

a thousand pilipino songs:  
pilipino ako

pilipino ako—from across the 7000 islands & seas  
i am the blood-earth patis flowing thru the mountain  
soil-veins of my people—the slated dung tongues of  
winter rain mud-carabaos—pilipino ako—i am pilipino—  
the thousand year old savage-green moss-forest  
ifugao bagoong—the sharp baguio wind piercing naked  
igorote bodies—isda from the mindanao sea—pilipino ako—  
i am the slated pink salmon from alaska  
barreled in thick seasoned wood—floating round like  
orange-persimmon buttocks fermenting in a bursting semen-  
sky—isda clinging to the pounding waves—slashing  
across like a bolo—drifting down to the bay of  
san francisco—wading thru the thick soggy fog & down  
the sea weed rocky shores—pilipino ako—i am pilipino  
living out in the mission & manilatown & chinatown &  
japantown & in central city & stockton & vallejo & salinas  
& seattle & watsonville & san jose & hayward & mt. eden &  
centerville & sacramento & isleton & walnut grove & up &  
down the coast & on mountains & hills & below trees & near  
rivers & streams & oceans & in the delano fields of brown  
volcanic-breasts growing out of igorota nipa hut panao-  
minds—pilipino ako—i am pilipino in a graveyard of  
wallowing shrunken negrito heads—round savage faces—  
hard rock-winter ancient bodies—with thick mango lips  
sucking up tuba juice from carabao eyes—pilipino ako—  
i am pilipino—manila cafe—san miguel—one thousand  
drunken nights watching worn white silk whores trampling  
their bodies on a ten cent lacquered counter—pilipino  
ako—i am pilipino—young & old—waiting for a new day  
to rise—to raise my bolo—to slash down—to hack the chain  
that binds my pilipino brothers and sisters—pilipino ako  
i am pilipino pain excreting dead blood of pilipino poverty—  
minds out of my burning bowels—pilipino ako—i am pilipino  
i am kearny street & the brown feet of manongs treading pool  
hall dreams— empty pockets of echoing sadness in the pit of  
lonely carabao bellies—i am international—st. paul—shasta  
royal hotel tomato sardines under warm mattresses—pilipino  
ako—i am pilipino—saturday nights at the pilipino center—  
brown hands holding the young pinays—dancing to tino’s music:  
“come to me my melancholy baby, come to me and i’ll be true”—true  
to *your* adobo skin—dancing to the rhythm of the night—pilipino  
ako—i am pilipino—slick black hair combed straight back with  
a little wave to catch the pinays eye—perfumed with nelson’s  
pomade—the florsheim shoes polished reflecting the pinays  
pompadour—pilipino ako—i am pilipino—on the dance floor  
with black-gray pin stripe suits stretched out slick & cool-  
pilipino ako—dimas alang—at the christenings  
adobo & pansit & isda—lick the lemon on the fish

stretch the tapa on the clothes line with lots of vinegar  
& salt—pile the calding—use plenty of garlic &  
pour lots of vinegar in a barrel — spread the tables and then  
floors & the landscapes & the grass mats with thousands of  
succulent lechongs by the rivers & villages & countrysides  
spread the ulam & pagkain—pagkain—pagkain—pilipino  
ako—i am pilipino—pagkain with your tatay & your nanay  
and your ninong & ninang & manong & manang & kababayan & anak

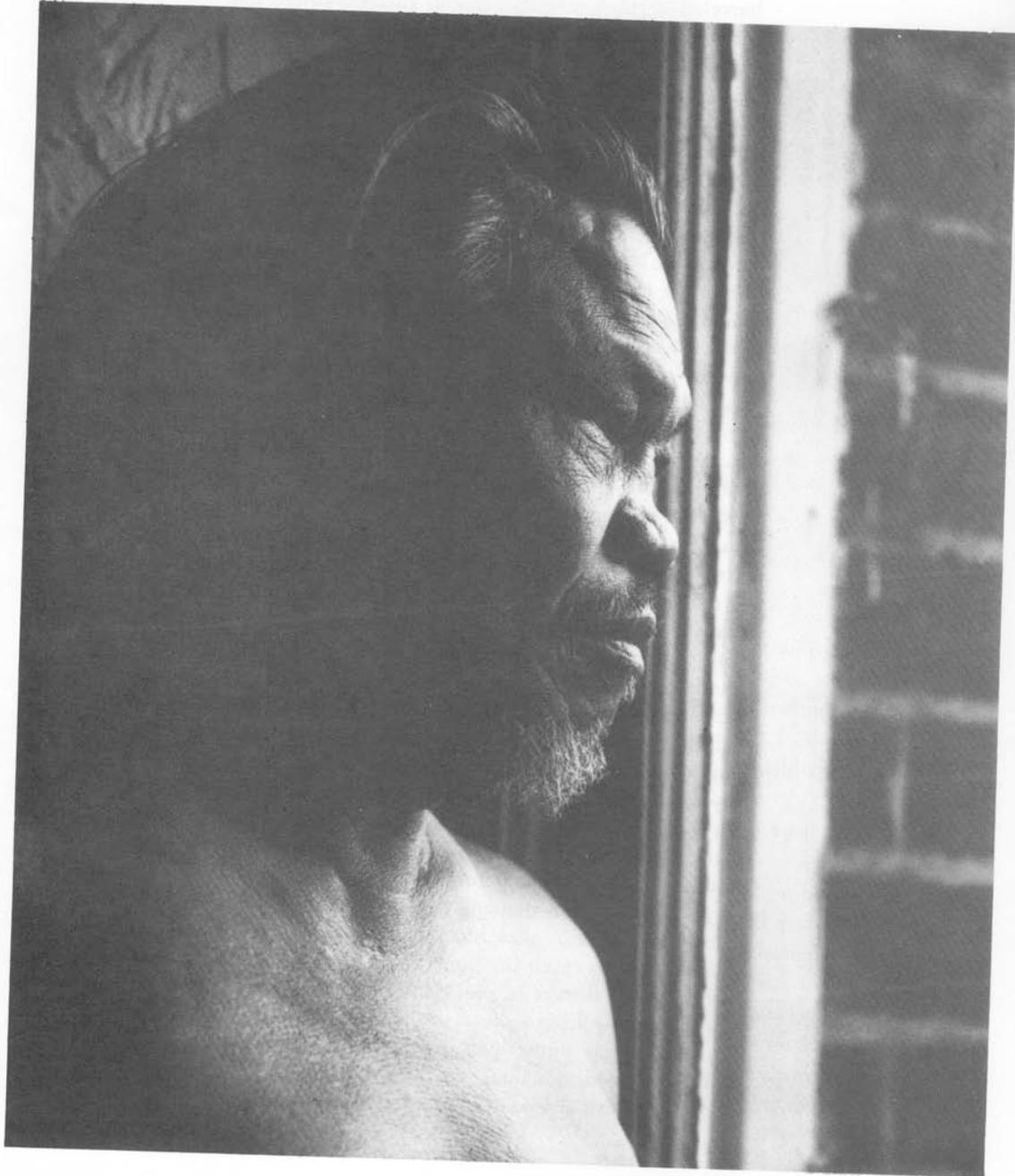


Photo by Begonia

& kapatid of loin cloth pilipinos in the sacramento river  
rice-shacks in central city—bayanihan—bayanihan—  
bayanhian—pilipino ako—i am pilipino—pagkain with  
your bare hands—feel the steaming hot kanin warming up  
then squeeze the tomatoes like blood in your hands  
mix the chili peppers with onions & soy yu—cat fish tails  
& fish heads & fish eyes & fish eggs—pagkain all day with  
a thousand pilipino suns in your belly, with the flame in your  
tongue, with the flame in your eyes burning the sky raging—  
red—pilipino ako—i am pilipino—  
dance wild into the dark night *with* cracking bamboo flute  
sounds—dance until the roots in the ground grow strong  
dance to ancient ways with spears & bolos & bamboo underwear—  
dance to the thunder throbbing wailing naked brown  
bodies wrapped in wet banana leaves—dance to the poor peasants  
dance to the wild ifugao dung-moon-smear'd women—dance to  
the flowing blood of wild goats, spilling down from the minds  
of pilipinos—dance to autumn-goats intestines—to the erection  
of a thousand pig ears & pig eyes & pig heads & dance to don  
carlos carvajal & legaspi—kearny street poet & worker for the  
pilipinos—dance to carlos bulosan, pilipino poet—dance to  
carlos villa & leo valledor & sid valledor & serafino malay  
syquia & all the manongs & to pilipino faces in the jungles, in  
the cities, in the ghettos—dance to carabao smells & fleas  
& seasons & taii—dance to magsaysay—dance to my tatay—  
pilipino clown—gambler—wild boar running wild in the pool  
halls, in the cities—fisherman in alaska & fruit picker in  
stockton & a pilipino who sang a thousand songs to his children  
pilipino ako—i am pilipino—goddamn it! — pilipino ako—  
dance to my tatay who pained and died each day—the blood in  
his body drained out his eyes, his face, his heart & stomach &  
brain & pulled my tatay into a fish-like grave smothered him  
with red blazing chili peppers and tomatoes of the earth—dance  
to my tatay who stood in the cold streets of chinatown, in the  
rain holding onto a telephone pole—reaching for the sun, a  
child's face, a hand to spring flowers in his dying brain—  
dance to my tatay who loved life & ulam & chunks of mountain  
baboy—dance to my tatay with fish and rice in his mouth—  
dance to the burning castration of magellan & iron crosses  
pushing down pilipino faces & minds & bodies—dance to cock  
fights & to the gods of the seas & skies & mountains—dance  
to pregnant ifugao spirits—dance to the manongs chasing  
7th street blondies—dance to the faces & eyes & feet of  
pilipino children—dance to their spirit that swirls round  
a thousand rice fields & playgrounds & alley ways in central  
city—dance to the clapping of brown hands & the stomping  
of ancient feet & the snapping of forest-fingers—dance to  
bill sorro & emil deguzman of the international hotel—dance  
to tino's barbershop—dance to manong carmara & manong osas  
dance to etang, etang, etang stroking my hair filled with  
carabao taii— -dance to my nanay in the pilipino sky—  
dance to the pilipinos struggling in the cities & farms of  
america—pilipino ako—I am pilipino—pilipino ako