

Jasmine Panganiban

Transit Line 2

Terminus: Santolan

Marikina spawns the early birds,
crawling in the station with hearts spurred.
From the concourse, they rise like hatchlings,
and they fall in scattered lines, straggling.
The rays of dawn, blinding callow lids,
swaddles the platform, and swathes its grids.

Next station: Anonas

There to the left, St. Joseph they'll find,
like the father who always reminds.
They'll hitch a jeepney down Radial Road,
to roam and wander, brazen and bold.
They'll tour Aurora, skip to Hi-top,
play under the green shade of the shops.

Next station: Araneta-Center Cubao

Alight to the city of excess,
where there's a card for every request.
Under neon lights, on rainbow lanes,
where self-seekers resent what they gain,
they bet their bills on fortunes untold,
where purpose is bought and dreams are sold.

Next station: Gilmore

Dusk: the early birds become sparrows,
toiling away to heal their sorrows.
They work on Broadway Centrum's spotlights,
the glare blinding them to their own plight
while mint green St. Paul looks down and sees
aged bodies with slumped backs and worn knees.

Next station: V. Mapa

Evening comes: sparrows make their way home.
In Magsaysay, they hobble and roam,
chase after Cainta-bound buses,
the heat and smog lulling their senses.
With their wrinkling eyes and slowing gait,
for the final train, they sit and wait.

Terminus: Recto

In Santa Cruz, the tracks meet their end.
From the tiled platform, sparrows descend.
They make their last exit and pass on;
Station lights are dimming thereupon.
The nine-beat pulse of the train ceases;
Quiapo is veiled in muted voices