

TROY OSAKI

**Long Live My First Summer in the Philippines**

Long live the house gecko licking the August air clean of mosquitos.

The flying cockroach fluttering in Jorrybell's hair. Her fantastical scream.

Long live the tent of blue tarps fending off monsoon rains.

The impossible cliffs of Baguio. The back alleys cluttered with clotheslines.

Long live the garden of tsinelas overgrowing

near the front door. The smooth plastic tabo in the CR.

In Tondo, there's a halo-halo shop next door

to a different halo-halo shop.

I'll remember choosing it over the other like an act of betrayal.

I'll remember oiled woks. Sandwich bags of orange soda to sip out of.

I'll remember the boy made of air we never saw

pickpocketing a thousand pesos from Nikko at Divisoria Market.

PJ picks up his guitar, the top string still missing. He strums

what he can of a G chord & a tiny typhoon whirls in the Visayas.

I mouth the little bit of Tagalog I know for the first time

in the Philippines, not the way I imagined. Soaked in sweat.

My boxer briefs turned inside out—reworn from yesterday.

We belt at the top of our breath around a fold-out table

buried in brown bags of pan de sal & sweet bananas.