -

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Eddie Roa (June 22,1942)

I'm a retired marketing man (market research, advertising, media management, brand management) now taking up the pen to express, entertain, elate, annoy myself.
I'm married to Alma, with two kids Eric and Lyn, one grandson from each, Dustin and David.

Works:

none

.0000001Death At Sea

The sandy delta as always was overrun by urchins
Even before the water set in to wash out their foot prints
It is the children across the beach who laid claim to it first
Ahead of the predictable and often tardy tide
But now with the water ankle deep and rising
The little ones with perked up ears caught sounds
Threatening them to cross the bar now or else
Words screeched at a frequency even clogged ears hear

It was a noisy and raging night at sea
The roar of angered waves dominated the din
And the blistering slash of briny water stung mercilessly
At hands, arms, a thumping chest and reddened cheeks
He did not hear the chanted prayers from a seaside hut
Nor the muffled cries of wife and children huddled
In his mind he heard a remembered warning at shore
Wife beseeching for him not to sail an ominous sea

It was as if he was reborn upon waking from a reverie
He floated in the stillness of a pacified but listless stream
Sea gulls flew overhead shrieking for edible flotsam
Now he was one with derelicts cast out by an enraged storm
A cruel sun shone mercilessly with searing ferocity
He could hear faint sounds carried by the easterly
Was it children’s riant laughter or a mournful dirge?
He doubled up into a fetal crouch to get back into his dream
The cold water slapping his sides made him aware of his demise

Eddie Roa

.0000001Leave Me, Muse

Hey Muse, Get off my back!
Leave me alone now that I have reached my door
I have escaped your relentless pursuit abroad
Pestering me with your endless lays and lies
In the solitude of unfamiliar towns and climes

Why could I not lose you in winding streets?
Not outrun you in wide avenues in traffic?
You are a persistent hound with a flawless nose
Seeking me out in thick heaths and endless marshes
Always at arm’s length away from your clutch

Must you talk to me of love and heroic deeds?
Inspire me with quests I know I could not attain?
Oh, what a wretch am I to even dare think
Of glories and fame unattained by anyone mortal
Leave me be Muse, sing your song to someone else

Eddie Roa

.0000001Scarecrow

The scarecrow with fluttering hands
Thought he scared away the blackbirds
Cawing in feigned terror, they dart about mockingly
The tattered suit, the poker faced grin
Remained as timeless as the stacks of grain
As seen from the paddies marking time by shadows

He only moves by wind, the only one
Trusted by heaven to be its witness
As the silent monitor of the passing of time
And all the human bumblings and errors
Losing to ravens and puny ricebirds

Ah, forlorn monument in the paddies
Who placed you there is the real fool
You cannot even scare away the tiny mice
Frolicking about your ragged hem.
Are you the stalwart sentinel designate
Who has concern over all?

Eddie Roa

.0000001The Day Stood Still

I flaunted faded glories in the still air
Like the banderitas of last year’s fiesta
The leaves of the big acacia tree by the wayside
Also waited for a cue from passing breezes

There is no slamming of front doors
And window shutters on the second floor
Are slightly ajar as if the slats had eyes
Peering expectantly at a desolate street

But the wind hung like heavy drapes
Despite the whistling of an urchin
The dust remains settled on the ground
Only the shimmering heat is seen

Even mangy dogs did not patrol
The narrow lanes of the interior commune
Cats did not move from window perches
A girl stares blankly at the stillness of life

Eddie Roa

.000001 A Day In August

Today the rays of the sun lost its radiance
It flew away with the summer birds to kinder climes
The breeze no longer warmed, instead, an alien cold
Brought in by the August rain hung clammily in the air

A few runted fruits stayed on the lichened branches
Abandoned by a beneficent sun of a summer gone
Nothing to reminisce by the glorious time of plenty
Or of the gaiety of nature's floral celebrations

Prancing newborns romped and leveled wild flowers
In robust green spreads of curling fields of grass
Today they huddled in the shepherd's wooden shed
Shivering in their sullied and stringy fur covers

Living through the abruptness of seasons, the bleakness of the day
Pensively, I pondered life's dispassionate and cantankerous moods

Eddie Roa

.000001 A God At the Intersection

He has the power to stop the flow of life,
To hold the pulse with the wave of a hand
And resume in stop and go the motion,
Humanity in suspended animation.

Unruly wheelers are held on their tracks,
An impudent hack, a road menace stilled
And hurtling pedestrians freezing in mid stride,
All eyes on one wielding the magical might.

What godly power is this
In the hands of one so mortal?
Suspending life as he pleased
All for so trivial a notion.

Eddie Roa

.000001 Dead Stars

The star that so inspires many tonight
Has long been an emptiness in the universe
Yet it shines prominently, ever lively
Dead yet alive, I wonder how

Is inspiration a sham because of this?
A dead brilliance, a fake shine
Magnificence that doesn't exist in time
A hollow icon, a cosmic mirage

I heard a politician talk today
How truthful he seemed to be
With glittering credentials to match
A studied honest face and mien

Does his history still hold true
Or the idealism he once had
Been tarnished and smudged
Now swept under an ornate rug

A rich textured arras
Woven with craft by masters
Of design and sleight of mind
In looms of lies and deceptions

Dead stars how pretty you are
Shining bright in a firmament
Made of tarp, a cyclorama pasted
With bubbles, sequins and glitters

Eddie Roa

.000001 Good Morning Manila

I pulled up an errant leg from bedside
Back into the safety of the mosquito net
Digging a pointer finger nail into a swelling spot
The itch made more cumbersome by the summer heat
Night shadows like moths chased lights on the wall
Fluttering and blinking white splashes and darkened dots
A broken reverie, a serenity disturbed suddenly...rudely
Mind wakened, every rustle, every flicker felt at the window
Light from the lamp post piercing the framed capiz squares
Dry leaves from the Macopa brushing the wooden panels
Skittering of mice feet and crinkly sounds of nibbled wrappers
Reverberate like thunder in the still and vacuous space for hours

Sitting up from the bed a street scene emerges...a momentary relief
The glimmer from the east now easing dark shapes into light
A new day comes with an annoyed welcome by sleep deprived eyes
The metallic scratching of many sparrow claws on GI sheets
And the honk of the early bread monger's horn invited the
Howling of a dozen hounds as if responding to a primal threat
Jeepneys revving up spewing noxious fumes into the morning air
Another day in the city is born, just so, with typical fatuous fanfare

Eddie Roa

.000001 Lines

Lines

My life has been spent drawing lines
Thick and threatening, a warning to others
Not to cross over lest they be thwarted
Demarcations that shut out people and dissensions
Straightest of lines to get somewhere fast
Rigid and orderly, a fine way to think
Never meandering nor considering other paths
I drew a line that excluded all, a narrow lane
Soon deeply rutted through countless hours of long treks
In fixed strides from one point to another, back and forth.
How much longer can I walk the straight and narrow and
Emerge into the light from dark chasms of my creation?

Eddie Roa

.000001 Moon Glow

How bright the full moon shone that night
Reflecting a chalky whiteness on public squares
Furtive movements uncovered by random light
Revealing silhouettes in the bush of lovers in pairs

Its fullness stirred compelling lunatic dreams
A breeze scattered moon dust into a shimmering glow
All stood moonstruck by the sprinkle of brilliant beams
The world, on this bewitched night stood still in awe

Eddie Roa

.000001 Rest

Come sweet rest, soothing rest midst shrieking leaves
Made by mountain winds crashing into a wall of pines
Close your eyes and your mind, be deaf to
Rattling brittle branches clawing smooth rock faces
Mind not the struggle of scraggly bush pines shaken
Scattering brown and green needles downward
Like long grain raindrops spiraling as wispy blurs

Take a walk by the foothills, promenade beneath the stars
Unravel the knotted neck and ease the stiffened chest sinews
Rise out of the tyranny of the daily grind and incessant rows
Be lulled by the lullaby of the serenity of nature's spectacle

Eddie Roa

.000001 The Savior's Eyes

How I closed my eyes to deny as if not there
The stare of someone coming from my blind side
I have always felt the numinous presence
Palpable through the blur of peripheral sight
He gazed with such kindness accosting me
To see Him now, to know His sacrifice and
Bear witness to the promise of redemption
Through His mangled body and blood
Copiously spilled for the fulfillment of salvation
Yet I have avoided the accusing aspect of His face
Turning away when He beckoned with pleading looks
I hurried on with downcast eyes muttering... later Lord

Eddie Roa

.000001 The Spin

Driven to a corner by resident chimeras
Shivering underneath a self woven tapestry
Depicting grandiose deeds and epical conquests
The thinness of the fabric given rich texture
Only by the magical spins of personal spiders
Giving sheen to drabness through lustrous webs
With the vision of a thousand reflections seen
Details magnified and multiplied by a house fly's eye
The fake brilliance of a cut-glass sunburst exploding

Beyond the ersatz dazzle created by self conceit
Conscience shakes us from our illusions and scatters
The notions created by our futile attempts at greatness

Eddie Roa

.000001 Thoughts At SLEX

With quivering lips we muttered “there goes our hero”.
Her harp made silent by destined mortal passage
But her song reverberates over the mangrove trees
And on white sandy stretches of countless strands.
The regal crests of this country's mountain heights
Intones in the breeze a requiem of a million bird-songs.
Yellow bells trumpet incessantly a heavy hearted eulogy
For the people's beloved one, for an irreplaceable loss.

But the lady knows no death, her legacy is etched on
Peoples' faces; hopeful and happy, proud and uncowed
Carved on the granite walls of justice made available to all
The spirit of this heroism lives on despite the unkind climes.
But the flame will not be doused by evil men and evil deeds.
For as long as there are the just, the brave and the good
Who will rekindle by a hundred, a thousand...a million fold
The gift bequeathed to the people of these restless islands.

Eddie Roa

.000001 What Will I Wear Tonight?

What gown will I wear tonight? she mused,
As the early scatter of the fading light settled and
Gray banners fluttered smartly in the twilight air
Festooned over an elegant black and white horizon
A prelude to high society's grandest ball of the year

Will she wear a cape dotted by a million sparkles and
Gems formed by light years from distant blasts
Made more brilliant by the absence of moon glow?
Would she dare wear a tiara of a burning disc with
A backdropp of subdued light from flickering candles?

A sturdy rack sagged with the weight of an array of vanities
Each one hopeful of being blessed by the lady's choice.
Her gaze moved from one brilliant creation to another
Oh the sorry quandary she faces though not only this once
But never apologetic for such an embarrassment of riches

Eddie Roa

.000001 Where Eagles Fly

Below, a never ending canopy of green
Filling the vastnesses of two horizons
An ethereal preserve where intrepid eagles soar
Aboard warm winds circling in gallant glides

Oh to be with eagles in exuberant flight
Testing the heights then daring a measured fall
Screaming and zooming above the earthbound green
Rapturous moments in a royal raptor's convocation

I'm envious of their fiefdom, their realm in the sky
Just like a sparrow beating with puny and frazzled wings
How futile to keep in flight with a jubilation of eagles
But oh, the grandness of the thought to be where eagles fly

Eddie Roa

.000001 Written On Sand

Ah, the serenity of daybreak at the strand
With you and a scatter of little birds at hand
Early morning sea breeze's amiable touch
Still without the harsh sting of a late day sun
Caressed and livened your reddened cheeks

I dared express sweet thoughts with my toes
Etching them on the sparkling morning sand
You rushed to trample on the words with bare feet
Conspiring to erase with the oncoming foam
Racing water rushed with frothy leads
Taking with it words and foot marks on the sand
As it ebbed back from whence it came

I thought that I would immortalize the nonce
Oh how briefly the moment savored
My love written on inconstant sands
Flew away with the sand pipers
Even before the end of the dawn

Eddie Roa

.000001A Midsummer Reverie

A tower jutted out from a sun browned hill,
Seemed like miles from where I walked,
Yet its shimmer beckoned with an alluring light
Daring me on to venture the daunting climb.

What awaits in yonder hill? A rampart of historic note
An ancient ruin wherein mystic runes may be found,
Or maybe just a pile of crumbled relics in dire neglect?
Curiosity and fancy took the better of me so I trod.

On a child's delightful wings I climbed,
Tortuous trek towards a goal of uncertain discoveries.
Finding the Grail, or an infidel king's scimitar seized.
Oh what noble finds and deeds atop a sun browned hill

But at the top nothing but the mockery of small birds and
The harsh sting of hot dust borne by a midsummer wind

Eddie Roa

.000001Bells of Barangay San Jose

The Bells of Barangay San Jose

The bells of Barangay San Jose
Rang against the din of the windblown rain
Struck from bell towers from four directions
The wet July weather deadened the tolling
Unable to reverberate in the thick as soup fog
Eager acolytes swinging on strong bell ropes
Coaxing the brass cones to clang out loud

The bells furiously called out the faithful at dawn
Loud summons to attend the eucharistic celebration
Nuns in white with colorful umbrellas stepped lively,
Matrons with missals tucked in braided belts
Waddled through the half opened seminary doors
Rosary beads dangling, in quickened half steps
Hurrying before the wet fog turns to cold rain

A blessed Sunday morning in Barangay San Jose
My love and I eavesdropped on the early birdsong
Of hummingbirds atwitter on newly wakened yellow bells
And red mayas chattering on undulating cogon blades
The mellifluous sounds blending with the suffused peal
Of brass bells hardly heard above the foggy veil
An orderly chaos of diverse sounds melding in symphony

We paused at our wooden gate to listen to the concert
Disregarding the urgency of the muted ringing of bells
A grand performance fit for kings was being played out
At my very gate, heavenly sounds filling a misty morn
All of a sudden a wave of baritone voices broke in song
A robust Gregorian chant rode the fog within hearing
The mass had started and to church we had to rush

Eddie Roa

.000001Dear Heart

Today I conspired with my heart
To erase the memories, the thoughts
Of the thrill that quivered my toes
The benign warmth that filled my breast
At the sound of her distinct footfalls
And the electric aura of her presence
That sent my heart and I in panic

No more of these, dear heart
My mind will not be addled
And my knees will not buckle
But heart, promise me to keep your cool
As for me, my instincts are not to be trusted

Eddie Roa

.000001Erewhon

The roads we have trod
Never become familiar
The dusts of alleys remain
Pasted on our worn out sandals
Unknown and unnamed lanes
With signs marred by graffiti
All market places have fetid smells
Cemeteries grow same crosses
Churches mere crumbling stone
People with gauzed-up faces
Meet you with whitened eyes
It's frightening to feel silent footfalls
And hear blankness of corners
As we walk past shadowy gaps
In a broad avenue of blurs
Nowhere in time nor place

Eddie Roa

.000001Garden of Evil

Little kernels, hard and rough
I planted them in the shade of the stone heap
They were seeds of spite sown to cling
On walls of old hurts and unforgiven wrongs

The little stalks pushed their bulbous heads
Unsightly growths on hard ground
Grotty green brown stains on the garden floor
Malevolent seedlings with haughty bearings

The fiendish vegetation thrived in dark nooks
Unhappy for the sun to touch its leaves
The tiny branches had threatening spines
And oh, a redolence not known by any man

Each morning I went out to see
How the dark of night have nurtured
The budding menaces they were to be
Verdant mottled green now covered the wall

I espied little beady growths in between
Hairy spines, crinkly leaves and rough branches
The evil flora was in bloom and I was appalled
A disgusting sight of clustered monstrosities

There I stood unmoving, scared of what I have sown
Primal evil seem to creep out of the crevices
As if taken by a demonic spell, knees weak, I knelt
And pondered on what I have sown and reared

Hours passed and like a mesmerized prey
I suffused a panic burgeoning from my chest
And sought help in prayer firmly resolving
A change of heart and to uproot the evil sown

I uttered a fervent penitent's prayer
Determined to stunt the evil growth spawned
Before the coming of the dark of night
Where its evil finds sustenance to evolve

With desperate haste I took a rusty hoe from the shed
Strong determined arms struck with impunity
At the evil plant of my own design and doing
Mangled and crushed before the fading of the light

Eddie Roa

.000001Glass Walls

I'm always a pace behind
Can't seem to get going
Each step is one taken back
My nose is pressed on the present
A moth fluttering against a glass pane
Facing a flickering, tantalizing flame

The wind blows hard behind me
I feel it prod and urge me forward
Yet with all its gale-like impetus
Nary an inch did it move me on
Oh what a cruel destiny decreed
To be denied even just a step ahead

How sad not to know tomorrow
Only the past to be relived over
Like a seascape without horizons
Or a flourish of buds never to bloom
Refused the solace of improving one's lot
How tiresome to know that it will be
Yesterday again and yet again

Eddie Roa

.000001How Little We Know

Like the storied boy combing the strand of a vast ocean,
With the shoreward Habagat slamming my blushed cheeks,
I wondered about the precise undulation of tidal waters.
In my palm shifty sands fall off between my fingers,
Calculating how many handfuls of these make creation,
Determinedly guessing, trying to grasp reasons for it all.

It is enough that I was a witness to God's grandeur
All the beauty of this world streamed through my eyes
It sufficed that I sensed His majesty, not thought it,
Felt His love rather than understood it.
He made an awesome and glorious world in my time,
But, then the world was not that beautiful at all times
I do not need to know why, really I don't. Do you?

Eddie Roa

.000001Love Has Wings

You live in the east of the ocean
And I, west of the mountains
And yet with a providential swiftness
We are lead willingly by glad wings
Across the vast continental expanse

Weaving through latitudes and longitudes
Crossing equatorial spheres and tropic zones
Through the portals of datelines
With unerring precision speeding
Towards an appointment of kindred hearts

Oceans and mountains made near
By mystic signals winging through space
Hearing familiar and loved voices clearly
Seeing with fond heart a loving face
Oh how fortunate man is for such inventions

Eddie Roa

.000001Love's Road Map

How familiar the road towards my affection,
A clearly mapped out route without meanders.
The stately mango tree starts the walk,
Then the old stone house before making a left
Past the ancient stone-walled well by the gate,
The moss covered azotea will loom into view and
I will be there, waving to greet your coming.
How unerringly we find each other in familiar
Country lanes and land marks constant as the sun.

Eddie Roa

.000001My Lady

She appeared softly into my twilight
In her trail a brilliant mane flowed
Like a cloud with myriad tiny suns and stars
An opalescent mantle of dreams and fantasies

The lanterns of past celebrations
Stood motionless and without light
She has stolen their gaiety and glow
Now hers to keep and unwilling to share

But I claim all that is hers is mine
As her whole being is mine, no other
Though captivated and enslaved
Still am her master though held in bondage

I have entrapped her in a silken cage
But she moves freely out of this velvet prison
The sturdy bars and steely nets cannot hold
This indocile lady I dare call my own

Eddie Roa

.000001Notions of Mortality

My cousin Del was obsessed by death

Saw maggots playing on tattered shrouds

And scattered rib cages topped by meatless skulls

Feigning smiles to those who looked

Tulip blooms growing from the eye holes

Searching intently at a seemingly infinite sky

Relishing morbid scene after morbid scene

Enjoying the thought of lying in state

Amidst mourning kin and friends

A moment of recognition to be seized

A time to be honored and praised, no matter

Dispel the fear to be hollow of bone,

The dreaded loneliness of insensate existence,

The hardness of the fleshless,

The disconsolation of the ungrieved

Eddie Roa

.000001Passage

The very young must be really blessed
To get through the ignorance of dangers of
Careless play, no-no foods, pets' feral instincts
Laughing and toddling over dark cracks
Of untrodden paths, unaware of the pitfalls
That await each tiny step gingerly taken

It's a wonder how we all go through the blur
Of childhood unscathed and unaffected
It's as if an invisible hand with a fairy wand
Has formed a screen that shuts out the evil eye
A magic that clears paths of thorns and stubbles
Clearing the way towards wondrous discoveries

As we succeed along the way, learning bit by bit
The knowledge gained by experience opens up
A new world yet to be explored and enjoyed
But now the scheme of things grow even more subtle
With a wider range of knowledge to put together
Sometimes disjointed patterns seem to make sense
Leaving us more bewildered and utterly befuddled

Going through undercurrents and tangled kelps
We struggle to surface from the confusion of adolescence
Reaching for the strength of experience but hardly succeeding
Seemingly impotent against a new milieu and unfamiliar beings
Conflicts and vagaries of life are all to new to a fledgling mind
But these are the challenges and the assaying of one's mettle
Out of the crucible into the tempered metal of man's maturity

Eddie Roa

.000001Redemption

Alone, a man burdened by human frailty
That bore its weight on an intersected bole,
Struggled to a task of dragging the fatal rack
To consummate a divine promise made.

Bloodied brows and tortured steps,
Climbing towards a destined fate,
Midst shouts of a stirred up rabble
Braying like a herd of prodded mules.

A tortuous trek on sharp granite blocks,
Each dropp a deep gash on weakened knees,
Quivering muscles at the stabbing pain,
Keeping the mortal charade to the last.

The years have not assuaged the suffering
Inflicted atop the tallest knoll of a hilly rise.
Mankind's ingratitude impaled deeply
On a martyr's side and open palms.

More than that of the grieving mother,
Man needs to bring down by himself,
The mutilated lamb from the impious rood
As an expiation of sins before redemption.

Eddie Roa

.000001Shameful Verses

At twilight I plucked the twigs in a gossamer trap,
It hummed the most mournful of nocturnal airs,
An entrapped cicada droned grating sounds
As it wriggled to be freed from its cage of lace.
On the forest floor small frogs whistled shrilly
While scurrying rodents made crunching noises
On rotting dried leaves glistening with dew.

The night sounds brought to mind sad verses from the past,
Resurrected from the depths of long forgotten episodes.
The haunting euphony of twilight sounds stirred anew
The pining for lost loves that were thought long gone.
Oh how I poured my heart then in a beggar's bowl, and
Tore my soul like a penitent's tattered rags,
How cruel of you not to have seen, nor felt, nor heard
Pleadings from a lad feverish with love's contagion.

I look back and remembered making a vow,
Not to embarrass and humble myself at such a low.
No more will I mewl nor whimper for hurt,
No more maudlin verses wallowing in mush.
But then, in this dark and soulful corner of twilight,
Memories are like shafts of light sharply beaming
Asserting their presence against my resolve,
Shameful outpourings reluctantly remembered, verses
That should have stayed locked in strong metal boxes.

Eddie Roa

.000001Somnolence

It's the fourth time he woke up today
His pillow flattened and streaked with silver gray
Groping for his glasses relying more on touch than sight
He reached his chair now rocking, and he tottering

I remember his manly poise, the arrogant strut
Acclaimed by those who sought favor and gain
I wondered if anyone then was truthful in praise
Would there be a man now to show a similar faith?

As he bent to pull up the warmer to his lap
Cursed a little the pain that stabbed his side
Finding relief and sliding into oblivion again
His fifth even before the dark of twilight came

Eddie Roa

.000001The Beasts Will Inherit the Earth

Somebody up there has a list
Fateful dates to reckon with
For sure each day he crossed
'Bout a foot long of names
But each day the list grows longer
By a meter or more than before

Man, the destined master of all God has wrought
Each day more of him are added to reap His bounty
Each one slashing and burning with impunity
Never content with a harvest for immediate needs
A maddened scramble for scarce resources will ensue
Soon the crossed out names will far exceed the new

Long after the added names have ceased
Will the earth be a barren and forsaken place?
Or will it flourish in its pristine and primal glory?
Without man to meddle with God's creation
The divine plan unimpeded in its course
World without man, a paradise for God's others

Eddie Roa

.000001The Cookout

They were doing barbecue in the patio
The warm noonday breeze wafted the aroma
Of steaks, broiled potatoes-in-skin pressing through
Screen doors, settling in the hems of curtains
The savory smell of burnt fat of t-bone edges
Hovered tantalizingly despite the gusty breeze

A sudden downpour sent the cook scampering for cover
Upsetting the heavy grating, scattering the smoldering
Embers hissing a sizzle upon the touch of cold rain
Half cooked choice cuts and potatoes hardly browned
Yanked out of the fire into a tatty wicker tray
And sent hurriedly to the table on the covered porch

A few steak cuts fell on the grassy floor
And the hissing meat hastily picked up by tongs
Find themselves back on the smoking grid
Purged clean by the glowing red hot coals
And with the foliage of celery sprigs and salad greens
Voila! A magnificent filet seared to perfection

The rain shower went without abatement
Guests in wide umbrellas soon came
Tramping on mud puddles and dried leaves
Glad to have come and partake of fine dining
Toasting the chef for a commendable fare
A wonderful steak offering fit for a king

Eddie Roa

.00001A Crying Sham

A woman weeps and intones a harrowing dirge
A loved one lost, she holds on to flitting images
Suffering more than she can weep, needing more tears
To wash away memories now encircling like gadflies

Others obliged and shed tears in sympathy
Rubbed their eyes out of conventional propriety
Snorting and clearing noses from welling mucus
Scented hankies now mushed and dampened

Teardrops cause ripples on Niobe's pool
Rush like tidal swells on indifferent strands
Surprising sand dunes helpless from the rush
Useless wrath for an unknown woman grieving

Unfounded tears gather into streams and torrents
Furious and raging, Oh what sham, Oh what hypocrisy!

Eddie Roa

.00001A Lover's Complaint

Never have I scrimped on the love
I bestowed on you from the start.
How now you doubt my ardor?
Even the gods would have envied
The delights I have placed by your side,
They were no less than the fealty they exacted.
Would you have asked for my soul?
But it was yours before you thought of it
The residue of my being willingly ceded
All for the dream that I might dwell
With you in an uncertain Paradise
Only fools are destined to know.

Eddie Roa

.00001A Mariner's Homecoming

Be ready for some rough and tumble, my love.
Tonight I come as the wild man
Home from the mythic seas of yore.
I sailed the Doldrums and the dreaded triangle
Through the Somalian pirates' trapping lanes
Have survived the harshness of tropical storms
And the numbing cold of the Arctic waters.

Be ready for some rough and tumble, my love.
The wild man from the bowels of Neptune's depths
Will be back from perilous peregrinations.
I have crossed the River Styx on credit,
Navigated the perilous gap of Scylla and Charybdis,
Braved the inhospitable Eastern ports of call
Denying the clawing allure of the seediest fleshpots

Be ready for some rough and tumble, my love.
Home is the mariner from the wind tossed seas
Escaped the insidious curse of the Albatross
Enduring the loneliness of being in distant climes
Away from the comforts of connubial and familial bliss
Steeling the heart from the gnawing anxieties of absence

Be ready for some rough and tumble, my love.
Forgive me for I will be a wild and lusty Golem
Deprived of the heat of your torrid embrace.
The fury of my pent up desires will rise to the brim
And will hiss like a flaming caldera, a crucible to weld
Anew the ardor of our love made cold by callous seas

Eddie Roa

.00001Don't Smell the Roses

My nose is not with me
even as I felt for it
on my face, it is not there
yet I see the gore putrefying
under the noonday sun,
all around the busy square
without the putrescence
it seemed somewhat appealing.

In the place where I stroll
at the cobbled city hub,
by the banks of a viscous river
unsightly with scraggly lilies,
among urban fecal flotsam
yet without the redolence
my mind anticipated
it looked lovely.

It had an insistent charm,
that I was seeing, feeling
but not smelling,
life couldn't be so bad
without having to smell
the sordid realities at the
edges of our existence.

Eddie Roa

.00001Eden Redux

The lifeless ground
raised twigs from dust
like arms in prayer
the Pharoah's obelisk
juts out from parched
red Nubian clay
beneath an oppressive
and torrid eastern sun

Is this Osiris' realm?
On crossing the divide
I find myself alone
upon opening my eyes
at the solemn hour
my tremulous lips numbed
No more to kiss, nor to
utter a fervent orison

My eyes wandered
Seeing fabled sights
A Unicorn pranced
around the Tree of Life
The lion and the lamb
cavorting in play
Adam chiding Eve
saving her innocence

Is this Eden now?
Here in the Eastern plains
where the Euphrates flowed
It hasn't changed a bit
Paradise still fittingly called
Even after the deluge
Its beauty preserved
unstained by original sin

Eddie Roa

.00001Fisher Folks' Fiesta*

it was the morning of the fiesta
crowds gathered in front of the old church
all agog in religious fervor and excitement
for the opening of the age-worn wooden doors

from the belfry bells clanged furiously
outshouting each other in joyful cacophony
bats rudely wakened burst out to the morning sky
scaring the sacristan pulling at the bell ropes

now emerging from the ancient portals
of the old stone Church, a big wheeled “carosa”
bearing the regal Virgen de Santisimo Rosario
bedecked in jewelry and rich satin robes rolled out

the swish and boom of skyrocketing fireworks
bounced off the plaza and faded as it hit the trees
while the faithful labored at tugging and pushing
the rickety carriage through the cobbled church front

cued by fireworks blast the baton was twirled and hurled
and sent hurtling back into the majorette's hand
with a shrill whistle she signaled the start of the “caracol”
and the “Banda Numero Uno” struck up a lively Sousa march

like ipil branches blown by the seaside breeze
arms and hips swayed one side to the other
shoulders to and fro, heads jerking smartly
midst cheers of little urchins by the wayside

the throng of religious “hermanas” and “manangs”
with righteous vigilance cordoned off their precious space
at the procession fringes their hands held a long nylon rope
while the other hand clutched their favorite beads

following the lead band and behind the “carosa”
flaunting their humble piety and pompous vanity
rings on fat fingers flashed counting Ave Marias
in misunderstood tongue but spiritual indulgence no less

not too far from rear of the pious ladies' group
another marching party bobbed and swayed to the lilt
of a second rate band's brassy and arrhythmic ululations
simple farmers, fishermen, vendors in honest dance

as the marching wended through the barrio
bystanders eating at street-side “caridad” kiosks
were cajoled by the paraders to join the revelry
and dropp the sticky “suman” and “biko” by the wayside

at the tail end of the long procession
raucous riff raff and the town's other lowlife creatures

visibly inebriated swayed in cadence with the percussive
enticement of a mere snare drum and a tinny tympani

with both hands waving gin bottles, each sway
ending with a swig of gin and the potent “lambanog”
revelers seeking redemption and absolution dance away
accumulated misdeeds and malefactions in the year past

with the atmosphere of headiness and stupefaction
a few having one too many buckled and fell
dropping by the wayside but with the smile of the repentant,
looking innocent and with the blissful face of the forgiven

at the “aplaya”, just behind village barber's house
fisher-folks growing excitement with the approaching band
a “basnig” gaily festooned was readied to carry the Virgin
on a sturdy wooden platform lashed on massive outriggers

row on row dressed up fishing vessels lined up the shore
wide brimmed “talakop” and smaller “basnig” waved gay buntings
all in wait to board the townspeople for the “ligid”
the annual fluvial parade in honor of town's beloved Patroness

amidst shouts and cheers, our Lady was boarded on the main boat
a dozen bronze-skinned fishermen heaved at the heavy icon
planting it on a platform and lashed it steadfastly on the mast
with stout abaca ropes to secure it for the dizzying ride

with the bands now grouped as one, they struck up
a loud but tolerable rendition of the River Kwai March
mingling with the excited noise of people boarding their boats
and the staccato burst of “kwitis” in the bright noonday sky

It was a joy to watch the boats escorting the Virgin's “basnig”
as it glided on the calm waters moving towards an appointed spot
with the Virgin's boat securely moored a safe distance from shore
the “ligid” started from a standstill to making loops round and round

the “ligid” picked up pace as the band went up tempo
a score of vessels with cheering riders went on dizzying rounds
then without a signaling cue the roar of engines were cut silent
the boats continued to turn in momentum then to a bobbing halt

a young lad dived from boat side, the water went into a boil
as young men and boys all joined in like dolphins at play
some swam towards the shore and everyone on the pretty boats rode
back to the waiting bacchanal and temporal excesses on the shore

another year, another “caracol”, another “ligid” done
criminals and felons now forgiven for last year's sins
with homage done mansions above await the pious ladies and
the men assured of bountiful catches and safe faring on this year's seas

La Virgen de Santisimo Rosario is back in a chapel recess
watches over the faithful with hardened salty granules on her cheeks
everyday her hands extended for urchins and old ladies to rub their hankies
it is another long year before her moment of glory in a tiny Cavite town

Eddie Roa

.00001Good Morning Vietnam

On the curb of Don Du Street
Sprawled early breakfast eaters
Men in undershirts, women in crumpled aodai
Slurping urgently at blue and white pho bowls
I am reminded of young urchins in Rizal Avenue
With scavenged sustenance and relief in plastic bags
On the moist pavements, shivering, relief, shivering again

The early yellow fog in Saigon is no different
From the Manila one, only clammier, heavier
It rises from the ground assailing the nostrils
Faces of curb people anywhere have the same blankness
A look of silent desperation and fatalistic resignation
Slurping pho, refilling blue and white bowls
Spitting out blobs of unwanted off-taste morsels
Missing my newly shined shoes as I jumped
They laughed at my surprise and at seeing such sport
The hilarity of the scene evaporated into the damp air
Rose and vanished into the skyline of electric posts
And into the row of rusted shop awnings
In an early morning stroll in Don Du Street in Saigon

Eddie Roa

.00001Juan Makabayan's Quandary

Juan Makabayan, home from a rally
Sat down and contemplated on the gash
His forehead suffered, grazed by a shield's edge
The throbbing pain nagged on refusing rest to
A tired body just gone through a day in the streets

Can't even recall what it was they were fighting for today
Yesterday it was Gabriela's cause for battered women
The day before, an agrarian protest for disenfranchised farmers
Was it for the squatters of Tatalon, or was it for estero dwellers?
or anti Cha Cha demonstrations at the Palace perimeter this morning?

Too many causes so little time, so puny the efforts to make them count
What was it that he desired for the Pilipino or for Pilipinas?
Could he wish it to be like before? What was that?
Pilipinas was never great nor noble in the past. It has a history
Of subservience from one tyrannical master to an even more despotic one

The time of the maharlikas of early barangays was never a notable one
It even inspired a plot of an erstwhile dictator to make vassals of us all
In a glamorized new society which would enthrone nobility of dubious origins
A devilish scheme to perpetuate rule and reign through countless generations
Making Cha Cha a sophomoric effort and so crassly unimaginative

What could be more ignoble than our lot from our colonizers?
From the Spaniards who brought in more sword than cross
To the unmitigated cruelty of the Japanese governance by samurai
And Americans, not be outdone in craftiness and in feigned altruism
These are histories you wouldn't wish for us to go back to in time

What of our politics? Was there ever a time we can regard as golden?
Quezon wanted governance by Pilipinos though run like hell and they did
Through the worst of times, our leaders were dancing to the piper's music
Except for a few truly dedicated statesmen the best era of our politics were
Besmirched by duplicity, machinations, disunity through regional factionalism

The more immediate past and the grating present has not shown any virtue
Our governance from the time of our independence has been checkered
Rapacity and greed was not exceptional to Marcos as successors learned well,
And abuse by leaders and their cohorts was the hallmark of every administration
Varying only in the magnitude of theft, graft and abuse of the people's money

Even as now the presidential circus has set up their tents in our midst
Self styled nationalists, patriots, men of the poor, media propped personalities
Now scramble to hide their gruesome pasts: convicted criminals, the scandal tainted,
The intelligence and mentally challenged, the sycophants, the power obsessed
Raising millions, nay billions, for the best Makati and New York makeover experts

Juan Makabayan sat up from his uncomfortable makeshift wooden bed
What is it am I fighting for? Was it worth a hundred bruised noggins?
There were so many causes to fight for, all seemingly just and worthy
Yet he could not grasp it in its entirety, what all of it was supposed to do

To the Pilipino, to Pilipinas, for whose sake he protested in all of his young life

Do these protest moves change things? What changes do I want to happen?
Who among the candidates will be the proverbial white knight to make the changes?
He felt the crisp smoothness of a five hundred peso bill in his pants' pocket
A handout for the day' protest, a regular payoff from a known politician
For the first time in all his protesting days he felt uneasy and discomfited

Eddie Roa

.00001The Flight of the Eagle

Up there, gliding on an ever widening circle of flight
The eagle hovers and scans the stretch of the land
Looking for some semblance of divine sense
But no, the carmine splotches on the desert floor
Offered no comfort nor solace for tired wings to rest
Everywhere it seems violent carnage has taken its toll
Indiscriminate slaughter of the ignorant and the innocent
The best of men lacking the resolve to stop the inhumanity
While the senseless and callous intently inflict their mayhem

Will God intervene or is this is the way of all things?
Natural laws enacting, a ruthless decree to save the many
From deprivation, from the inability of natural providence
To give each of God's children a share of His munificence
Who are the many? Are African refugees counted among them?
Are the people of poor countries not part of the many to be saved?
Oh the pain, oh the wretchedness of not being chosen
Deprived of a divine birthright, a promise of salvation reneged
Throw away humans, bargaining chips in the eternal balance

The eagle soars on, the land below will always be a hostile patchwork
No matter how stretched his wings, no matter how keen his eyes
No favorable wind will find him restful oases and idyllic Edens

Eddie Roa

.00001The Night of the Headhunters

The flame tree is in a mantle of red explosions
The ladies and young lasses watch by the window sill
Gazing at the flaming spectacle from the living room
Unaware of the blood lust this carmine display
Provoked among the young men in the village

The menfolk sauntered in pairs, in larger groups
Moving restlessly, listlessly in the dusty street
Into the alleyways and sitting in the corner stores
Taking swigs of gin in quarter peso cups
Primal instincts in restraint, innate urges on hold

The old men talk about the forays into other villages
At the first night of the flame tree's full bloom
Young men, then, eager to gift the village lasses
Ghastly trophies of truncated heads impaled in poles
As proof of valor, manhood and intense devotion

But that is just old men talking, some boastfulness
Coming from barren bodies and the bragging of the ignored
The young lads gather to listen to tales of their headhunter past
Wreaking havoc, sowing terror upon hapless hamlets
Heads of their prey strung together like hanging coconuts

The full moon cast a beam on the treetop blooms
But the red was not there, only darkened patches
More stories went on as the time and the gin dissipated
A wizened elder fell asleep in the middle of his tale
As village boys staggered back to the safety of their huts

Eddie Roa

.00001Words Like Goats

Words I have released from the confinement of a corral
Run all over the white expanse of a blank scroll
I disavow any hold on them as they skitter and
Frolic like young goats in a field of succulent grass
Some are playful and chase away the butterflies
Partaking of the bounty of the field sipping nectar from
Errant flowers in small clusters dotting waves of green
Black and white kiddie goats scamper with mayhem in mind
Bullying the runts, snorting as they scatter them afield
Others still go about peaceably munching fresh grass tops
Unmindful of the noise from the raucous and rowdy bunch
Some with amorous intent follow their noses and nudge
Coy she-goats into being mounted by one or two hot billies

Once freed from my mind words are on their own
As they get ingested, digested and regurgitated by anyone
Who happen to be within reading sight and distance
What words turn out to be after being spewed from my pen
Are transmuted by happenstance, disastrous or serendipitous
Some of them become uncouth and rapacious vandals
While others blossom into gracious courtiers with elegant miens
Others still put on the pompous and pedagogic demeanor
There are words who don saintly halos and others yet sordid horns
They become what they become, I deny authorship once released
From the confines of my teeming but well intentioned mind
There are so much more to worry about than being misunderstood
I write what I feel and think, not my fault if they don't get it
Caveat lector

Eddie Roa

.0001 Clouds

It was a wonder why clouds were so gray
Despite the brightness of the afternoon, and
No one knew that you left on the three o'clock train

A surprise why the clouds burst into tears
When all around a dry and arid air prevailed, but
I did not tell anyone of our parting

I am perplexed by clouds huddling in narrow corners
When the azure expanse was so wide and endless, yet
They could not have known of my despair

Mindless and mushy floating jumbo cotton wads
Seemed to commiserate and provide comfort, merely
Wished for by the conceit of abandoned men

Eddie Roa

.0001 A Murderous Season

His dark majesty rode in with fluttering cape shrouding the day
With no bugles to herald, no chorus chanting his usurping of the light
The people in the village huddled and together trembled with fright
Pulled down the shades and barricaded the doors of straw and mud
"We're not ready for you, " they shouted peering through slits of rotting wood
"I come at my pleasure", he roared from his fiery eyed ebony mount

"Where are your offerings…your fealty…your sacrifices?
Where is the fattest of sheep, the youngest of sons, the purest of maidens? "
"Tempt me not to summon my minions to wreak havoc on your lowly abodes"

"Oh your eminence, forgive us for our shortcomings, turn your anger
Somewhere else…the next village perhaps…we will be ready in a fortnight"
The sheep will be fattened, our Benjamin ready and the virgin dressed in white
With a shrug that shook forests, blew away clouds and tossed seas
He said "I am a god that does not wait, I want your offerings now.
Your pleas insult me, your excuses disgust me, your promises infuriate me

All throughout the village a heavy pall of fear and dread hovered
Then he left with a shattering flash of lightning and the roar of crashing waters
Even the dawn was reluctant to shine out of the gloomy wake

Through the gray of an unsettled morning light
No babies bawled, raucous children silenced and dogs lost their whimper
Huddling in corners of their decrepit huts mumbled prayers ululated
Fathers and mothers wrap their arms around their quivering wards

Somewhere in the village young men grouped and with loud voices
Declared "prepare, be ready, let's put up a stand against this onslaught"
Lit torches crackled, the staccato thud of pegs driven on hardwood and
The gnashing of metal sheets lashed on steady moorings were heard all night

As before, his dreadful majesty comes without herald, without ominous harbingers
The sky will crack up and with bright electric storm light up a silhouette of trees
Along the edge, a bleak horizon flashing off and on in rapid succession
As bats dot the darkened the forest's canopy like scattered ants in a broken hill

Now he came as threatened…sudden, looming big, terrifying and horrid
Against a backdropp of a splintered sky…a tattered Aurora's hem
Thunderous hooves fell on hard and dry ground shaking up mountains
Primeval forests bared and hills flattened with every heavy stride

It was a peaceful night in the tiny hamlet, only the rustling of rotted leaves
And the mewling of a distant cat could be heard in the village square
Past the ruins of an adobe chapel, by the field of withered corn stalks
Roods of odd sizes and slabs of crude granite scattered on weeded plots

A murderous season came to pass, a plunder most cruel and swift
There is no redress, no recompense, no relief and no reparation
Injustice, unfairness and unconscionable cruelty never were protested
It is the way of all things and it will inflict its fury again in time

Eddie Roa

.0001 A Long Day

I sat listless
My writing chair is hard
I should change it
It occupied me too much
Instead of me occupying it

Watching with unintent
From a windy veranda
Birds alighting on twigs
Nice to see but
Threatening...to the birds

Walked towards the gazebo
No reason to do so
Just being led
By a chirping wee bird
Flitting close to a feral cat

Black Labradors growl
As I approached
Then the redolence
Of dog turds
Abused my nose

My lychees flowered
But they dried up
Withered early
Like young dreams
Robust but stillborn

I rushed down
My foot prints
On stony garden steps
Vanished traces
By blinding light

The pond fish
Greet with avid glee
Awaiting morsels
With barbs attached
They did not bite

The mango trees
Failed me again
Flowered like last year
But erased by the rain
My ax gashed a bole

The sunset lingered
Too long for me
Wanting the day's end
But the sun

Got entangled in the trees

Eddie Roa

.0001 Dark Eden

I lived in depths of a hundred fathoms
Where days are dark and cold
Darting shrimps leave silver streaks
The only light to be seen at noon

You can’t tell when it’s ebb or tide
In my abyss no precision gauge
Measure what is great and small
Leviathans and weak fish equal in esteem

Friendly barnacles smile but who’s to see
Sea grass greet should anyone come
Fiddler crabs play mute chamber music to
An audience of groupers with mouths agape

Endless miles of filigreed corals
Graceful kelp lined row on row
A regal maze of lime green hedges
Lie hidden in deep blue trenches

Loveliest place in all of the seven seas
Only if a million bonfires could be lit
An Eden kept secret, you know it’s there
Illumined by floodlights of my mind

Eddie Roa

.0001 Elegy In A Flower Garden

each petal that falls even
from the homeliest blossom
is grieved by the congregation
of blooms in the garden

a solitary demise
is not an isolation

though not heard nor seen
the emptiness it creates
hangs heavy and tumid
untunes the euphony of echoes
and casts thick darkness
in the serenity of white clouds
puts the glade, the lake in gloom

pink and yellow bells toll
an earnest elegy for the fallen

Eddie Roa

.0001 Light And Dark

Oh, the dark is a bottomless hole
Where evil and malice hold cabal
Conspiring against joy and delight
From fear and angst they brew
A maelstrom of nightmares
And watering roots of torment

Ah, Light, a boundless sky
Radiant with rainbows and
Swallows endlessly streaming
On a backdropp of green forests
And magnificent mountain crests
A display of God’s munificence

Darkness hides in inky pits
Conceals malice and malignant guilt
Light shines bright in splendor
Proclaiming truth and beauty
Yet Light thrives only in darkness
Without it no shine or glory

Eddie Roa

.0001 Purgatory

I was sucked in by an eddy of raging lava
An infernal hole of blinking redness and darkness.
My soul groping for some outgrowth in the rim
Of a gaping caldera brimming with toxic fumes

A wreath was tossed by a kind specter from an overhang
Brightening for a few moments the evil mouth
Some spark of hope before the engulfing of the light
Before the obliteration of all that is good and right

You were to redeem me from my wretchedness
But like an evil boil on the land's face
You only caused me pain and anguish
A throbbing ache on a quivering flesh

I sailed through treacherous straits
Via the doldrums and the lake of the Hydra
Into the mythical triangle of the Sargasso
You devoured and sunk me a thousand fathoms

You drove me with your feigned affection
How commiserating you seemed of my frailties and woes
The shamness of it reeked through shuttered portholes
As I viewed a false parade of masquerading sneers

I have loved you much, too much to my undoing
You were the words of my song, the furnace of my loins
My magic box wherein stowed my dreams, fantasies,
My creed and my joys, where dwell my passion and salvation

You have cast me to an oblivion of your creation
Oh woman loved, but heartlessly not loving back
A place of ungranted desires, of pain without remission
My soul in ruin and my heart pathetic in cold chains

I turn my back on you now, woman!
Whatever foolish notions I had harbored now departed
I have sobered up from a mindless stupor held so long
Worms neath the bark now exposed and evasive of the light

While ugliness have now sprouted from your brows
I look back with gratitude for all the momentary pleasures
Crushed but ecstatic in your grasping tentacles then
Relieved at last, gaining freedom from your stranglehold

Eddie Roa

.0001 Rainy Days

Rain chatters annoyingly
An incessant harangue on metal sheets
Drums, grates, pesters my listlessness

A lackluster sun sinks ever so weakly
On a jagged silhouette of somber evergreens
Its gilt edge no more than erose rustiness

I remember the ugliness of the day
The slate gray of twilight taking over
Amidst the harassment of an obstinate rain

Eddie Roa

.0001 Saturday Morning

My mind ambled in strange arbors
How faintly my heart throbs

Here she comes across the trellised walk
Afraid my beloved Circe will glare

Beneath the bowers there’s no place to hide
The yellow bells warn with trumpets mute

Must I face without looking her in the eye
For discomfited poise and limpid eyes betray

I have erred but not too much I think
Turn away, be brave some other day

Eddie Roa

.0001 Sea Dirge

Let me sing my song, a tale for all to know
In salty tongue, the unkind days
The harshness that had to be lived
And the strong longings I abided by
On a frail boat these have I borne
With treacherous billows, I had to suffer
Keeping vigilant watch at the prow
Puny craft against perilous cliffs.
Oh, the cold froze my senseless toes
Even the ropes chilled; words froze
Wrenched my heart and hunger stirred
In sea-sick misery I mused
How lucky they are on firm sod

I despaired in the harshness of an indifferent sea
Endured the merciless cold, oh, what wretch am I
Away from my beloved
My face bearded with froth, in the roiling sea
Nothing was heard ‘cept for the churning waters
The creaking rigs, then I think of home
Sea-birds’ boisterous din was solace
The chatter of the gull was gaiety
Their song in the wind was a paean to my ears

Howling gale against the jagged wall, like a sea eagle
With ruffled mane, plummeted with a shrieking scream
Fateful claws like scythes open to the quick
Thus my deliverer came with violent sweep
In the watery fields

Eddie Roa

.0001 The Foothills

The foothills are rueful and evasive today
Their outline glow seems palled and
The twilight reluctant to give up the light
The sun a dull emboss on weak pink,
With rays like wrinkled fingers crawling.
A lethargic passing of a day

Clasped by avian claws a hare’s mangled fur
Wriggly worms feasting on rotting mouse
Crafty spider weaving zombie bags
An aloof mantis lops off her lover’s head
A woodsman felling venerable trees
The air reeking with scents of battered wood

I promised to keep this to myself
As I looked away from the scene
I shudder to think of the mayhem
Happening everyday in a sleepy glade
But, some things in the foothills
Are better left veiled in gorgeous green

Eddie Roa

.0001 The Seedling

A seed buried in fertile soil
Pushed out its stem towards the light
Growing a two leafed head
Bowed and fragile yet breaking loose
From the hold of a determined bond
Of a possessive earthen cage

Earnestly it struggled to break free
Frail but prodigious creation
With its tiny roots sucking strength
To shove the heavy load pressed on
Puny shoulders and bent stalk
Eager to burst out into the sunlight

Somehow in its eagerness to grow
Its life was smothered by a blanket
Of mud slurry caused by a flood
Oh what a tragic and unjust fate
A seedling with leaves, a branch, a trunk
Snuffed of breath, denied of life

It would have been a grand acacia
With brawny brown branches
Holding up a heavy canopy of jade
Dominating a landscape of weak brushes
Majestic in its proud demeanor
Taming unruly and fractious winds

Eddie Roa

.0001 What Kind of Poet Are You?

Why can't a modernist be
more like an imagist? said one

A modernist's craft it seems
Plays hide and seek
Not wanting to be found out
In one easy read
Muttering gibberish-like
Imagery seemingly indiscrete
But couching a hidden gem

Oh, why can't an imagist be
More like a modernist? said the other

An imagist tells you what is what
No games nor riddles in his verse
What you see is what you get
Lyrical lines, image well defined
Gushing populist sentiment
Yet profundity lies within

It may be a matter of choice
No right, no wrong no doubt
No one no better than the other
Apples and pears cannot compare

Eddie Roa

.001 Poesy Defiled

What have I gotten myself into?
A commune of faggots, dilettantes,
Men In mistaken milieus
Ladies feigning radical chic
In pretense of art and sensitivity
Of the unwanted and the ignored
Spewing vulgarity and unabashed behavior
Hiding behind the absurd and the ambiguous
As if fearful of being stripped naked
All in the name of mythical temperaments
And consciously fabricated personae

Poets with fractured verse gather
As in symbiotic safety
Unmindful of grammar formality
Spewing anarchic syntax
Senseless verbiage strung indiscrete
Metaphors unmatched and asinine
Words spelled as heard
Free verse shamelessly abused
Mouthing poetic license as an excuse to
Inflict mayhem on literariness
Drawing attention as avant-garde
The charade lives on, robust and raucous
In the circle of fools

Eddie Roa

.001 Bare Assed

I come to you now unclothed, unwashed and unabashed,
This is my barest, lowliest, truest self,
With wanton passions brimming, ogling with animal intent
This is me wallowing neck deep in the sweet but unctuous tar pit
Nurturing my prurient delights, my wettest of dreams
I slink through dark parlors besotted and puking
I spew lewd orations enjoyed by kindred low life,
My gem of the barrel dregs! Jewel of the sewer silt!
I come to you unclothed, unwashed and unabashed
Frenzied and clumsy in anticipation
I rush and come to be one with you,
So, embrace me now my lovely, quickly
Before I don my clothes again.

Eddie Roa

.001 In A Field of Daisies

Daisies arrayed row on row
On a blanket of mottled green
Marked by black and white monoliths
On the ground and above it
Only the sun to ease the reposed from
The tedium of morning, noon and end of day
Just stars and the moon give brightness
To the dark and cold of an unsympathetic night
Memories swept like dried leaves and scythed grass
No visitors now lay garlands and wreaths
No more caring hands to pull weeds
And unwanted tare on the unkempt lawn
A beloved husband then overly grieved
Now in aloneness amidst other scattered bones
A son and daughter's mortal remains interred
Beneath a coarsely woven impenetrable veil
Of forgotten existence and faded affections
Soon names and epitaphs on hard stone
Are erased by wind, rain and indifference
Not even the lowly worms delight
Over bare and dried up skull and bones
Only hypocritical daisies bow in the wind
As if in reverence, as if in remembrance
Are the dead thankful for the decay
And insentience of their mortal leftovers?
Surely they are for they can no longer feel,
Nor see the faithlessness of spouses and lovers
Ingratitude of children and the inconstancy of friends.

Eddie Roa

.001 On A Far Away Beach At Dawn

On A Far Away Beach At Dawn

Your face is etched in the stars that dot a sky about to lose its black
Mirrored as a reflection on a luminous sheet of sea at low tide

The image skittered like sand pipers dissolving as the first rays
Of an impatient sun scattered light on the slate gray sand

A harsh westerly blew to shore and slapped my face
Assails my nose with the briny redolence of shoreline waste

From afar clam diggers sat on empty pails digging and
Poking with bamboo spatulas the water logged sand

I heard your voice mingle with the twittering of the shore birds
As they skipped and darted leaving their v marks on the glistening sand

I thought of my easy chair, my garden, I thought of your smile...of home
A harsh westerly slapped my face, a briny redolence assailed my nose.

Eddie Roa

.001 A Poet’s Off Day

listless on a sofa,
on a mental walkabout,
upon a surreal scene,
of crumbly purple glades
and molten steel skylines

mind like a gadfly
scrambling
from disjoint sets,
stopping neither
here nor there,
giving chase
with tattered net
to frisky thoughts,
intractable words

settle down,
your verse is a
jumbled mess,
your babble,
a Babel

read the comics,
walk around,
today nothing
comes

Eddie Roa

.001 A Pointillist Morning

Off-white mist rising on the ridge
Hurrying into the emptiness between trees
Lost in a thick stroke of green curlicues
Then splattered by a sudden breeze
Like silver droplets scattered by a frisky dog
Shaking off unwanted cold rain
Glistening like playful carmine dots on a
Mantle of matted threads of emeralds
A sudden inspiration, a shimmer of yellow birds
Explodes like a roman candle in sparkling hues
Filling the cerulean sky with tiny glittering flakes
The scene, now in orderly chaos and panic
Strewing golden leaves and bronzen twigs
Blotting over an increasing spread
A canvas speckled with lusty colors
Of an artist’s special view of
A morning by the ridge

Eddie Roa

.001 Being Human

Lord I do not wish
To hide from you,
I'm too lazy, I say

You molded me
From lowly clay,
Am I to blame?

Can I help it
If I err?
Only human, I say

Free will is
A handy phrase but,
Is it really there?

Redemption I can't own
The Fall, as well,
Not mine to will, I say

It is God's grace
If success is undeserved,
Failure surely the Devil's

Conscience perplexed,
Helpless yet blamed,
Innocent but guilty

Simple minded me
In a quandary, how else,
Accept the mystery, I say

Eddie Roa

.001 But, I Wanted To Sing –

Sparrows in my mind
Scratching for ort
Stirring a host
Crowding in my bowels
Have the fireflies flown?
From a grumbling cavern
They fly up to
My uptight gullet
Pushing up bile
Tamped down
By peristalsis

Aach, what a sting!
But, I wanted to sing

Eddie Roa

.001 Fallen Gods

Hey! I saw you
I told the breeze as he swooped
And lifted a lady's skirt
With no one seeing us
But dust and a few scattering leaves
And a hobo amused at such a sport
And with a hiss the breeze
Timorously said, shh…shh

So, Zephyr back off!
You gods have lost your right
To bedevil mortal maidens
Prometheus had lost his fire
Achilles had athlete's feet
Hercules went limp…aww!
Bacchus just another sot
And Zeus' thunder went pfft!

The bra burning, hairy, tree huggers are past
Still the quest is to be as equal if not more
Battered, bypassed, patronized, even ignored
The Human Rights commissioner's
Gavel struck hard at the shameful folly
These Olympians were once amused
The then dreaded divine elite, now
Meek as vestal virgins in the hearth

Eddie Roa

.001 Greed

I tell you greed is grasping
It roots on acid ground
Sucks the juice of the muck
Even at the last gasp
Clings with avid vines
On broken slabs and angels
With broken cement wings

I tell you greed is quenchless
It begrudges the sun its brilliance
Envious of the moon’s glow
Sweeps all the stardust and
Gathers them with a dustpan
And stores them in dark rooms
Enjoying them in demented isolation

I tell you greed is without compassion
Thriving on hedonistic nurture
Denying closeness and amity
Cuts off the umbilical nexus
Shun familial obligations
Shrugs off the flakes of conscience
From the black dress of indifference

I tell you greed is shameless
Ecstatic in pelf and exaggerated self worth
Gloats over riches felt deserved
Forgetful and incognizant of God’s grace
Jingling patina encrusted coins
Amused and savoring the endless count
In glee…in endless count…in glee

Eddie Roa

.001 Heart Break Motel

Come, I'll take your hand and go
When dark of night blots out the sky

Like a love struck swain bumbling
I will lead you to familiar, gaudy burrows

In mired floor cafes still wet with spits
Alleys that stalk you like unforgiven wrongs

From feigned conventions and politesse
You turned to rudeness that you couldn't help

I babbled and you waited for me to quiet down
And then you took my hand and led me in

Oh heavens, I was not denied, once more
Another discomfited tryst of a one night stand.

Eddie Roa

.001 I Behold You

The acacia tree
rained shimmering jade
below its bowers
where you and I slept the night
on soft ground, on a blanket of ferns.
Last night I chanced to see
the radiance of your face
in the first glimmer of moonlight
and the classic splendor of your bearing
imposed on the glorious light of dawn.
I wonder now if you are prettiest
in sunlight or in the glow of a full moon.

Eddie Roa

.001 Ill Wind

The wind told me you're leaving today
With voice so harsh it laid trees bare
Again he said you're leaving today
Hissed through the vines his ill tidings

You can't leave today my love
Not when the bougainvilleas frolic
Oh no, not today my love
Not with orchids in festive glee

Even in the morrow you cannot go
For the fruits will be in harvest then
Oh no, not in the morrow you cannot go
For the arid sod awaits your benediction

The wind told me you're leaving today
Absurd! I said to this malignant tattle
The wind insisted that you're leaving today
Ill wind begone, was my incensed outcry

Eddie Roa

.001 Innocent Black

The gloom of the dark night
Blackens the filth, the squalor, the sleaze
Of narrow streets and inner city hives
Darkens the pavements, the curbs, the walls
The habitation of the wretched, the damned
Hides the sins of perverts, killers, pimps
Slimy, quivering loathsome lowlife

The gloom of the dark night
Covers the city in innocent black
All’s well in the world until the first light

Eddie Roa

.001 Into the Night

the blurry light of dusk
turns the world into slate gray,
a cold night treads on soft shoes,
ushering a scaly night sky
that hover over the city,
casting dread and gloom.
bats empty dark belfries,
singing the witches' evensong

Eddie Roa

.001 Leaving By Taxi

Tell him not to go
Tug at his coat sleeves
Cry out in plea
Won’t you?

He’s going now
All suited up in black
Sullen cabbie waits
In a gaudily festooned hack

Cab fare is ready
Two minted coppers
Covering his twin orbs
As the flag went down

The taxi crept
In an unhurried pace
The radio droned a hymn
I heard it hum a somber tune

The hack bucked and sputtered
As he bade goodbye to each block
Past known haunts and faces
Turning last into a gated arch

Eddie Roa

.001 Manila, Recently Dead

Manila, recently dead
Bowed under by a heavy yellow cloud
Forest transported in its midst struggled
But soon black soot effaced the green

Trudging wraiths crossing Quiapo bridge
So many dead men walking in a line
In silence but for footfalls on greasy stones
Walking not knowing wither they all go
Flowing downbridge into the plaza of demagogues
To where the women walked on shortened legs
As the cathedral belfry shouted at the throng below
'Amulets, amulets to hang on the blackened Messiah!
But your city will not live, no not at all'

Wake your homeless and hamletize them off
'Til only mangy dogs beg in the filthy curbs
Oh Manila, recently dead, I leave you now
Without laments over your passing

Eddie Roa

.001 Merry Month of May

Lovely month of May
Lasses' hearts aflutter,
Lads gather in the plaza
Watching the flitting moves
Of young maidens flirting
The swains eagerly show off
Glistening sun tanned bodies
While the girls coyly turn away
With reddened cheeks
And tinny giggles

It was the night of the "lutrina"
The girls dress up as
"Sagalas" in the barrio "santacruzan"
Hosted by Ate Delay, the "hermana"
The lads in freshly ironed shirts
And thickly pomaded hair
Huddle together underneath
The "palapala" playfully
Teasing each other at
The sight of the girls with
Rouged faces and false lashes

The procession went five blocks
Past the banca crossing station
Into the main road where
Houses opened their windows
With kids waving from the sills and
The elderly "manangs" thumbing rosary beads
Others watch from their thresholds of the yard
The village gossips having a grand time
Spreading rumors about the Reyna Elena
And the handsome escort, a guest from the city
While an irreverent scream of religious songs
Blare from a hitched megaphone behind a cart
Loaded with an electric generator for
Lighting up the Reyna and "sagalas" up front

A block away from the "hermana's" house
Little boys ran to announce procession's return
Neighborly womenfolk help make ready the
"Talyase" of thick "atole" and the "bilao" of "luglog"
Helpers with beads of perspiration paddle vigorously
The rice porridge, stirred and steaming
Now ready for the arrival of the marchers
After the recital of Hail Mary's, Our Father's
And Glory Be's three times over
The queue at the table builds up, chattering children
With bowls in hand waiting for their turn
At the 'sandok' to scoop the steaming treat.
Some of the more daring boys edge over
Towards the young lasses and with awkward

Opening lines utter stammered introductions
With sweaty brows and sticky palms offered
Hands in acknowledgement of each other

The merry month of May in our barrio
Ushers in these jubilations year after year
Religious piety and pagan practice, flaunted
By the elderly folks mixing with the gaiety
Of young swains and maidens daring to shed
Timidity and defy parental admonitions
Answering the call of adolescent proclivities
Happening at the longish day of the summer solstice
Instinctive and mindless in the sweltering heat
It has gone on for as long as I can recall
A life's celebration the barrio folks never tire of doing
I'll be back next year in the merry month of May

Eddie Roa

.001 Nocturne

Hark, the footfall of padded paws thud
As twilight wafts its melancholy tune
The traipsing of furtive mannequins into the scene
To start the commerce of the night
Ah, angels on hocked wings mingling in the shuffle
Of insatiable lusts of white, yellow and brown trash

A nightlong stance of enticement and allure
No rest, nor ease through the cold and apathetic dark
No help, no solace from a sometimes provident night
Singles, pairs or even threes they hustle corners
In tatty glad-rags and blackened rouge they sell
Ersatz affection, snatches of bliss to blighted souls

Heaven has no ears to hearken to piteous plaints
From cracked lips and blistered tongues
They push their trade until soles run raw
Waifs with scarred heels hide in scaly shadows
Oh, what lassitude shrouds the night air
In the blazing red light of a false sunrise

Eddie Roa

.001 Sirens of Manila Bay

I adored you last night
Dainty in silky kelp
You swam into sight
Unmindful of the flotsam
And jetsam stream
Midst haughty pearls,
And blushing corals
Floated upward with wide eyes
Fleeing softly, more inwardly
Your face grinning, breasts
Deadly smothering
But rising from the depths
Grasping wrists
Wresting, grappling limbs
Feigning postures
Then reverting
Quickly but gently on all fins
Through an opalescent reverie
In the ebony depths
You slithered on sea foam
In garments woven by the tide

Eddie Roa

.001 Strawberry Hill

On a hill of endless jade
Red strawberries dotted the swathe of green
I hurried to sate my bulging wicker
When you surprised me with a nudge
I thought…
You were happily busy with your chores
And didn’t even know I was there
On our neighbor’s hill of jade
Picking luscious strawberries on the green

Eddie Roa

.001 The End of Summer

I imagined the Bicol Express zipping through
the patches of billboards crowding each other
and I saw you seated nonchalantly by the window
oblivious of the hazy strobe of nipa huts, trees and high wires
jumpy frames like a film derailed from its sprockets

did you have to leave earlier than all of us?
every hour gone from the time you left
were precious sands from a shore of memories
collected as keepsakes but now spilling in a waisted glass
as streams of regrets fast receding, collecting in tidal pools

now, there you sit on a fast moving train
nary a thought of the stretch of sandy dunes and starry skies
shared a few cherished days ago in a sultry beach in Legazpi
did you have to leave earlier than all of us?
I missed my chance to say what I wanted to say all summer

Eddie Roa

.001 The Medium Is the Message (about Philippine media)

Let’s not talk about terrorism, write, nor broadcast it
No more the sight of blood and gore from dismembered
Carcasses of men and women, young and old, and the tender flesh
Of babies scattered, alighting on treetops and eaves of houses
Unchecked hell, ball of fire singeing, bloody scimitars like
Venomous tongues of diamond-eyed serpents strike
With senseless abandon on bright sunny days of barrio fiestas

Innocents dragged for ransom, indiscriminate and ruthless
To forward political and religious causes, or is it just banditry?
The white flags drip red oozing from wounds of the unwary
Enough of this on tv, enough of this in newspapers and radio
Get your revenue from somewhere else, not from blood money
You only stoke the flames, ransoms go higher, embolden scum and make
Famous the infamous, opportunists into heroes ready for the polls

Enough of the false glitter reflected on the tube and silver screen
Let’s be done with silly plots, martyred women and crying waifs
No more the inane and vulgar dialogues and dragging scenes
Clothe the immodest, the mammalian freaks who bare as if in art
The sick and kinky pleasures penned by hysterical fairies
Selling obscene laughter from the tasteless slapsticks of gay ridicule
Lewdness and crudity are now clicheic fare regardless of audience

Let’s raise the cause for better media offerings
Uplifting themes, virtue rewarded, moral lessons to children
Heroes worthy of emulation, not the rich and the powerful who
Flaunt their ill-gotten loot, getting away with their insidious deeds
Let’s sing hymns to those who serve well, applaud exemplars from the barrios
Those who labor with honest toil, plowing and seeding the native sod
Let media deny those who self-aggrandize, those who create saccharine images
Reject bulging envelopes of releases with ulterior motives and wads of bills
News that disinform, make malice, besmirch the honest, lionize the crooked
The tube and the diode box are bad news, the press blotted by its own ink
Let’s now defer listening, seeing and believing the heralds of a muddied estate

Eddie Roa

.001 The Morning God Sang

The sounds came rushing in, where did it come from?
Has it always been there? Angels' halleluiahs, God's riant laughter
Pervasive, reverberating in crescendo at the gladdening hour,
Trilling with early birds, buzzing, whirring with the bees on morning forage
The day now begins clearly, with light spreading from the ridge to the lucent lake below
Love songs sung in gaiety, noble anthems, magnificent hymns and gentle pinings
Like Orpheus' flute, the music wafted in the air, oh what euphony!
Tones winding in and out, weaving with the breeze, brushing against pine needles
Out-shouting, out-running each other in playful chase, playing tag with grasshoppers and soprano birds

Then as quickly as it appeared, the joyous harmony stopped, stillness began
The reality of the late morning sun caught up with me, I, silenced in its recognition

Eddie Roa

.001 The Sea

One sullen day on a beach
I spread my beach towel on the sand
And posed as if in deep musing
But nothing came to my senses
Except the hiss of the sea breeze

I thought the cold of the water
Would stir me up from my lethargy,
I dipped my head twice
But it only numbed me some more.
I could have drowned in its iciness.

Instead I looked at the sea in the eye
And spat out an obscene oath.
If you couldn't solace a spent soul,
You are inutile, you over-rated majesty
Not serving mere man's intentions.

Eddie Roa

.001 Transitions

Boyhood summers went fast
Passing through woodlands
In search of wild fruits and berries
River crossings and sandy beaches
Keeping cool from a torrid sun
Spider hunts at first light
Matchbox condos overfilled
Rites of manhood bravely faced
Tearful dips into the river
After risking a barber's cut
On your budding manhood

At the end, a thorny threshold,
A one way portal to an unknown,
A gate creaks close just this once

Eddie Roa

.001 Uncertainty

Fear not the uncertain
For even he is not sure
Of what, of who, of when

Hold uncertainty by the ear
Chide him for his bullying
He who knows not, knows not

Of what’s to be or will not be
Live life without concern
As did sparrows and lilies of the field

Eddie Roa

.001Tagaytay Mornings

Bare feet on glistening wet grass
A chorus of leaves rustling, humming
Wake my soul from its stupor

Black Labradors howling protest
Over the bread man's honking horn
  Stir my listless heart

Snails hurrying to greet the worms
Pacing through slithery trails
 Unravel my knotty sinews

Zesty sparrows collecting by the gazebo
Quarreling over seeds in a frenzy
 Remind me of God's grace

Frogs and turtles chatting by the pond
Placid water disturbed by their noise
 Tell me that silence is a virtue

Hungry blue birds avidly watching
Over tiny ripples made by wee fish
 Warn me of the day's perils

Carillon ringing its morning tidings
Clangor against brassy chapel bells
Arouse my lust for life

Evergreen giants brushing off
Wet mist from heavy shoulders
Teach me tolerance and forgiveness

Spectacles, tableaux, and pageants
Greet the dawning of each day,
Mornings God has made, rejoice and be glad

Eddie Roa

.002 Too Late the Nomad

Stranger from the highlands and cold climes
Your gaudy costume and cleated shoes
Speak of romance and never ending adventures
What can you tell me of the land that you came from?
Did a mother cry when you tightened your bootstraps,
And did a sweetheart pour her heart out and tore her golden hair,
In the highlands grooved with gorges and tors capped in white?
What made you turn your back from the warmth of the home fire,
From the safety of familiar haunts and comfort of kinfolks?

I look at you in wonder and in honest envy,
Did I not have the same urge to seek out the world?
The long road beckoned, a gilt lined horizon held promise
Of riches, strange loves, exotic sights and sounds waiting to be felt
The wanderlust of youth never been put to rest
Now the resolve is almost gone though the urge remains strong

I listen to you with whirred hearing
Your tales conjure images unclear and lackluster
How pitiful that imagination has failed
To see the splendor, the spectacle, the thrill
Of faraway places from whence you came.
What is the color of a sunset from a mountain crest?
Are daffodils and edelweiss as bright as sampaguita?
Tell me again and again because the images fade quickly
Blurred flashes, a confusion of gray, black and white'
A mind-numbing monotonic haze is all I see.

Rest your tired arms and legs on my soft chair
Let the cool sweetened quaff moisten the dryness
Of a roughened gullet so that you can tell more tales
To regale my inquisitive yet hardly comprehending mind.
Looking at you now and trying to feel the pleasures
You must have felt throughout the years of wandering
Leaving your trail on foreign sod, seeing faces
Black, white, brown, yellow and other hues
Friendly, hospitable as well as hostile and cruel.

Tell me if it was worth it all
Leaving a crying mother and a woeful wife
Abandoning kith and kin, familiar and friendly haunts
Or is it just the folly of youth, the dare of the unknown?
Do you not regret having the hot winds sear your face,
The trackless routes, the gravelly path, the thorns in your shoes.
Do you not regret these?

Tell me I am right in staying put
The travel itch still unscratched, but, I would not know
If the pleasures are as my mind earlier envisaged
Or will I forever wonder what glories and fortunes

Have passed my way when I did not sail or fly my fancy.

Eddie Roa

.002 Balinese Danse Macabre

Red faced dancers on artful bowed legs
Gold tipped fingers on an upward tilt
Wide eyed but expressionless
Beckoning with uncertain malice

Peacock headdress strutting, eyes like
Black dots darting left, then right
Oblivious of the boisterous, crass crowd
Heads cranking on the plink of the gamelan

Foot bells tinkle at the angklung's hollow beat
Earthy auburn songket sarong with gilded edge
Glittered loudly with each half turn of
Pretty boys masquerading as nubile dancers

At the last clang of the agong they scampered
Sucked into the emptiness of the dark night
Malevolent sounds shriek from the blackness
Augured that somewhere tragedy will strike

It was a chilling, killing night in Bali
Terror struck with hellish ferocity
Scarlet striped pale faces run helter-skelter
Minced by shards strewn by wrathful blast

Mangled limbs dangled on dancing carcasses
The hapless hobbled and crept, lost in terror
The pall of the blackened smoke draped heavy
Kuta reeked with zealot's pungent burnt hate

In nearby Nusa Dua, the merriment runs on
Youthful artistes plied their age-old trade
While revelers loud with obscene laughter
Unaware of the other carnage and despoliation

In the morrow they washed their bikinis
To rid of the red that came with the tide
Batik now indelibly stained with carmine blot
A stain in the land's richly textured tapestry

Where now the inimitable Balinese smile?
Where now the art of the woodcarver, the painter,
The smithy, the batik dyer, dancer and the puppet maker?
Where now the white sands the majestic promontories?

Senseless slaughter of anyone, anything, everything
Not for all the promise of virgins, white horses and
Heavenly gates can ever make right the selfish injustice
Pancasila violated by militant butchers of the faith

The euphony and gaiety of the festive stamboul
Replaced by pained moans of the stricken

And the hissing groans from mutilated throats
Cry anguish that echo even in distant hearts

What a waste, what a shame! Why Bali? Why?
Fountainhead of art, island of beauty and amity
God’s pearl spoiled by the ugliness of inhumanity
Of ignorance, of intolerance and manic zeal

Eddie Roa

.002 Kundiman (Serenade)

Kundiman

A tune and its refrains hauntingly crooned,
While a guitar is strummed in soulful rhythms,
A mellow leitmotif for a kundiman.
Plaintive words from an ignored swain,
A lad emoting as only the lovelorn can.

As if obliged the moon shone bright at
A night that was quiet except for the chirps
Of pesky nocturnal winged creatures,
Thoughtless of the pain of a boy in swoon
In sympathy the dogs did not bark at the moon.

The kundiman played on and on,
While the strings struggled to keep pace
With the erratic rhythm of a dragged out tune.
Sang by a smitten singer looking at a window
That stayed closed hiding a fair maiden's face.

Oh, the promises were high and plentiful,
The sadness and the sting of rejection heavy,
For a moment even the mocking nocturne of chirps
Subsided as if relenting to the heart-rending pleas,
Ever eloquent in words and in song.

The nacred windows stayed unopened,
All through the cold and hostile darkness,
A song that can soften dark angels' hard core
Fell on unhearing ears and an unheeding heart.
The kundiman will play on as it always did.

Eddie Roa

.01 Sweet Smell of Success

The sun on its descent
Bade the flowers
To unfurl their royal capes
And through the disappearing light
Shafts of fragrance beamed
Casting a shine unseen but felt

Through the graying scene
A lad waded through barbed thickets
Fighting off the heavy shove of branches
Tracking the delightful draft
A frivolous breeze pirouetted
There he sat waylaid and discomfited

It is the fragrance of laurels, fame and riches
How familiar it was to a learned nose
An opulence that conjured images of palaces
Of harem rooms and reclining odalisques
Magical concoctions brewed by apothecaries
For fortunes paid by potentates and kings

It is an evanescent grace that he desired
How vainly he pursued the elusive prize
Through uncharted courses and perilous treks
Braving other men's hostility and nature's whims
But don't we all, stake a princely price, going after
Holy Grails and sailing to portless Odyssies

Eddie Roa

.01 Bye, Bye Blackbird

Blackbird,
Singing from high tension wires
Urging me to sing along
Follow the frittering flashes
Of smoldering plumes
Strung up like notes
I should be home by six
But it is a pity to miss
Bird burning up high
Will anyone understand?
Asked Billie, what lament
The song intones
Blackbird strung up
In high wire
No harder luck story
Than this been told
Make my bed and light the lamp
I'll be home late tonight

Eddie Roa

.01 Enigma

I give you three guesses and more, but
Even the oracle cannot make me out
The sphinx uses my mystery in riddles
I am dove, I am eagle, I am the sun
The forest is my son, the sea my daughter
I am the bread that you denied the hungry
The water you dried up to spite the thirsty
The gaping hole in the sky is my legacy
The polar ice caps sweating is my doing
I am the one here and over there
History is my handiwork, the future, too

I am the numinous, the ineffable

Eddie Roa

.01 Reckoning

Into the uncharted depths of
Unending human vanity
Some vision, perhaps an illusion
Of youthful conquests, green laurels
Linger in a colorless reverie.
I, cradled in Morpheus' arms
Unwilling to be awakened from
A blinking dark to light kaleidoscope
Trophies with dull gleams
Plaques with tarnished sheen and
Illegible citations of dubious merit
Brittle sheepskin with obscure Latin script
Are these all that I have wrought
In a lifetime of toil and invention?
How beggarly my existence has been
As I face the numinous One
To Him who bequeathed a legacy
For a life that is replete with promise
Of selflessness, of beneficence, of divinity
All of which were left stillborn in me.

Eddie Roa

.01 A Highland Hymn

White billows rise from a patchwork lake
Soaring fast as if racing with the sun
My thoughts are of you at this holy hour
Only you and of the fishnet gridded expanse below

I saw you at the creation of the lake waters
You were there when they sowed the first wild flower
The mountains were sculpted from your silhouette
Waterfall cascades were copied from your tresses

I claim you as my soul's friend and bride
The mountain breeze echoes this declaration
Tiny songbirds fill the air with joyful song
In harmony with the resonant timbre of my words

My voice carries over the orchards, the waters of the lake
Past fruit pickers, fishermen, fishwives, horse riders
Bouncing off evergreens, fruit stands and diners
Proudly bannered, rising and falling on the steep ridge

Eddie Roa

.01 A Lovely Place

what a lovely place
and yet so cold and forlorn
warmth and light soon comes
let us gambol upon its coming
tramping down wild flowers
jumping low bushes
scraping your knees on sharp thorns
I will be glad to kiss away the sore

Eddie Roa

.01 a repost GOOD FRIDAY

Suntanned revelers
Frolic in raucous delight
Jesus impaled sweats

Eddie Roa

.01 A Valentine Longing

Do I recall saying,
 Lines that ardent swains' whisper?
Borrowed sonnets from the Portuguese

Do I recall offering,
What every adorer bears?
Wine-red roses and chocolate truffles

Do I recall the impetuous act,
That a lover on impulse dare?
Clasp hands delicate as Dresden china

Do I recall the affectionate kiss,
That I, with fervent passion implored?
Scarlet lips voluptuous as Autumn cherries

I do recall with longing all these and more,
A lunatic fringe all young lovers dwell in,
Reckless adoration of the beloved on Valentine's Day

Eddie Roa

.01 A Wake In the Barrio

Funeral wakes in our barrio
Are simple but picturesque

Amidst boiling cauldrons of
Rice porridge with strips of tripes

A gathering of mourners intone their grief
While downing jugs of native grog

The sakla master shuffles the deck
Cards bearing luck not auguring death

Children past bedtime hours scaring
Each other while hiding under the casket

Wilted floral wreaths line up the walls
Like sentinels with nauseous breaths

The honored one somber in slumber
Indifferent to the homage paid him

The widow worries about the collection
Fingers the knotted hankie bulging with coins

Will there be enough to pay in the morrow
The brass band engaged to liven the sorrow?

Oh, but her eldest will arrive from LA tonight
Bringing US aid, then there's nothing to fear

Picture yourself behind the coffin's misted glass
A life well led but ended with trifling ceremony

Funeral wakes in the barrio will always be the same
As if I care, but I wish they can do better on my turn.

Eddie Roa

.01 Again, My Love

You gave your love
Nonchalantly, obliviously
Like a day passing its memory
To tomorrow.

I woke up and
Felt you beside me
Snuggled for warmth

Your limpid eyes
Looked hopingly
For yesterday’s reprise

Eddie Roa

.01 At the Movies

The world of the silver screen is
In high definition and Dolby sound

All the drama, the horror
and the music are played, replayed

right before you without the peril,
all the notes of the symphony

without the back seat chatter
Flawless nymphs in natural glory

Traipsing and screaming on celluloid fantasy
Bigger than life and in megapixel colors

Reality is just a bag of popcorn
Spilling at each thrill and delight

Eddie Roa

.01 Bamboo in the Wind

The black bamboo fronds reached high and low
Swinging to every blustery blow of the westerly
Up and down, to and fro, left and right
But rising to straighten not staying low for long
Like erect whips snapping lively at impassive clouds
Lashing out against phantom scars and imagined foes

With momentary lulls they spring back to uprightness
The tiny tenants at its lower branches stir and chirp
As if a siren sounded the respite and the return of the calm
The bamboo shed encrusted scales relieving the itch
Caused by the constant strain of heaving, stooping and rising
Then it stooped so low, creaked and broke its battered bole

Not even the sparrows at the bowers could, despite their cheering
Restore its poised air and proud bearing
The waste left by an unbending and unyielding pride
The litter of the green flaky rust lay on sodden floor
Who is to clean up? Who is to wield the broom?
No, not us. No, not the wind, not you nor I

Eddie Roa

.01 Caged Flowers

flowers caged in a glass
bouquet imprisoned within
then crystals shattered by
a wayward hand
a sunburst of fragrant beams
scattered on the wet doily
announced the felony
but unconfined blessings
now released to bring
joy and pleasure to all
look away now
for once abet a sin

Eddie Roa

.01 Cat Woman

Wipe that sardonic smile
Your teeth are showing through
Jagged and glistening
They gnash exceedingly harsh

I could make out the
Shape of malice in your mouth
Forming like stalactites
Threatening fangs sharp as razors

Still you smile, as enigmatic as a Cheshire's
You hate and still show love
My mind is mushed and befuddled
What is it really?

Purring and stretching
You sidle up and jump on my lap
Resting your padded paws on my arms
Retracted claws at ready

What's a guy to do?
I am tempted wring your supple neck
Or smother your innocent and trustful face
 I tightened my embrace, but then, fondly

Eddie Roa

.01 Counter Flow

The patter pitter of the rain
Played concert with the
Tock tick of the clock
As my day started with the
Setting of the sun
I could hear the music
Rolling and rocking
From the room next
As people went out and in
Slamming doors

From the window
I strained my neck
To see and look
Behold and lo
People about and up
Flowing fro and to
Like the tides and ebbs
Of swampy waters

The strange sequence
Of events that go and come
Had me bewildered and bothered
But on the down and up
Considered, it may be better
That our fortunes go and come
And fate is as we die and live

Eddie Roa

.01 Jaded

Centuries of delight reprised
Weaving thru the statuary
Peeing Eros, spouting lion
Cold nubile maidens and
Olympians with lecher eyes

Doorway upon doorway
Leading to a gallery then another
Daylight to twilight
Midnight to dawn
Oh what irksome ennui!

You awe at wonders only once
Not felt if all over again
First gladiator kill gives the most thrill
The first kiss divine, then just lust
A debut is grand, what’s next a parody

A continuum of sameness
A season of repeats
A looped tape of events
An echo playing pong
God stammering

Eddie Roa

.01 La Belle Dame sans Amour

He saw her pass by
Crossing with familiar rush
A figure moving in strobe

A tree stripped bare in the Fall
Like watercolor blotting badly
Rouge melting showing skin

Is that she? He asked
Surely, not she, he thought
There unmasked in stark light

He loved her truly
They all did, too
Who asked you? said she

Eddie Roa

.01 Little Freedoms

Some freedoms will be late in coming
Not this afternoon nor tonight
Not ever hurried through resolute effort
Nor through exaction, nor imposition

We all cherish our little freedoms
Unfettered, not hemmed down
By strangers from ourselves
Proudly we stand foursquare on this

Forces abound around us
Other people's strong assertions
You cannot do this nor that
Why not, we shout back lamely

Freedoms are urgent
They are burgeoning forces
Throbbing in the heart
Wanting out from confinement

Easy to say
I want my freedoms
Whoa! hold it, keep your cool
It comes on its own accord

Eddie Roa

.01 Morning Bells and Prayers

The bells rang raucously
As they have always done at six
They rang late for the devoted one
Who was out of bed by five

They rang too soon for some
Who need not wake at such a time
A stolen hour from someone’s rest
To restore strength to work the day

The loudspeakers shouted rudely
On the day’s crack of dawn
Waking every creature from their stupor
Rousing their faith with noisome pleas

The voices buzzed with electric crackle
Intelligible cackle cutting through the fog
It’s done no good for all its intentions
Unwanted annoyance to start the day

Eddie Roa

.01 Qualms

Your face inspired the letting loose of the ogres of spite
From your feigned naivete the silencing of a thousand flutes

You widened the chasm between me and my paradise
The gap between the eastern and western strands

A hint of betrayal on the whim of affection loomed
A raging brightness that blurs and blinds totally

A nuclear head riding a blazing rocket running berserk
Carving its imprints of quicksands and bottomless sinkholes

Obliterating the clam diggers and the sandpipers on the sand
While I lie on shore with blackened and crinkled skin

Bleached skull and big bones emerging from crumbly ash
My soul flying off without bidding goodbye from the residue

Eddie Roa

.01 Rara Avis (environmental)

Fragile feathers sway the high wire
Burnt wings strewn on a violent swirl
Plaintive chirp intones a dirge
Trilling against the hectoring din
Flapping frantic homeward wings
Dodging flak from the sooty haze
I should have cared a bit more
For morn to find him on my window sill

Eddie Roa

.01 Red Lace

I espied a red glint
In between the cracks
On the wooden panels
Of a locked up closet

How many sphinxes
Stood guard with riddles.
Halting curious eyes?
No sentinel more vigilant

I caught glimpse of a
Red lace stuck
Between mahogany doors,
Some past vanity imagined

Standing there unmoving,
Drawn by intrigue, I was
Like a cat sniffing on
A netted pantry window

I stood beside the
Grim and ominous bureau
A piece of red lace
Clutched by wooden vise

Perplexed and unsettled
Mind wandering
The past insinuates
Rekindling flames
From cold embers

The band played on
Red lace swirling
In the garish glow
Of a festive December night

It was not I who held
Those delicate hands
As you pirouetted and
Caused an eddy in the crowd

Plain red lace seen
Awkward in between doors
What images it evoked
My tired eyes hardly make out
An unwanted remembrance

The memory now a saturated scene
My eyes no longer entertain
Sordid images resurrected
A glimpse of other’s paradise

I lost you once, oh what pain
Losing you again in recall
From a red lace
Stuck between closet doors

Eddie Roa

.01 Reflections

The venerable gentry claim
And this is a truth oft told
Nothing escapes change

Shedding leaf by leaf on the bough
Like long nailed yogis with bony knees
And limbs like gnarled mangrove roots

On shadowy floodgates
Youth and beauty ebb away
Mirrored on receding swamp waters

Eddie Roa

.01 Retrospection

I sought shelter from the rain
In frayed book pages
I used to sit at the head of the table
And listened to by all seated
Dictating everything under the sun
The years have changed me much
Youthful heckling and jeering
And behind the back scheming
The shameless punks at their worst
At tweaking irreverently
On views of another time
The years have changed me much
No woman looked twice
At frayed book pages
Yet the damsels in my youth
Are etched deeply in my brows
Fie on tyrannical time
The years have changed me much

Eddie Roa

.01 Sea Change

Do you have a sea within you
Where awesome barnacled monsters
And fragile fish in shiny crimson vests
Scatter in the sea grass as they meet

A swarm of wrasse streaming through
Like muted skylarks chasing wind
On a swathe of gaudy pink corals and
Upon fields of somber olive kelp

Oh what a powerful will lie in wait
In the calm waters of the deep
Only the undulation of the sea grass
Give hint to the burgeoning force

Oft times, restless waves with billowing roar
Swell up to heave foamy white crests
To crash against the stolid gray cliffs
Challenging steadfast promontories

But the land will always frustrate the dare
The sea falls back deeper into its abysmal depths
Then, gathering strength, it rises again
Rallying waves to get back at a startled shore

Eddie Roa

.01 Smug Frog

The frog proclaims unabashedly
Within hearing of everyone
He brags that he has paid his dues
And did it even before the last hour,
Paid much more than what was worth
Every bit of what was owed and more
So, he held his head up high
Nothing else matters now
The day is a mockery for him,
Beneath an imagined sun,
Basking in delight in a shrouded glow
Owning the dark of night,
The cold of the puddle,
An empty inheritance in creased parchment,
He now croaks his incessant boast
In a pond where day refuses to come

Eddie Roa

.01 Thanatopsis

Face with dignity the dreaded Pied Piper
Follow his lead and not hesitate in your stride
The end is everyone’s fate
No argument has ever won its case
So quit a struggle that you can’t win

Face with fortitude the cruel Leveler
Honorable men proclaim their great deeds
With ignoble dealings veiled by deceit
Wastrels who spent the day and threw away the night
Rued their wanton ways and but not soon enough

Face the unkind Reaper with head held high,
Moribund journeymen with keen eyes see
Staring wildly at an overcast ethereal terrain
Give up, give up, the rally is futile and tiring,
And, for you, my brother, the events are cast

Fight not fate, give up the struggle
Your fateful number has been drawn
Move on, you’re holding back the queue
At the rear they are giving a hefty shove
Face him now, the ruthless Thanatos

Eddie Roa

.01 The Hat

What hat will I wear today
To cover the bald spot and hide the gray
An obligation to human frailty

With smug but studied poise
Chin held high to hide the fidget
This charade willingly played

My shame and discomfort
For an inelegant noggin with
Scraggly growth sparsely strewn

Happy am I to be seen in
A dignified pose, a gentleman’s air
Topped with a Stetson in suede

Eddie Roa

.01 The Scent of Onions

Behold an onion out of a hat
Eager to be put in a pot
It was the only one said the chef
And the dish will be bland without

It was an ungainly sight to see
Skin so dried and dirty splotches wrap
It will do cried the kitchen staff
After a wash and ugly layers peeled

Its humble bulbous shape
Seemed innocuous on sight
But each layer peeled spewed bile
And pungent rot reeked out

The dirty layer peeled
Gave sight to more dirt inside
And they peeled on with hope
That no more dirt be found

So eager to get the dish begin
With cheers from all
Peeled on till putrid essence squirt
All with unfelt tears began to shed

Peel off the dirt they said
But each layer found dirt anew
Now wafted redolence pervade
But still the encouraging cheer

We need an onion no matter what
The one on hand will have to do
Toss it into the stewing brew
And the need will be satisfied

Men both great and lowly
Insist on the culinary treat
No rest till avid palate served
Blighted onion has saved the feast

True heroes and saints are hard to find
Once one seems right we lionize without delay
Feet of clay and checkered past ignored
Another Baal to mesmerize us anew

Eddie Roa

.01 To Alicia Back From Dubai (Overseas worker's homecoming)

Throw the door wide open and rejoice
With spread arms and welcoming laughter
Oh, my beloved is back from a long sojourn
A perilous odyssey in distant shores

She walked in with silent grace emerging
With familiarity that rekindled the house lamps
Perhaps I will enthrone her there
On the ornate chair at the head of the table

And all the people who came to greet
Curious idlers whiling away the time of day
Will notice her tired but brilliant glow
Modest elegance, with simple flair

Reach out and hold my hand, beloved
Let you and I bask in the familial warmth
Come, adorn my hearth and home
Bringing back affection and care

Open your bag brimming
With your homecoming gifts
Wrapped in happy paper prints
For those huddling by your side

You’re beside us once more
Delirious with joyful affection
Dust and scrape your wayward roving shoes
Never to leave the welcome mat by the door

Eddie Roa

.01 Village Secrets

long kept secrets
lay beneath a placid lake
move with scurrying fish and
into a brook they flow,
washed and cleansed by cascades
still the brook babbles through the houses
now the whole village knows
kept secrets of long ago

Eddie Roa

.01 Wisdom of the Mountains

the mountain wind blew
whispered wisdom, uttered truths
from leaf to leaf then tree to tree
bounced from the rugged ridge
to the lofty mountain crest
settling on the pine covered glade
here is where I'll camp

Eddie Roa

.01 Worms

high atop a hill
the world looks bright and cheerful.
worms creep up to see
what mankind has wrought,
rebuilding stately edifices,
laid to waste just centuries ago
by early vandal worms,
now creep lively,
there's more work to be done

Eddie Roa

.01Ants

hush now and be still
listen to the hustling ants
leaves, kernel, grains
busy lugging and hauling
beams, planks and mortar
to rebuild a squashed community
flattened by hobnailed boots
not once but over and over
but man will tire of his malice
and the hill will be built
a testimony to the ants'
indomitable instinct

Eddie Roa

.01Graduation Post Script

When we got through our scholastic years
And have returned to youthful stomping grounds
Hello again to the sweet reality of being extramural
Relieved from reading tome upon heavy tome

Wanting in words to describe the relief the completion caused
From the rigors and hardships of a disciplined way of life
The august halls of the alma mater a prison now behind us
And the parchment scroll did seem irrelevant to our lives then

The college library had rude graffiti on its mottled walls
The carillon pealed from fractured bells tinny hymns
A heavy yellow pall spread clammily on the quadrangle
The dean was in disrespect, the faculty tainted, we were sure

But what of the mind, the nurturing of which, we
Unknowingly, surreptitiously had been honed to face
The challenges of a reality then far imagined
Clearing the muddled glasses of youthful views

Soon we realize that the years behind the ivied walls
Were not stones wasted and skimmed in an algae filled pond
Later as we mused and pondered complexities of existence
That would have stunned us dumb had we not persisted

Eddie Roa

.01Indios Bravos (Filipino Heroes and Heels) a doggerel

Where have all the heroes gone?
Heroes to boast of we may have none

With his shiny kris Lapulapu struck with ease
Magellan's head flew above the mangrove trees

Henceforth spiny fish was named after him for good
While Magellan became an exclusive neighborhood

Most of our heroes lost their fights
Without reaching glorious heights

Gregorio's Tirad is a poor copy of Thermopylae
Wretched devil killed by rats with silver dollar pay

Samson pushed columns, caused a temple to fall
Bernardo Carpio mere crags…a mountain wall

Darna zoomed our skies with a tousled mane
Wonder Woman on first class in her invisible plane

Vhong Navarro's Lastikman stretched arms snapped
Plastic Man's rubbery limbs had evil men trapped

Oh, for a hero to get us through the political morass
Man of steel, moral, honest and not an ass

We have lionized several in the past and how
We bent over in a subservient kempetai bow

Malakas at Maganda was a promising pair
Until conjugal corruption filled the air

FPJ stopped the bad guys with fast draw forty five
Wrestling GDPs and GNPs would he come out alive?

Another ersatz hero still wanting a comeback
Asking for a chance to give the till one more whack

Can Super Gloria fight off villains of evil deed
Or the beloved marauder's immoderate greed

Is our land a place where real heroes cannot thrive?
We've been manufacturing false heroes at an overdrive

The hero mill's output is at a dismal low
All that have been produced had a flaw

Self styled heroes in Senate and Congress eager to get going
Natural wealth and country's coffers are for the taking

Alas poor Juan's wish for a hero may never come

“Alis na baka pati karsonsillo mo’y makamkam”*
*(get out before they steal even your underpants)

Eddie Roa

.02 The Last March

The summer sun shone exceedingly bright
Struck harshly on old men in a mid morning parade
Made the marching lane seem wider than it was
And, also, made it seem longer than they can walk

A late shutting lamp post cast its light feebly
A toothless veteran pointed to it and cackled
Mocking the uselessness of lamplight on a bright morn
The rest of the men understood and nodded in agreement

Old men out on a march on a hot cemented road
Dragging stiff legs and scuffing shoe toes with each step
Moving funny in a rhythmic shuffle caused by
An uneven gait of stubborn and unmatched legs

Little kids on the curb laughed heartily
To see a gang of elderly men marching to
The lilt of a marching band they hardly hear
Half bending stiff knees and stomping sore feet

Feet that have walked the long mile
Of death marches and humiliating retreats
Feet that carried comrades dead and dying
Midst the brutal prodding of ruthless bayonets

In the grandstand the local town officials
Sipped lemonade and munched crumbly cookies
Grinned amusedly as the old marchers passed
Their hands full of cookies, unable to wave nor clap

What a hilarious sight, they thought
Old men in raggedy faded unmatched uniforms
Gamely jerking tired legs offbeat with the drums
Kept pace with young maidens riding a floral float

Amidst the pomp and flourish of a glorious parade
Less than a score of decrepit derelicts of forgotten wars
Hobbled and plodded looking proud but hurting
On a hot and sunny day in the month of June

Marching to a band with faint drumbeats and muted fifes
Struggling to look smart midst the gaiety and glamor
Looking laughable to an amused crowd at the curb
Stepping in earnest to the beat of a remotely heard band

True heroes marching through indifference and apathy
Onward they moved, gallant and proud, yet, pathetic and comical
Through jeers and taunts of children yesterday born
And of uncaring men and women with amnesic minds

In a year their numbers would have dwindled and faded
No more heroes to take part in the celebration of our independence

Now spared of the unkindness of forgotten heroisms and won freedoms
Of the derisive fun and unwitting ingratitude of children and countrymen

Eddie Roa

AA. Where Terrorism Is Bred

The zeal of the crusades
Persists resolutely to this day
Shackling the tractable faithful and
Hounding the wretched infidels

Missions more impassioned than ever
In fulfilling their avowed vision for all
Insistence rather than tolerance and suasion
Contrary beliefs and rights repressed

Other faiths fight back with fanatic fervor
Striking with flaming swords the unbeliever
The whiter the flash the redder the carnage
The louder the blast the more terror sown

Death to the cohorts bearing the cross
Sowing terror is ruthless intolerance, but,
Saint George and Michael Archangel delivering
Fire and brimstone to the heathen yet another

Eddie Roa

Aspic Goo

I come with my senility in the cold of December
Listening to raindrops and whistling for the wind
I have become spineless, an aspic goo
Face plastered upon a limestone seawall
Nose, eyes and ears trickled like dripping clay
I talked to you with sticky, gooey throat
Pleading words loudly, unheeded and unheard
Like blustery gust on dried quivering twigs
Like a stray cat pussyfooting on bladed walks
Now a shape without form, a pallid tone
A portless odyssey, a motionless struggle

Charon met me at the banks of the river Styx
Crossing the stiles with ticket willingly paid
Think of me now as though not gone
But as a wretched and troubled soul
As a spineless man, an aspic goo

Eddie Roa

Chiaroscuro

Shadows now cast east
With somber grays quaking on the grass
It seems only a while t’ was noon
And the sun shone bright
Without the specter of the dark

Mottled silver streaks in the east declare
That day will soon expire
Look west and pine
The dazzle of puffery and youthful loves
Now gray, black, shadowy and stark

Eddie Roa

Crossings

Don’t change the linen yet
It’s still warm
With charm and laughter

Pat the sofa later
Let the hollow stay longer
On the silky cushions

Let the blinds stay folded
The sunbeam remains bright
Casting soothing shadows

The bud is not fully bloomed
Hold the florist’s shears
Just for one more day

Let us not be eager
To shut the gate
Not just yet

Eddie Roa

Death Does Not Live Here Anymore

Death does not live here anymore
Stripped of name but one with the north wind
And the one who lives west of the moon
Whose meat has been minced, stripped raw to the bone

She will be recognized with brilliant signs
Senseless she made better sense
Heavy leaded soles break free to rise above the sea
Lovers come and go but love remains

Death does not live here anymore
Nor in the deep chasms of the sea
Those about to die do not die easily
Bodies racked in agony, hamstrings stretched

Straining torture racks creak yet not break
But even hearts with strong faith shall snap
And primal evil prevail in west of the moon
Death does not live here anymore

Eddie Roa

Dysphoria

Strange fates and unwanted destinies
Stuck and ensconced on us like oyster shells
Adding to our discomfort and dismay
Evanescent ease, inconstant joys
Our inheritance from alien origins
Undeserved legacy foisted on us

Our sojourn is not from ease to ease
But rather moving from worse to worst
Snatching bread from mouth to mouth
Living lives from barrenness to little worth
Can you find a hiatus from this affliction?
Brace yourself for an infinitesimal wait.

Eddie Roa

Ha Ha Ha Ha Haiku x4

1. The Mouse

Tim’rous little mouse
Slips through the bedroom at two
Rolling pin hits true

2. Thongs

Tempt me not to see
Cross your legs in front of me
Your thongs hide little

3. Fresh

Kiss the lady hard
Grab her with much gusto
Slap, such sweet sorrow

4. Mother In Law

The mother in law
Lays down the domestic rules
Price for daughter laid

Eddie Roa

Ha Ha Ha Haiku (2) x4

Pick Nits

Pick critics brains here
In overused critique’s page
It is nitpicking time

The Poet

The words do not rhyme
The meter an iamb off
Yet he dares to write

Disarming Love

Futile affections
When Venus de Milo loves
In absurd embrace

Who Caught Who

Run after me
Beckon the flirty lady
Until I catch you

Eddie Roa

Hah Ha Ha Haiku x4 (3)

Verbosity

Poet look for a word
To describe his lady fair
Wrote epic instead

Failed Player

The world is a stage
Said Will, the bald poet
You forgot your lines

Spider Man

Peeping Tom Spidey
Swings across sills and ledges
Sightseeing lecher

Lady Godiva

Bare assed Godiva
Rode the streets of Coventry
Wish I was a horse

Eddie Roa

haiku - Hugs

Hurried and harried
After a busy workday
Rewarded by hugs

Eddie Roa

haiku - Migrante

The birds have flown in
Arduous journey from harsh climes
Swarm in lambent shores

Eddie Roa

haiku - A la Basho

A pebble skims
Rippling the pond’s green surface
Bullfrogs leap aside

Eddie Roa

Haiku - Boracay

Dream of Boracay
Palms swayed by the balmy breeze
Waves lap at white shores

Eddie Roa

Haiku - Clouds

Clouds at childish play
Hover on a dry cornfield
Giants cavorting

Eddie Roa

haiku - Flutter By

Butterfly afloat
With cathedral wings afire
Petals flutter by

Eddie Roa

haiku - Lost Hopes

The silver lining
In our lives are all but gone
The sun let us down

Eddie Roa

haiku - Mayas

Mayas in summer
Exchange gossip by the bush
A feral cat waits

Eddie Roa

haiku - Memories

Memories are streams
Of glorious times, sad failures
Flowing out from time

Eddie Roa

haiku Missing Mom

(haiku)
I felt your soft touch
A motherly kiss on my tired eyes
Your scent filled the room

Eddie Roa

haiku - Morning Becomes...

Sunbeams light her path
Suddenly morning has come
Emerged from a dream

Eddie Roa

haiku - Nightfall

A gilded sky cast
Trees in silhouette yonder
Night softly signs on

Eddie Roa

haiku - Nymphs

Woodland nymphs gather
Elves frolic round misty boughs
Magical moments weave

Eddie Roa

haiku - Passion

Embrace me hotly
Leave the cold and wet behind
Hang your love to dry

Eddie Roa

haiku Season of the Heart

(haiku)
Shall I look for you
In the season of the heart
My mind says beware

Eddie Roa

haiku - Summer at Sea

Summertime at sea
Amidst eddies and ripples
Wee fish jump for joy

Eddie Roa

haiku - Summer’s End

The end of summer
Tiptoes in without notice
A lad sighs glumly

Eddie Roa

haiku - Suspicion

Speak up old tree
She was here with him last night
Don’t just shake your leaves

Eddie Roa

Haiku - Swan Lake

Oh elegant grace
Still the waters of the lake
Majesty passes

Eddie Roa

haiku - The Brook Knows

Village secrets flow
Washed and cleansed by the cascades
Still the brook murmurs

Eddie Roa

Haiku - The Flirt

Merciless beauty
You flaunt your allure to all
But deny pleasure

Eddie Roa

Haiku - The Koi

Consider the koi
Gliding under a lotus
Disturb not the calm

Eddie Roa

haiku - The Spat

Midst shouts and slams
My beloved despot rages
The clock ticks and tocks

Eddie Roa

haiku - Trysting Place

Cool stream in the shade
Trysting place for a lover
How quietly he hides

Eddie Roa

haiku - Ugly Ducklings

Never thought our love
Would create ugly ducklings
Push them off the falls

Eddie Roa

haiku - Wary Heart

Shall I look for you
In the season of the heart?
My mind says beware

Eddie Roa

Haiku - Wintry Morn

Trudging down a stream
On a cold wintry morning
Fish hid in white reeds

Eddie Roa

haiku - Worm’s Eye View

High atop a hill
The world looks bright and cheerful
Worms creep up to see

Eddie Roa

haiku Your Warmth

(haiku)
Your warmth eases cold
Like a setting sun’s radiance
A peaceful night comes

Eddie Roa

Haiku (1 to 5)

1.Landfill

Urchins eyeing lunch
Cats, dogs and rodents in wait
Garbage man cometh

2.Tiny Flowers

Tiny flowers niched
On mossy walls by the well
Crushed by errant pail

3. Loneliness

Loneliness seeks ease
With strange alien faces
Babbling nonsense

4. The Bamboo

Lithe and pliant cane
The bamboo, a boy’s delight
It cracks at great strain

5. Cold Morning

Early morning fog
Stirs the sleeping children
Woken by the chill

Eddie Roa

Haiku (6 to 10)

6. Shorebirds
Waves beckon calmly
To shorebirds pecking at crabs
Shooed by urchins' cries

7. Continuum1
Can't tell dusk from dawn
Should I stretch or should I yawn
It's God's continuum

8. Grandsons
Dustin and David,
Mischievous kids both ten
Oops! A Ming vase breaks

9. Beacon
Sunset's brilliant glow
Sailors' beacon near day's end
Dark clouds loom above

10. Continuum2
Farewell glorious sun
Fearful darkness now settles
But morning soon comes

Eddie Roa

Haiku 7 Environmental

Shark fins soup is nice
But it is vain indulgence
Save the maneater

A solemn moment
In a mysterious glade
Another tree felled

Apocalypse steeds
Gallop through arid tundra
Warming sodden earth

Waste water buried
Into deep and dark chasms
Toxic fumes now reek

A blanket of smog
Turns the land into slate gray
A cold night descends

Hummingbirds' sad song
Plaintive dirge augur its loss
Evil haze spares none

Plummet like Icarus
Mount Apo's regal eagle
Dead as the Dodo

Eddie Roa

haiku A Koi’s Death

One of my kois died
Bright scales now in dull pallor
The pond lies still

Eddie Roa

haiku Bats

Black bats at twilight
Circling in dizzying swirls
Emptying belfries

Eddie Roa

haiku Damsel Fly

A damsel flutters
Where reeds bow to the wind
A frog lashed out

Eddie Roa

haiku Good Friday

Suntanned revelers
Frolic in raucous delight
Jesus impaled sweats

Eddie Roa

haiku Leo

Leo don't stare
It's enough for you to roar
And we're out of here

Eddie Roa

haiku Maya

A blade of cogon
Is bent by a maya bird
A slingshot buzzes

Eddie Roa

haiku Scurrying Fish

Through a running brook
Scurrying fish dodge pebbles
Hurrying nowhere

Eddie Roa

haiku Sleeping Dog

A park bench hobo
Growls in a deep slumber
Beware to rousers

Eddie Roa

haiku Snow

Blinding, shimmering
Whiteness of the blustery snow
Come share your warmth

Eddie Roa

haiku The Raven

A big black bird lit
Dropped a bomb on my noggin
Quote I, “Nevermore”

Eddie Roa

haiku Wet and Cold

Ominous warnings
Of impending wet and cold
Warm hands allay fears

Eddie Roa

Senryu (haiku) For Duffers

With a graceful swing
My pitching wedge struck the ball
Fell short of the hole

Fore! called the golfer
Atop the seventh tee mound
Splash! replied the lake

It was just two feet
But my buddy didn’t say “take”
Ooh, the ball lipped out

A butterfly looks nice
But not on the driver’s mound
Use your “mulligan”

Long putt’s a challenge
Two to three breaks from the hole
Glory to God it’s in!

Tee mound dilemma
Wind, club and stance decisions
Then swing hard and firm

Anna, the golf widow
Cold husband always away
Sold “irons” in bazaar

Birdies have no plumes
Bogey is not an ogre
Albatross, not cursed

An eagle soars high
So is the spirit of one
Who makes it happen

Duffer’s blessed round
Short par threes, also, even grass
And smart caddy tips

Fairways are real cool

Despite the noonday sun
After acing one

Greens are perplexing
Slow, fast, break left or right
Blasted hole so small

Sands are relaxing
On a balmy seashore spot
It stinks in the links

What could be worse than
Triple bogey on par three
A missed short birdie

Golf helps your language
With each errant stroke you mouth
Expletives galore

Oh, Tiger, Tiger
Ball burning bright, a meteor
In dazzling flight

A friend is remiss
When like a ball who’s just around
Refuse to dropp in

You are out of bounds
Said the pert lady caddy
At his naughty pitch

Eddie Roa

tamka - Through Wild Flowers

Come let us gambol
Trampling down wild flowers
Jumping low bushes
Scraping your knees on sharp thorns
Let me kiss away the sore

Eddie Roa

Tanka - The Sculptor

These calloused hands
Once sought classic ideal
Hewing rocks, chiseling marble
Faithless Galatea shaped
Thankless heart as cold as stone

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Angels and Demons

Angels brought forth rain
To the thirsting fallow earth
Demons drew lightning

Eddie Roa

tanka - At First Glimmer

I might chance to see
Your loveliness and your grace
In the first glimmer
Are you prettiest in sunlight
Or in the glow of full moon?

Eddie Roa

tanka - Black Labradors

Fearsome black twins
Growling at strange intrusions
Flashing hostile fangs
Feigning ferocity to all
But truly amiable dogs

Eddie Roa

tanka - Bouquet

Garden flowers wait
For the beautiful lady
With gentle hands pluck
Roses, Azaleas in bloom
To grace a potter’s fine urn

Eddie Roa

tanka - Fading

Where is yesterday’s
Colored mantle on the lawn?
Gone without bidding
Adieu to the vibrant scene
Leaving only boring green

Eddie Roa

tanka Father John

(tanka)
Father John woke up
Roused by a sudden crash
On the kitchen floor
Clinking sound of broken glass
Sacristan scurried with wine

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Halloween

The scaly night sky
Hovers over the city
Casting dread and gloom
Bats empty the dark belfries
Singing Halloween’s evensong

Eddie Roa

tanka Happiness

(Tanka)
She is happiest
When the Sisters of Mercy
Bring their orphan wards
To loll round her flower garden
And rouse the blossoms at rest

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Indiscretion

Do you think in dread
That your indiscretion leads
To disaffection?
Fear not, a plucked rose remains
As sweet as those in the bower

Eddie Roa

tanka - Inner Joy

Leafing through the frayed
Pages of an old album
I stopped to rest my
Eyes on your insouciant face
Oblivious of my delight

Eddie Roa

tanka - Joyful Hearts

Unwanted waifs swarm
The toy village, the train rails
Winding round the mini hillocks
Herded by white frocked nuns
Happy innocents frolic

Eddie Roa

tanka - Moping

The morning found me
Moping beneath the duvet
Denied a good night
Left clinging on unsteady vines
Sent home without a fond kiss

Eddie Roa

tanka - Night Sounds

I whiled through the sounds
Frog's grunts, cicada's buzz saw
But not finding yours
Only the memory heard
A soothing wind-borne whisper

Eddie Roa

tanka - Old Age

Looking forward to
The rest of our sojourn
Wishing all be well
Despite the waning senses
And the vanishing wellness

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Parallel Lives

Whither will we go
I have traveled the low road
And you took the high
Ne'er shall we meet again
Lives in parallel chosen

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Rebuked

You chided me then
When I asked for affection
Slapping my hands
And I, tremulous with fear
Withdrew in the raging rain

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Rejected Roses

Rose petals wilted
The breeze blew the crimson flecks
On trellis floor laid
Attempts to restore, in vain
I will send again

Eddie Roa

tanka - Religious Community

Our community
Lies surely on hallowed ground
Nunneries, seminaries
In every street a chapel
Heaven must be at the turn

Eddie Roa

tanka Simple Joys

(tanka)
Nuns oblivious of
Others in a secluded glade
Frolicked like children
Beneath sturdy branches
Picking up low-lying ripe fruits

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Stay

Can you stay longer?
At least until the rain stops
My bed is still warm
With your smoldering kiss
And your scorching embrace

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Summer Time

Summer came knocking
Stirring lads’ and lasses’ hearts
With amorous ardor
Youth danced at the throbbing beat
Maddened by the torrid heat

Eddie Roa

Tanka - The Dawn

The dawn we failed to see
Neath blankets huddling in the cold
But no big regrets
Wait for it tomorrow, love
And maybe miss it again

Eddie Roa

Tanka - The Eucalyptus

The eucalyptus
Rained its shimmering jade leaves
Below its bowers
Where you and I slept the night
Soft ground, a blanket of green

Eddie Roa

Tanka - The Lovers

Lovers cowering
In the long shadows of dawn
Fearful to be seen
Anxious of the consequence
Of last night’s wanton delights

Eddie Roa

tanka - Umbrellas

Spiritual umbrellas
For rainy and sunny days
A shield at ready
From the vagaries of life
And excesses of success

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Understanding

You don’t have to say
Sorry for your surly moods
Felt by nods and looks
Knowing what each gesture meant
No malice in thoughtless acts

Eddie Roa

tanka - Wanton April

Come away with me
Enjoy April's wantonness
Away from stealthy eyes
Rush the oncoming breezes
Endure the sting on your face

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Wayside Saint

Nuns on morning walk
Ambled by the roadside blooms
A noble thought flashed
Sister Marian stooped to pick
Lost flowers by the wayside

Eddie Roa

Tanka - Your Name

I mentioned your name
And songbirds sang it like a tune
They gathered around
The rosebush and the green ferns
Humming the wondrous refrain

Eddie Roa

tanka - Yuletide

December tingle
Is in the hearts of children
Well behaved and neat
Mama says Santa’s making toys
For all goody girls and boys

Eddie Roa

tanka Eloquence of Love

I hesitated
To say my true feelings
Soon after our tryst
The memory of your lips
Told me to be eloquent

Eddie Roa

tanka Foggy Day

It’s a foggy day
The trees and flowering plants
Are covered in mist
The sun had to squint to see
Even blooms were blurred to a bee

Eddie Roa

tanka -Sparrows

Sparrows walk the line
on a treeless sun-drenched lane
dodges stone thrown
Boys scurried from the scene
Away from Mom's shouted threats

Eddie Roa

tanka Surfing

Surfing the vast net
Prodding the meek little mouse
Searching aimlessly
Going nowhere, everywhere
Lost in an ocean of clicks

Eddie Roa

tanka Yellow Birds

Yellow birds fluttered
Atop the tall evergreen tree
A blur in the mist
Singing their morning prayer
I whispered Amen

Eddie Roa