

## Stadium of Old Rage

*[In 1972, Martial law was declared in the Philippines, the darkest era in the country's history.]*

The sky still collapses into  
dead rivers every night  
Each star learning to grow fins

Like this body, when it reaches  
for the knife / but instead,  
grows blades around its edges

Knows it is more than just a body  
but a stadium of old rage,  
a skeleton of a brutal history,

1973 tortures that never made it  
to the evening news,  
fresh cuts from a 46-year-old knife,

each blister, each cigarette burn,  
each peeling of a skin  
that will never heal into a nasty scar

something we will try to wear  
like pendants,  
a symbol of survival

But no one survived  
just yet

Turn the sweat into fuel  
Ignite the sleeping bodies  
until everyone is burning

Until everyone is a wound  
still living in places  
they will never touch

Explode like confetti tears  
Scream and burn  
like cigarettes in their mouths

Let them point the gun to the sky  
Let the bullets carve a hole  
on the clouds, let the blood pour

and water the soil  
that has been dry for so long  
it has forgotten its own name.