My Daughter’s Apples

It’s worth every bite.
-Washington Apples ad

My daughter tells me, “Welcome to Yakima!” where apples grow on trees and she’s staying on to pick them because in those apples is America she’s long been dreaming of. Eighty years back her grandpa Bulosan had written about trees so heavy with promise it was

madness not to stay. So she sends the fruits of her labor by wire transfer, boundless as the harvest from orchards on the way to the clinic, then she calls to ask how we’re all keeping and about difficult cases or the rare or unusual disease. At times she goes into personal

detail like when she forgot to turn on the headlights one night on a sick call. The northwestern sky never looked so rotten. No wonder, she told the police officer, and was about to confess that an apple a day does not keep the doctor away from loneliness, but he had let her go.

Your email message yesterday
is like kapok bursting from
its pod in late summer, tufts
of cotton in humid air, like tropical
snow tumbling from the sky.
Gently, you drop the explosive:
probable as her hair
grown back after chemo,
the return of your wife’s cancer.

I imagine her hair:
almost
to her shoulders, thick as waves
but petal to your touch, real
as the sun’s resumption on your fastened
lives or the afternoon’s wildflowers
at Kings Park where you two are
taking all the time in the world.
It is September’s end; it is
spring come, but already
her hair is falling, again
her hair

is furring your mouth, your
thickening thoughts, your almost-
said words. The fine threads of herself
tangle in every room, every corner
inside you. On bedcovers, chairs, clothes,
she is drifting away.
Her hair
ink-brushes the whirlpool patterns
on the floor, the narrowing hallway, the door
marked No Exit
on which you are scribbling over
No Entry.

Grief makes you, dear moth,
write me who am virtual yet
real as rain
falling like slashes of invisible hair.
Toast
for Bruce and Trish Bennett

Tea is *el pacto de sangre*,
the blood compact
that seals a friendship,
the toast,
¡Vencer o morir!

Conquer or die—so
we take the city,
the loot,
art, history, tapas
and souvenirs. We sack
room after room
of museums,
cathedrals,
La Rambla, the port,
then head back

to English
where *No molestar*
is *Do not disturb*—
that summer
of the conquistadores.

Isabela Banzon