

# Cold Mountain

Paolo MANALO<sup>a</sup>

Once she was the girl next door  
Whose dream was work in Singapore.  
Back then you barely saw her smile  
But now she laughs that it has “taken me a while  
To get my act together  
While life is so much better  
Out there.” She laughs at me for what I lack;  
I laugh that while she left, she keeps coming back  
For more of me that she won’t find abroad.  
She laughs, I laugh to catch the silence when it drops.  
One went, one stayed—the horse-hooves sounds of clips and clops.

*(a version of Han-Shan)*

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