Feasting

By Joseph O. Legaspi

Bitaug, Siquijor, Philippines

Three women dragged the spiky, bulky mass onto a bamboo table on the side of an island road. A raised hunting knife glinted in sunlight, then plunged with a breathless gasp, slicing into the unseen. To a passerby they were a curious wall, a swarm of onlookers, barrio children and younger women, buzzing with a rising gleeful cadence as a mother busied herself with the butchering. Surprisingly, a citrusy, sugary scent sweetened the stranger’s face when offered the yellow flesh like thickened petals, licorice to the touch, he stood awed at the monstrous jackfruit, bloodless armadillo halved, quartered, sectioned off for feasting.

His tongue tingled ripely. This country’s foreign to me, he continued, but I’m not foreign to it.

Source: Poetry (July 2017)