



To Be An Empire Is To Burn!

Eileen R. Tabios

TO BE AN EMPIRE IS TO BURN!

Eileen R. Tabios

locofo chaps

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Chicago, USA, 2017

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Ambition and Beauty

—*Paris, 2016*

When offered Versailles
I shook my head

He'd never been
Once was enough for me

No need to gorge
on foie gras, etcetera
though many do

I don't feel superior
bringing crickets to geese
Crickets also matter

I am still with this man
who appreciated the result
of a 27-year-old King
's aim for immortality

If only ambition could unfold
and beauty reveal itself
without collateral damage

The Lord sits with me
He does not laugh
though we listen to Mozart

and the sunlit sky is burnished
by Versailles gold

Dialogue

Marianne Moore: "I think each time I write that it may be the last time."

Eileen Tabios: "I want to think so, too. But then 2017-2020."

WHITE TOMBSTONES, GREEN LAWNS

No promises exist
in combat...

Hot lead muzzle velocity
= 1,000 feet/second...

Proverbial bad shit?
Bound to happen...

The rare constant:
white marble tombstones...

White tombstones blossom
as ever in Arlington...

From afar, the eye could choose
to see magnolias against green lawn...

But he salutes in intimate space
facing the warrior's mother...

He cannot disclose
why her son's casket is closed...

"I made him promise
to be careful..."

She sees the medals—
they fail to console...

"Promises are difficult
in battle..."

He offers the flag
folded, not waving...

“You survived to be general.
Are you a good man?”

He forgets to answer
“Never as good as the dead...”

He forgets when he catches
the scent of white blossoms...

As a boy, he frolicked
in his mother’s garden...

To be a general
is to be old...

If the old must dream, *the innocence*
of perfume offsets inflamed hot lead...

As if...
“As if...”

He silently pleads with
the grieving mother...

Don’t let me explain: flowers
must be crushed for perfume

(written while reading *Commander In Chief* by Tom Clancy and Mark Greaney,
G.P. Putnam and Sons, 2015)

“What Kind of Poetry Will You Write Now?”

They belittle the safety pin
on my bodice, cushioned by a breast

They do not see the sharp(ened) point
lurking within its shining steel clasp

Ferdinand Edralin Marcos

—*a Rippled Mirror Hay(na)ku*

“Power
corrupts absolutely”—
you provided proof.

Your life proved
“Absolute corruption
powers.”

The Dictator's Daughter

You praised Chaucer—you understood
the significance of the poet (and philosopher
and astronomer) for legitimizing
Middle English vernacular at a time
when French and Latin dominated

Now you're relegated to claiming youth
as an excuse for not protesting
your father's abuses. 29 is young?
No doubt—but only—to a centenarian

Ivanka Trump, meet Imee Marcos—
a future you do not want to be yours

Bibliography:

Thomas Fink's Introduction to *THE THORN ROSARY: Selected Prose Poems & New (1998-2010)* by Eileen R. Tabios (Marsh Hawk Press, 2010)

"Dear Imee Marcos, you knew all about the torture and political detainees during your father's dictatorship" by Raissa Robles, *inside Philippine politics & beyond*, Nov. 15, 2016

#NoDAPL

water fleshes out
any hollow
if

water does not
freeze from
greed

To Be An Empire Is To Burn!

—in memory of Dionel Campos, Datu Bello Sinzo and Emerito Samarca

You slashed
the teacher's throat.

But he survives
your ignorance

with what he knows:
when you push us

deeper into the forest
higher up the mountains

away from land our ancestors
did not own but cherished

we will fall
from ravines as land ends.

But you shall follow us
down with your lack

of comprehension: our
survival is your survival.

And the few survivors
and the many witnesses

from even oceans away
will pray, sing, dance

make art, write poems
for us, not you.

They will celebrate our lives
not yours. They will remember

us, not you who murdered
to become a footnote in

other people's lives.
History reveals over and over

despite your ears deafened
and deadened by greed:

*To be an empire
is to burn!*

Hear the teacher invading your
dreams with a throat slashed

but still able to proclaim:
Mr. Footnote, no one knows

your name. Mr. Footnote,
when an empire burns

trees split their own wood
to hiss through the flames:

*No one is spared
not even he who lit the match.*

MONICA LEWINSKY

obtained a psychology degree from Lewis & Clark College

received a master's degree in psychology from the London School of Economics

wrote a master's thesis entitled "In Search of the Impartial Juror: An Exploration of the third person effect and pretrial publicity"

designed a line of handbags bearing her name "The Real Monica"

is the daughter of German Jews who escaped Nazi Germany and emigrated to El Salvador and later the United States

worked as a correspondent for British Channel 5, reporting on U.S. culture and trends

hosted a reality television show

enjoys yoga, musical theater, flea markets, museums, facial and color hydrotherapy

was a spokesperson for Jenny Craig's diet program

was sheepish when she forgot to pay her cable TV bill

often offers toothy grins

gets introduced by strangers to their dogs

apologizes

is friends with Alan Cummings

knits

LISTING

I saw the Best Poets of my generation

Best American Poetry
Best U.S.-American Poetry
Best Poet With Lariats Poetry
Best Puppy Poetry
Best CAT! Poetry
Best Moon Poetry
Best Mooned Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Poetry
Best Cowboy Poetry
Best Indian Native American Poetry
Best Under-Thirty Poetry
Best Under-Twenty Poetry
Best Minor Poetry
Best Over-Fifty Poetry
Best Eighty-is-the-New-Fifty Poetry
Best Obscure Ethnic-American Poetry
Best Bestests Poetry
Best Beasties Poetry
Best White Male Poetry
Best Filipina Poetry
Best Non-American Poetry
Best Non-U.S.-American Poetry
Best Whale Poetry
Best Political Poetry
Best Apolitical Poetry
Best Witness Poetry
Best Blind Poetry
Best Conceptual Poetry
Best Concrete Poetry
Best Death Poetry
Best Samurai Death Poetry

Best *Other* Poetry
Best Other-ed Poetry
Best Eileen R. Tabios Poetry

I saw the Best Poets of my generation

submit themselves

to Best-of Lists

and Create New Lists

upon zero acceptance

by Old Lists.

Best American Experimental Poetry
Best U.S.-American Experimental Poetry
Best Poet With Lariats Experimental Poetry
Best Puppy Experimental Poetry
Best CAT! Experimental Poetry
Best Moon Experimental Poetry
Best Mooned Experimental Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Experimental Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Experimental Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Experimental Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Experimental Poetry
Best Ethnic-American Experimental Poetry
Best Cowboy Experimental Poetry
Best ~~Indian~~ Native American Experimental Poetry
Best Under-Thirty Experimental Poetry
Best Under-Twenty Experimental Poetry
Best Minor Experimental Poetry
Best Over-Fifty Experimental Poetry
Best Eighty-is-the-New-Fifty Experimental Poetry
Best Obscure Ethnic-American Experimental Poetry
Best Bestests Experimental Poetry
Best Beasties Experimental Poetry
Best White Male Experimental Poetry
Best Filipina Experimental Poetry
Best Non-American Experimental Poetry

Best Non-U.S.-American Experimental Poetry
Best Whale Experimental Poetry
Best Political Experimental Poetry
Best Apolitical Experimental Poetry
Best Witness Experimental Poetry
Best Blind Experimental Poetry
Best Conceptual Experimental Poetry
Best Concrete Experimental Poetry
Best Death Experimental Poetry
Best Samurai Death Experimental Poetry
Best *Other* Experimental Poetry
Best Other-ed Experimental Poetry
Best Eileen R. Tabios Experimental Poetry

I saw the Best Poets of my generation

submit themselves

Letter From Paris to New York

—November 2016

When offered Versailles
I shook my head

Once was enough for me

No need to gorge
on foie gras, etcetera
though many do

I don't feel superior
bringing crickets to geese
Crickets also matter

If only ambition could unfold
and beauty reveal itself
without collateral damage

The Lord sits with me
He does not laugh
though we listen to Mozart

and the sunlit sky is burnished
by Versailles gold

as if he really was the *King
of the Sun*—an aspiration
understood and shared
by the steak-eater
with small hands

flinging open the door
of blood diamonds
to the same flashing gold
gilding the chandeliers
of a Fifth Ave penthouse

in New York City where
streets are buckling
before the steps of a toddler
holding up a sign: IF YOU
BUILD A WALL, I WILL GROW
UP AND TEAR IT DOWN!

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ABOUT THE POET

Eileen R. Tabios has released over 40 collections of poetry, fiction, essays, and experimental biographies from publishers in eight countries and cyberspace. More information is available at <http://eileenrtabios.com>

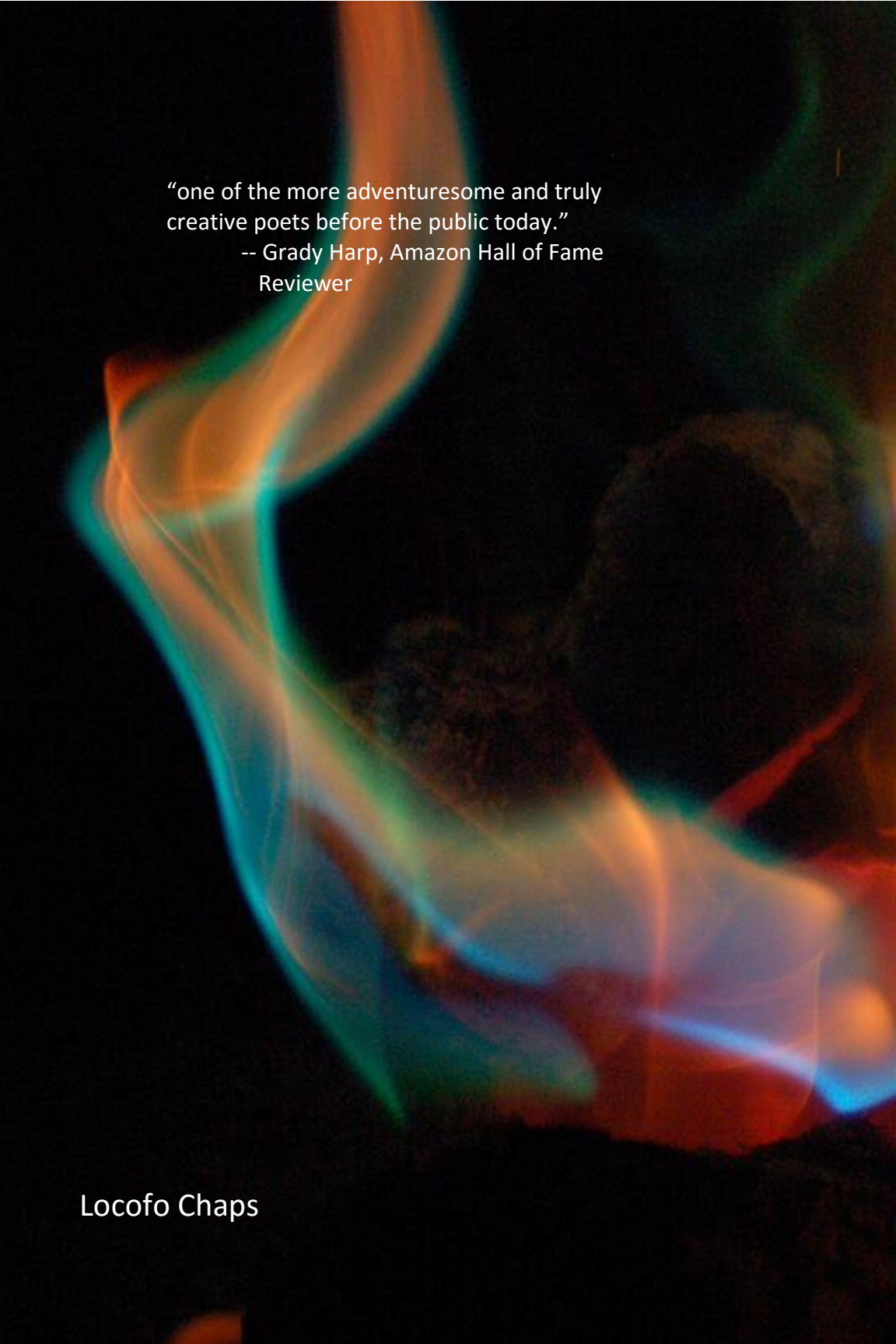
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Eileen Tabios' *To Be An Empire Is To Burn*

Charles Perrone's *A CAPacious Act*

Joel Chace's *America's Tin*

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