

# The Tragedy of the Pineapple

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She wept all over again until her tears were dry. She realized that the words she had spoken were really a curse on Pinang. She began calling the plant Pinang. As the years passed, people began to call it “pinya,” a word in Filipino which means the juicy, edible tropical fruit we all know as pineapple.

- *Why the Piña has a hundred eyes*<sup>1</sup>

## I.

The irony was that from simple blindness  
was born a thousand visions, all yearning  
the looking back into the regret of perhaps.

Flesh curling, unfurling into skin  
rough, a warning to one's touch,  
a tragedy of bloom, the peril of harvest.

When others demand *Pinya*  
I imagine the shape of someone's arms  
wrapped around a body shivering,

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too tiny to be left alone,  
too frail to weather the cold,  
too much of a testament to what is loved

after the departure. Here the ache  
belongs to the eyes that stare back  
and remind me of the guilt of language.

### **II.**

The story was an old folktale  
meant to explain the birth of fruit

and teach a lesson to children  
about filial piety and the danger

of words. Maybe one should consider  
the trajectory of loss. A mother

bears the years till what remains  
is flesh and blood and the irony

that lessons proceed only after the tragedy.  
So what is gained after the child is lost

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if not for an old wife's tale, but what if

the old wife was real, what if the fruit

was the child and the aftermath the body

that the tongue that curls around swallows

until no words remain. Only the sight of a garden

and the memory of grief's harvest.

### **III.**

In the morning when mother wakes, a sun bursts into color. A grasshopper gathers fibers for winter. The garden melts into radiance. You are here you say. The ability to speak coils around the tongue, a finger brandishes pinpricks. The first part of the tragedy is the discovery that it is a tragedy. Here light treads and then threads into itself. Its claim is your uncovering. Now revelation, after revealing. Discover unfolding as blooming. Mother lives in the stories passed down from mouth to hand to finger to soil. You are here you see. Until the legend says *let there be darkness*.

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### **Note**

<sup>1</sup> "Why the Piña has a hundred eyes," in *ABAKADA* (Babaylan Denmark, 2010). <https://paperzz.com/doc/1782925/why-the-pi%C3%B1a-has-a-hundred-eyes---babaylan-denmark>