

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.

# A 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

# 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 clammy 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# A 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

# A 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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 hopefully  
For yesterday's reprise

Eddie Roa

# Anomie

From within, glowing in all directions  
The pit of the coconut pulses  
Touching strange forests and alien strands  
Self numbed into nothing, nothingness

All senses are divested from self  
A wearisome travel to borderless regions  
There the life nectar freezes still  
Like hail stones roll, rolling

All the feelings and emotions are roused  
A burning sunburst on bare heads  
Searing a presence that will not be doused  
From their infinite perch stars drop, dropping

Trapped like mangy wild beasts  
Scurrying in every which way  
Toil animals quivering at each whip snap  
Waiting for the sun to die, dying

Eddie Roa

# Ants

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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

## 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

# 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

# Bells 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

## 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# Dear 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

# Death 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

# 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

# Don'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

# 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

# Eden 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

# 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

# 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

# Erewhon

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

# 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

# Fisher 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 drop 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

# Garden 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

# Glass 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

# Good Friday

Suntanned revelers  
Frolic in raucous delight  
Jesus impaled sweats

Eddie Roa

# 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

# Good 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

# Graduation 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

# 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

# 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)

ill

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

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

# 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

# Hostage

Your tender hands hold me  
I will not try to escape  
Limpid eyes bind me  
Soft voices encage me

Fetters stronger than steel  
Envelop my being  
Body and soul bound  
By my own flimsy webs

In my reverie  
I sought the expanse  
Of white beaches  
And green vales

But hurry back to the  
Soft and warmth  
Of cuddly bears,  
Security of pillows

With you there  
There are no doubts  
Nor second thoughts  
Only you comfort

Eddie Roa

# How Soon

The clock's pendulum strikes the gong  
The pulley readies it for another strike  
Outside the leaves have been swept in the curbs  
Even before they turn brown, flame red and gold

Impatience goad the blossoming and ripening  
Not allowing them to stay awhile as green and sour  
Hot housing and hurrying their reddening  
Sweet and acrid to the taste, gritty on the tongue

If it has not been by now it will never be  
You have shunned others and they, in turn,  
Have left you recalling false remembrances  
Fantasies trying to be real yet in a blink are lost  
In desolate streets you nail signs on rickety posts

Eddie Roa

# 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

## 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

## 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

# Indios 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# Juan 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

# 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 nacre'd 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

# 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

# Leave 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

## 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

# Love 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

# Love'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

# 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

# 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 "santacruzán"  
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  
Neighborhoodly 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 jubilation years 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

# 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

# Moments

Memories cascade over moss laden rocks  
Blurred and misty images chasing each other  
A bird splashes and disturbs the peace  
Globules stay on the crinkles of my nose

Scratching through the muddy mantle  
The smell of treasured moments ooze out  
Silted soil agitated blurring the shine  
Of roots and leaves gilded by the sun

In that instance I remembered how I  
Deftly moved my arms to your waist  
Steadying your wobbly bearing  
Upon stepping on slippery stones

Oh what fortunate happenstance,  
Unexpected pleasure to have you enclosed  
In my surprised and tremulous arms  
Oh what joy, oh what bliss!

Eddie Roa

# 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

# 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

# My 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

# 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

# Notions 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

# 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

# Passage

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 too 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

# 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

# Premonition

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

# 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

# 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

# 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

## 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

# 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

# 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

# Redemption

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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# Scarecrow

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 bumbings 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

# 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

# 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

# Sea Escape

My eyes pulled down the window shutters;  
Flushed the bowl, turned off the manmade cool,  
And shut the casita door with a slam  
Summer now stored in a box of pixel images

Your watch says go now, the desk awaits the keys  
Keep the cockles, half shells and dry kelp  
Even as the tide wanted to take it back to sea  
But soon these, too, will be lost in the shimmer

No goodbyes, go as you have come  
I won't be by the parasols nor the divers' stand  
Promises now as paper boats riding the waves  
Crashing, dissipating into frothy crests

I walk alone by the fringe of a churlish sea  
Midst the commotion of sea birds  
Fighting over wide eyed crabs scurrying  
As I gather precious shells washing in

Already I have forgotten you  
Nothing but the soft whisper of waves  
And the sparkle of bejeweled sand  
Spoil me as I bask in the motherly sun

I cannot go home 'cause I am home  
My soul is imprinted on the white sands  
The call of great whales sound my coming  
Mermaids on dolphins wave in greeting

The sandy depths now my garden patch  
With corals and the barnacles in bloom  
I cling to driftwoods and wrecked derelicts  
Happily counting seashells and chasing wee fish

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

## Shameful 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

# 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

# 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

# Somnolence

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

# 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

# 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 Odysseys

Eddie Roa

# Tagaytay 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

# 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

# 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

# The 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

# The 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

# 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

# The 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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 clichéic 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

# 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

# The 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

## 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

# Through Wild Flowers - Tanka

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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

## Words 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

# 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

# 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