

Irreconcilable

by Kevin Martens Wong

A public toilet along the coast at Labrador Park's Berlayer Shade Shelter, near midnight – quiet, serene, clean and even softly welcoming. Fluorescent light flickers. Three sinks, three door-mirrors, all covering stalls and opening by themselves. The sound of waves outside. Only a Kristang person would be here, in one of the most forgotten parts of reality, this late at night, and only a Kristang person with guilt on their conscience and fear in their reflection would still be in the toilet. Thus, we find ITHAMAR-NOW, scrubbing his hands at the middle sink. Too hard. He stops. Breathes. Swears. Starts again.

ITHAMAR-NOW: Not yet. *(A pause)*. Fuck. *(A pause)*. Later lah. *(Pause)*. Fuck.

From the left mirror, ITHAMAR-PAST steps out, wearing only bright neon underwear, towel over shoulder, fake smile practiced and polished to perfection.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(confidently and faux-regally, as if cut from the same stock as ancient Rome itself)* Later keeps the night obedient.

ITHAMAR-NOW: Go back.

ITAHAMAR-PAST: If it didn't work for Lady Macbeth why the fuck would it work for you?

ITHAMAR-NOW: Go away. Get the fuck out.

ITAHAMAR-PAST: I can't. I'm structural.

ITHAMAR-NOW: Fuck you, understand?

ITAHAMAR-PAST: Nah mate. You fucked yourself over long ago.

ITHAMAR-NOW: Fuck you! *Bai pra infernu. Bai pra mureh!*

From the right mirror, SINYORANG MORTI steps out. Cowboy boots on tile. Skull mask and beautiful, ornately-decorated cowboy hat, both with intricate Kristang azuletra motifs. He tips the hat slightly. Both ITAHAMAR-PAST and ITHAMAR-NOW yelp-scream.

SINYORANG MORTI: YOU CALLED?

ITAHAMAR-PAST: Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh *fuck*, no I didn't. *He did (points at ITHAMAR-NOW).*

SINYORANG MORTI: PIDIH PEDRANG. *(to ITHAMAR-NOW)* YOU CALLED?

ITAHAMAR-NOW: W-w-w-w-what?

SINYORANG MORTI: BAI PRA MUREH. IN ENGLISH, THAT MEANS, GO TO YOUR DEATH.
(flexes). AGORA BENG, SINYORANG. BENG PRA BAJA SA MUREH.

ITAHAMAR-PAST: Oh shit.

ITAHAMAR-NOW: I...I...I said g-g-g-o away. I said...I said later...

SINYORANG MORTI: LATER'S A TOWN WITH GOOD ROADS AND NO EXITS.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(gibbering)* F-f-f-fuck...

ITAHAMAR-NOW: *(startled, terrified, gawking)* You...*(but he is older than ITHAMAR-PAST, and is slowly regaining composure more quickly)* You can't be here.

SINYORANG MORTI: PUBLIC PLACES ARE WHERE RECKONINGS GRAZE.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(whispering, mumbling)*...you're...you're too early...

SINYORANG MORTI: I'M PUNCTUAL.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(to ITHAMAR-PRESENT)* You're taking this deep existential guilt thing way too seriously.

SINYORANG MORTI: (to ITHAMAR-PAST, *who screams again*) YOU LOOK LIKE A JOKE
SOMEONE TAKES WAY TOO SERIOUSLY.

ITHAMAR-NOW: (*drearily*) Yes. Yes. Fuck.

A pause. The sound of the waves in the background. ITHAMAR-PAST cowers on the floor.

ITHAMAR-NOW: Well, I didn't call anyone else. It was just supposed to be shitty-me and
I tonight. Again.

SINYORANG MORTI: (to ITHAMAR-PAST, *who screams again*) YOU WASHED YOUR HANDS
LIKE MEMORY BLEEDS.

ITHAMAR-PAST: M-m-m-metaphors mean we're c-c-c-cornered...

ITHAMAR-NOW: (*bravely, like a real old-school Eurasian gentleman*) Well, who are you
then?

ITHAMAR-PAST: You don't...don't ask someone like *that*...who they are...

SINYORANG MORTI: (to ITHAMAR-PAST, *who screams again*) I KEEP THE LEDGER WHEN TIME
STOPS PRETENDING.

ITHAMAR-NOW: (*resolve collapses*) Fuck...just the way you talk...I know I'm fucking
dead. I know I can't say your –

SINYORANG MORTI: BONOS DOS-DOS KUNISEH KUNG NEKRU. NEKRU SA NOMI –

ITHAMAR-NOW: I...I'm not dying. (*Faux-fiercely*). Fuck you, *Sinyorang Morti*, I'm not
dying.

ITHAMAR-PAST: (*whimpering*) I am...I am...

SINYORANG MORTI: NOT DYING.

SINYORANG MORTI tilts Their skull.

SINYORANG MORTI: *(with venomously sweet love, enunciating every syllable)* PRACTICING.

ITHAMAR-NOW: Everyone wants forgiveness.

SINYORANG MORTI: TO DECORATE THE PRETTY, PATHETIC, ACHINGLY EMPTY HOLLOWES THAT
THEY CALL THEIR CONSCIENCES.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(whimpering)* I want to be forgiven.

SINYORANG MORTI: DO YOU?

ITHAMAR-NOW: *(whimpering as well)* Yes. Though I...I don't know what I did.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(whimpering angrily, to ITHAMAR-NOW)* You cunt, lying shitface.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *(to ITHAMAR-PAST)* Fuck you, understand?

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(to ITHAMAR-NOW)* You were *abusive*.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *(to ITHAMAR-PAST)* I'm going to kill you.

SINYORANG MORTI: BAJA SENG SERTU. YOU WANT ABSOLUTION WITHOUT PROXIMITY.

ITHAMAR-PAST: Clean hands. Clean story. *(Rubs his trembling hands against his chest).*
Clean body...fuck I'm sorry Rufus. I'm sorry!

SINYORANG MORTI: DEBTS MAKE EXCELLENT FURNITURE. HEAVY. IMPRESSIVE. IMMOBILE.

ITHAMAR-NOW: You're not supposed to be here! I...I...

ITHAMAR-PAST: I hurt someone.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *(to ITHAMAR-PAST; but all of them know his confidence is shattered)*
Shut up, you bloody fucking swine. I'm not done.

SINYORANG MORTI: I KNOW.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *Fuck lah fuck this fucking shit.* Fuck you, Rufus.

SINYORANG MORTI: YOU DID. WITHOUT ASKING.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *Fuck lah fuck this fucking shit.* Fuck you, Rufus.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(wailing-whispering)* Rufus. For fuck's sake...why...

Light shifts. In the centre mirror in front of ITHAMAR-NOW appears RUFUS (FACSIMILE). He stands, coat on. He never speaks. He never blinks. He is exact enough to be unbearable.

ITHAMAR-PAST: We said no witnesses.

SINYORANG MORTI: YOU TRIED TO HAVE US AGREE TO SILENCE. BUT NEITHER TIME NOR REALITY NOR I SIGNED THE CONTRACT.

ITHAMAR-PAST: I called it confusion. I called it need.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *(to ITHAMAR-PAST)* Yes you did, you fucking monster. You didn't stop when stopping mattered. *(to RUFUS)* IT WAS HIM. Not me.

RUFUS does nothing. The stillness answers. Both ITHAMARS weep.

ITHAMAR-PAST: *(to RUFUS)* I knew you were lonely.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *(moving to attack ITHAMAR-PAST)* And so were you, you piece of shit.

RUFUS tilts his head, just enough. No sound. The sea drops to a hush. Lights blink, and

SINYORANG MORTI is suddenly standing between ITHAMAR-NOW and ITHAMAR-PAST.

SINYORANG MORTI: SIT.

Lights blink. Both ITHAMARS scream.

SINYORANG MORTI: NO DEFENSES.

Lights blink.

SINYORANG MORTI: NAME HARM WITHOUT ORNAMENT.

Lights blink.

SINYORANG MORTI: OFFER NOTHING YOU CAN'T KEEP.

ITHAMAR-PAST: (to RUFUS) I had nothing to offer. I knew you were lonely. I'm sorry.

ITHAMAR-NOW: (to SINYORANG MORTI) That is not me anymore. I fucking swear it. I'm different. I –

Lights blink. RUFUS screams; he is covered in a bright-neon-coloured liquid the same colour as ITHAMAR-PAST's underwear. It looks like blood, and ITHAMAR-NOW's resolve collapses.

ITHAMAR-PAST: (to ITHAMAR-NOW) Who's the monster now, fuckface?

ITHAMAR-NOW: (to SINYORANG MORTI) I did not do it. (to RUFUS) But no...no, bro, stop crying...please stop crying...

Two more versions of SINYORANG MORTI appear in the left and right mirrors.

SINYORANG MORTI: IF YOU WON'T ACCEPT...WE COULD TAKE YOU ALL TONIGHT, IF YOU LIKE.

The main SINYORANG MORTI takes off his shirt and pants, standing in underwear with a gleaming, wicked keris-looking blade.

ITHAMAR-PAST: (to SINYORANG MORTI) That's fucking not how the universe works!

SINYORANG MORTI: TELL THAT TO YOUR OWN IMAGINATION.

SINYORANG MORTI pulls himself close to ITHAMAR-PAST.

SINYORANG MORTI: (to ITHAMAR-PRESENT) SHALL WE KISS?

ITHAMAR-PRESENT: Fuck. Do whatever the fuck you want with him.

RUFUS: Just like you did with me?

Lights blink. ITHAMAR-PAST and SINYORANG MORTI freeze.

ITHAMAR-PRESENT: *(sobbing)*

RUFUS: Just like you did with me?

ITHAMAR-PRESENT: *(sobbing)*

RUFUS: Say it, Ithie.

ITHAMAR-PRESENT: *(sobbing)* I can't.

RUFUS: Say it, Ithie.

ITHAMAR-PRESENT: *(sobbing)* No one...

RUFUS: ...what?

ITHAMAR-PRESENT: *(sobbing)* No one has called me Ithie since you.

Lights blink. When they come back on, RUFUS and ITHAMAR-PAST are gone, and ITHAMAR-

PRESENT is left trying desperately to grab on to an empty mirror.

SINYORANG MORTI: *(to ITHAMAR-NOW)* DID YOU KISS?

ITHAMAR-NOW: I'm not asking him to forgive me *(but he is broken)*. Oh fuck. Rufus!

SINYORANG MORTI: TERROR MEANS YOU'RE NEAR TRUTH.

ITHAMAR-NOW: If he forgives me –

SINYORANG MORTI: THEN YOU WERE WRONG.

Lights blink. RUFUS appears briefly again in the central mirror, crying; and then he suddenly stops.

SINYORANG MORTI: YOU WERE ALWAYS WRONG.

ITHAMAR-NOW: *(soberly, shudderingly)* He...he...

SINYORANG MORTI: HE MAY HAVE MOVED ON. HE MAY HAVE NOT.

Lights blink again, and RUFUS is gone, and ITHAMAR-NOW is also stripped to his underwear.

SINYORANG MORTI: BUT THE QUESTION IS WHERE YOU ARE NOW.

ITHAMAR-NOW: Why don't you just take me?

SINYORANG MORTI: I CAN'T. YOU KNOW WHY. WHY WE KEEP COMING BACK HERE.

ITHAMAR-NOW: How will I survive this?

SINYORANG MORTI: EVERYONE DOES. A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY.

*SINYORANG MORTI removes their skull mask to reveal beneath it ITHAMAR-FUTURE. The
resemblance lands like weather.*

ITHAMAR-NOW: You –

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: – still don't remember.

ITHAMAR-NOW: How –

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: – come? It's the *arvahang*, of course. Future you talking to present you
talking to past you. You'll remember one day. Eventually.

ITHAMAR-NOW: But why –

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: – does this keep repeating? Why do we keep coming back here? You
know why. This is where it all began. And you asked how it all ends.

ITHAMAR-NOW: With –

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: – forgiveness? Or with the courage to actually make amends?

ITHAMAR-NOW: Are –

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: – you Death pretending to be your future, or your future finally honest enough to wear your own name?

ITHAMAR-NOW: Fuck! Does it really matter?

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: Or is it all just about your own, fucking, obvious, impossible shame?

ITHAMAR-NOW: I...I...

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: ...still can't say it yet. Don't pretend.

ITHAMAR-NOW: (*collapsing feebly*). ...it's...not...about...sorry...not...about Rufus.

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: (*stunned in a good way*) ...and at last. You recognise it.

ITHAMAR-NOW: (*whispering, on his knees*) Not about if...

ITHAMAR-FUTURE: (*serenely, taking ITHAMAR-NOW's hands in his*) – but when.

Lights blink. RUFUS is standing in the centre mirror, watching them both.

Lights blink. ITHAMAR-PAST is standing in the centre mirror, watching them both, now covered in the same neon-coloured liquid RUFUS was covered in.

Blackout, as the sounds of the waves linger.

THE END

