

Mark Maza

Kundiman for Tondo: 1986

i. 1986

A month and a half before / I was born, a blood-stained revolution finished / leaking
between the rugged skin / of a runway that could not testify / to a man's assassination,
and is now in lockstep / with every holy and sinning body / on the streets of EDSA, marching
towards the house / of the man that commanded the trigger. / And my pregnant mother,
two worries away from giving birth to a premature me, may / have been the only person /
in a noiseless but always abandoned Tondo, who stayed / home instead of exacting a rightful
vengeance upon the ones / who appeared to have profited / from their misery. My mother watches
/ tv, looks at the faces of the men scaling / Malacañang's gate—all eyes heavy
with intention / to claim a piece or a head, making sure / none of them resemble my father's—who
is somewhere, in this crowd, eager to make some sort of story / for himself
while abandoning my mother and me.

ii.

after Patrick Rosal

The early morning
rooster cuckooing
at a birthing sun
The daisy offering
to a barrel-mouthed-
lead-spitter The lord's
prayer The what's-
the-difference-between-
thousands-of-feet-and-
a-couple-hundred-tanks
The holy-shit-they're
all-on-the-same-side retreat
The entire street of EDSA
The cursing priests The
bum rush nuns at the gates
The glass crackle The fire's
pop The chants The
chants The huwag
matakot stance The
makibaka waltz The
ready-to-die Tondo
The Bonifacio smile
Mga anak ng bayan Rizal's
end Ninoy's end The
tinikling sticks The arnis
and eskrima We'll-mano-
mano-if-we-have-to The rocks
The takbo The hintay lang
dito All of Imelda's shoes
The Marcos's fled and the US
helped them We're taking back
what's ours All The mothers
The grieving widow Cory
Aquino The first woman
president Ang bayan-bayan-
bayan-ko cries—

Hindi-pa-tapos-ang-laban-mo

iii.

I was born a [redacted] leaking
[redacted] runway to a man [redacted]
in lockstep with every [redacted] sinning [redacted] street [redacted] marching
towards [redacted] my [redacted] mother,
[redacted] the only person [redacted]
[redacted] who stayed [redacted] a rightful
vengeance [redacted]
[redacted] eyes heavy
with intention [redacted] to claim a piece [redacted] of [redacted] my father [redacted]
[redacted] in [redacted] eager [redacted]
[redacted] abandon [redacted].