**Where I’m From**

By Abygail Gutierrez

I am from ***pandesal* with your coffee**

from ***arroz caldo* when you’re sick** and ***paksiw* when you’re missing home.**

I am from the **rows and rows of** **rice terraces**,

**verdant *berde* scaffolding, from our mountains**

**to their cities.**

I am from the **drooping plum,**

**that falls too-soon,**

**burdened by rainfall.**

The **cacophony of the rambutan tree**

whose long-gone limbs I remember

as if they were my own.

I’m from **leaving** and **wanting to come back**

from **Gutierrez** and **David**

I’m from **short tempers** and **long apologies**

from ***bahala na***and ***cuidado***

from **hands meant for wringing**

from **sun-browned bodies tangled in one bed,**

whose long-gone limbs I remember

as if they were my own.

I’m from ***paciencia*** and ***kawawa***

and **men don’t like that.**

I’m from **waves that never touch the shore**

I’m from **soursop** and **bitter melon**

**Calamansi** and **tamarind paste.**

From **La Llorona** and **Balete Drive**

From **white-knuckled prayers** and **wailing in locked rooms,**

**haunting your family until they’re sure,**

**you’re a ghost.**

Whose long-gone limbs they remember

As if they were their own.