Jose Lacaba · *Philippines*

Force of Circumstance

When Maritess was kidnapped
by the son of a
congressman,
the stars flickered
like fireflies
and the moon was full.

When Maritess was taken
to Novaliches,
the wind was dancing
with the tall grass
and the cicadas
whistled insistently.

Four members of his gang
accompanied
the son of a
congressman
in his new Mustang
And Maritess looked like
Susan Roces.

When the gang ripped off
the expensive pantsuit
that a gay couturier
had made for Maritess,
an earthquake was rocking Manila
and the kids were
demonstrating at the Embassy.

When the gang caressed
the panties of Maritess
and pulled out her Tampax,
tear gas was crawling
on the streets of Sampaloc
and Susan Roces was recommending
Lux soap on TV.

University of Iowa
is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve, and extend access to
The Iowa Review
www.jstor.org

Four members of his gang
accompanied
the son of a
congressman
in the midst of the tall grass
and five young men mounted
Maritess.

And when the five young men
had vented their hot blood
on the bleeding will
of the ex-virgin,
they lighted imported cigarettes
and burned the pubic hair
of Maritess.

Four members of his gang
accompanied
the son of a
congressman
in his new Mustang
and Maritess now looked like
Bella Flores.

When Maritess was released
by the son of a
congressman,
her boyfriend got drunk,
the papers shivered with glee
and the cops jerked themselves off.

Mr. Congressman is set to run
in the coming elections.
Let us not forget him.

THE SACRED PASSION OF ST. JOSEPH

Chisel, plane, and hammer,
listen, I'll whisper
my bitter secret: though
I've never whatchamacallit her,
my girlfriend's pregnant.