



1 Doz. Poison Hay(na)ku

* Ivy Alvarez *



IA

opium

pupils
may dilate
as death approaches

belladonna

loud
heartbeats audible
at several feet

bryony

estimated
lethal dose
is forty berries

black widow

hides
under upholstery,
cushions, toilet lids

curare

paralysis
of lungs.
victim turns blue

fool's parsley

humans
have died
seasoning their salad

moonseed

pips
cause mechanical
injury to intestines

yellow jasmine

faces
take on
a masklike expression

potato's green parts

diarrhoea,
cerebral oedema,
stupor, convulsions... coma

caesalpinia pulcherrima

leaves
poison fish—
seeds poison criminals

gila monster

grooved,
flanged teeth
conduct the venom

brown recluse spider

female
more dangerous
than the male

Author's Note

Ivy Alvarez is the author of *Mortal* (Washington, DC: Red Morning Press, 2006) and three chapbooks: *what's wrong*, *catalogue: life as tableware* and *Food for Humans*. In 2005, she received a Hawthornden Castle fellowship, enabling her to write a number of poison poems during her residency.

The hay(na)ku is a Filipino and diasporic poetic form conceptualised by poet Eileen Tabios.

Colophon

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