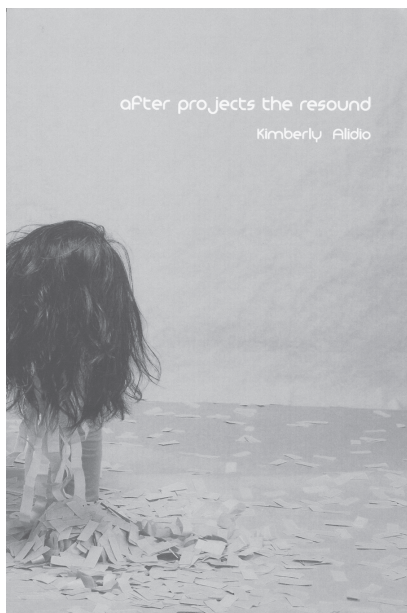


# AFTER PROJECTS THE RESOUND

Kimberly Alidio

Black Radish Books (\$17)



Abstract concepts are both objects and objectives.  
(from “Certainty is a kind of desire”)

Kimberly Alidio’s first full-length collection of poems is an exploration of printed documentation of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines between 1898 and 1946. Via confession, memoir, and personal response, it intimately portrays the history of brutality imposed by the colonial, oppressive West, and examines the implications of the historical relationship between the two nations in the turbulent present. The language is defiant and often challenging through its mixture of raw and intelligent biographical intents.

“This book began on a train between Midwestern libraries,” the poet says in her afterword; in conducting research for this book, Alidio traveled to multiple institutions seeking out primary documents. The resulting poems explore what arose and what remained through such inquiry. As much a collection of findings as a document of personal travel and growth, these poems are rough and transgressive in their polarization of content. Fragments, erasures, lists, and micro-narratives regarding the journey are a few examples of the strategies

deployed; daily affirmations and documentations of the world balance and invigorate. Through the meeting of history and the present, the book never feels stale or dusty, and yet it never feels completely immediate either. These lines from “Do you want vitamins?” illustrate the tension:

Fourteen seconds held up by my hair.  
My private city. A Barcalounger of DHL cartons.  
A mini-piazza for praying. A bingo game.  
My hands for sale. Transit maps.  
Pigs with umbilicus. Bird without feet.

Knowing more about Alidio and her background certainly provide rewards for the persistent and curious reader. The structure of this book and its embedded themes are angled through Alidio’s queer, Filipina perspective; while elevated through the nature of the found language of the project, her clear and independent voice—whether tackling expression of a corruptively perceived identity, longing for the presence in the everyday of intimacy, understanding intention in today’s landscape of technology, or appreciating the struggle of objectification through narrative—offers an extraordinary sensibility in a world of chaos.

Exceptionally progressive in terms of multiculturalism and poetics, the poems here often serve as challenges to the reader. What symbolic implications does Alidio explore when she traces the historical-cum-etymological relationships between ketchup and sauces across borders in “Fermented AKA ferment”? What of feminism and human rights found in subtly injected statements as “The exhausted object have [sic] no body of work” (“But some of us are the resound”), statements that are equally as philosophical as experiential? How is Alidio’s “being trained long before birth to be a soldier of something” responding to the crimes of history? *after projects the resound* is a book about opening such doors rather than explicitly describing what exists behind those doors, as exemplified in these lines from “Enclosed within a boundary”:

“Write your name in the space provided”  
Tropical records have rusty paper clips  
White MacBook coated with fine brown dust  
Present intentions are that these people will return  
to Honolulu upon completion of current contracts  
Pertaining to or emanating from a labyrinth  
Heave phlegm into the bathroom trash  
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From cover to cover, *after projects the resound* is a collection about process, and though it covers much in its forty-three pieces (perhaps a bit too much to convey with complete poise and clarity), it proves worthy of the contemporary reader’s inquiries. The author’s command of counterpoint carries the book into new areas of awareness and meaning with grace and authenticity, suggesting a new potential for what poetry and poetic language can offer us in this aging twenty-first century.

— Greg Bem