



COR JESU COLLEGE
THE SCHOOL OF THE BROTHERS OF THE SACRED HEART

Sacred Heart Avenue, Digos City
Davao del Sur 8002

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'14*

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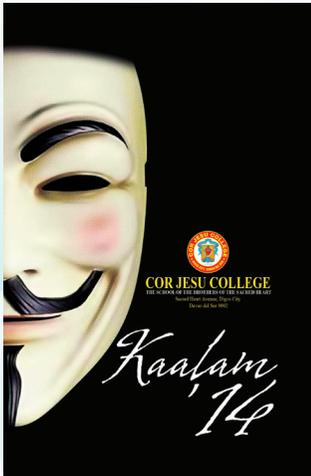
An anthology

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About the cover

History is created when ideas are put to action. A single idea could be so potent that it could easily spark movements, revolutions, or even wars depending on who's using it. That's why most ideas have to be kept hidden under the mask of literature, waiting to be deciphered by the one's who are worthy of putting it to action. This anthology provides the readers verses and passages filled with ideas hidden beneath the mask of poetry and prose. It is now up to the reader if he/she is willing to lift the mask and use these ideas to change the world around him/her.

FOREWORD

Society needs a voice; without one, it ceases to exist. The people's voice is considered to be more than the very blood that circulates deep into the veins of a democracy; it is also the nation's soul. Each word or stroke that a person writes through his/her pen is one pump of our nation's heart. Literature and art truly takes the person's voice to another level.

However, in today's modern and hectic era, society is starting to lose its voice. With today's technology and new notions for pleasure and entertainment's sake, literature and art is slowly going to a standstill. As a consequence, the people are also slowly losing their voice.

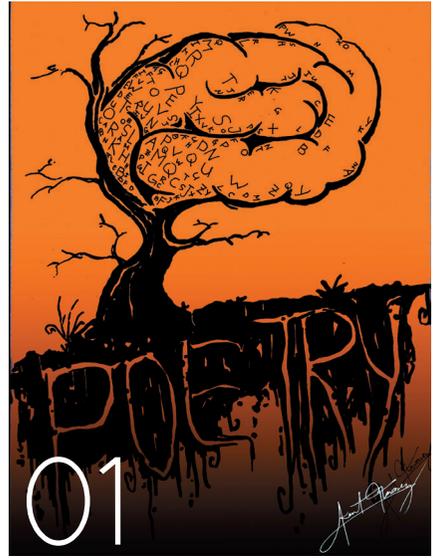
This anthology aims to amplify the very little voice left of a certain society located inside the province of Davao del Sur, the voice of Cor Jesu College. With this anthology, we try to bring the democratic society back to life by exposing various social and even political issues through the prose of literature and the images of art. We sincerely hope that the reader would be encouraged to get his/her pen and let his/her voice be heard too. We have set the stage for you. It's up to you to decide if you want to raise the curtains and let your voice be heard.

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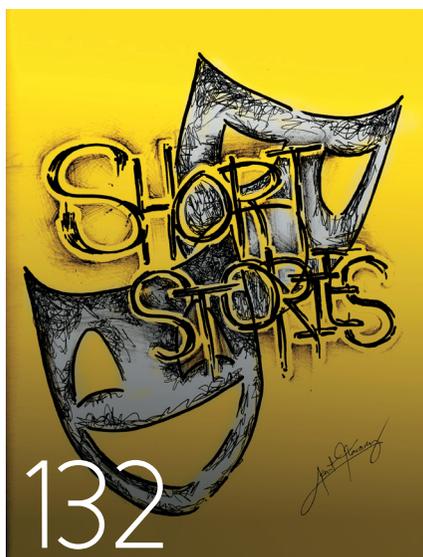


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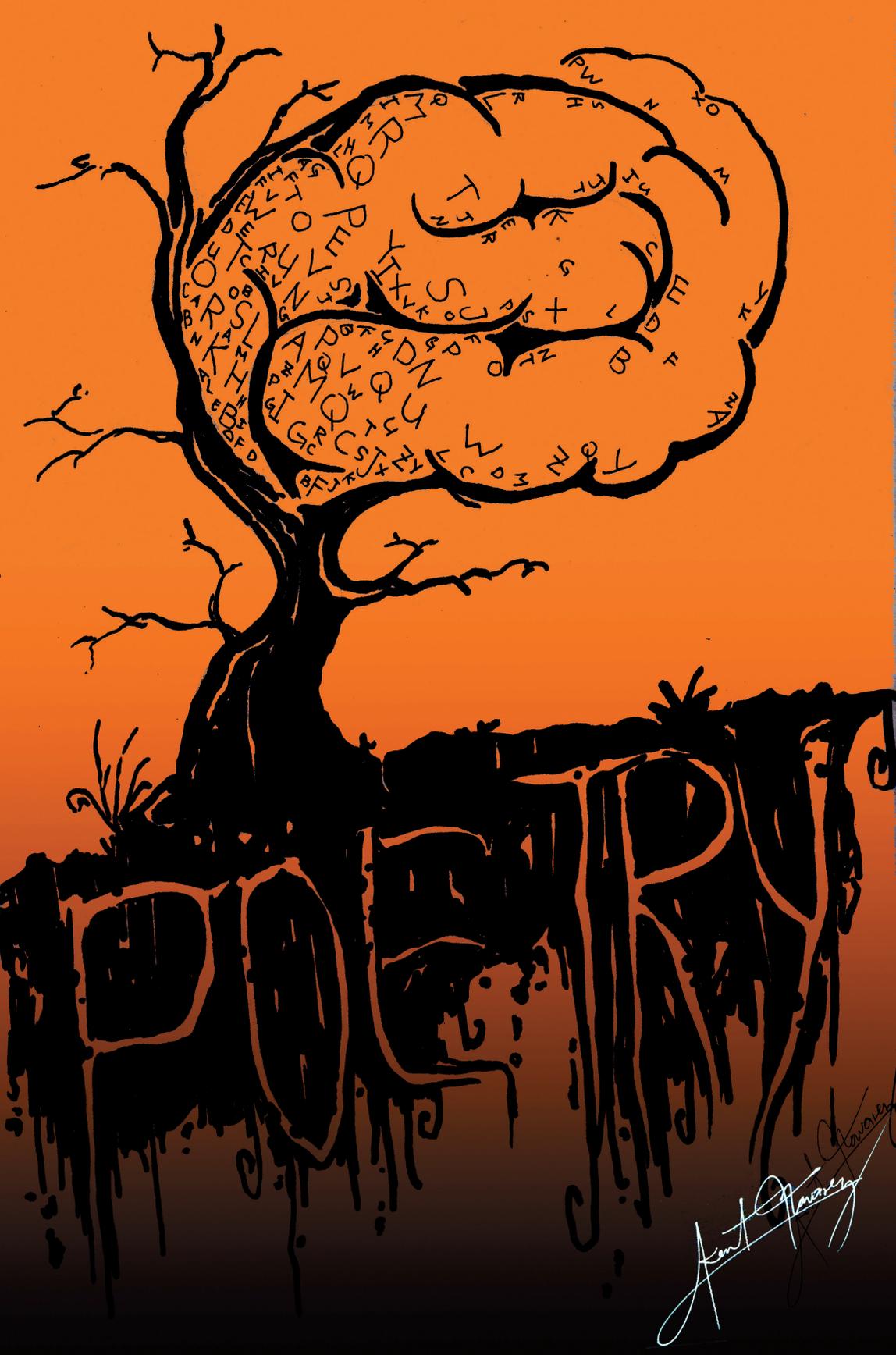
Acknowledgement



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DEDICATION

Dedicated to all students,
Inside and outside the academe,
That they may be inspired
To take their pens,
And with their voices,
Reveal to the world
The precious gem of truth.



Art Amorey



A FESTONING OF WORMS

Jeopril Jane R. Pableo

Someday I will be honored food for worms;
In that extremity, I will not want
For company, for lacking wit to flaunt
Or warmth to share, I fraternize with germs.
Still, lying there, on those unyielding terms,
I shall recall, while in that sacred haunt,
The song you sing my furtive art, to taunt
And draw it from the refuge it affirms.
So do not mourn me, when the moment comes,
And spare the soil your melancholy tears.
Fear not the bugles, or the muffled drums,
But let the perfect sunlight burn your ears,
For note—those worms shall listen close and say:
She still sings here; we dine another day.

5-7-5

Jeopril Jane R. Pableo

As I hold my breath,
Forever I'll clasp my peace
And wallow in gloom...

ULAN

Jeopril Jane R. Pableo

Sama tag hanga di kaw ang gipa-abot...
Wa damha nga muabot ka'g dayon-dayon.

Sa mga dahon ikaw mihalok,
Ug sa yuta ikaw migakos.

Bas-al Bas-al
Bas-a kining mga kamot
Nga gapaabot sa mga tulo
Gikan sa atop.

ACRONYM

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Comel Let's discover the beauty of this home.
Open yourselves to the palpable possibilities of holistic development.
Respect, indisputable dedication and renewal of faith.

Just say YES and let's commit along with this community.
Earnestly, helps you draw out your very best,
Shaping and molding whatever potentials, talents and passions.
Unifies you to the sustaining responsibility towards social transformation.

Clever as you are, treasure this place and be
Overwhelmed to the luxurious power of compassion.
Loyal as you are, live your life with this institution, be filled with
Love, respect, and kindness till the end of
Eternity, forever, infinity or beyond.
Guided by genuine commitment, grateful and
Entrusting a better future to the hands of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

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ANG KINABUHI PAGHUMAN UG SKWELA

Dean Paul E. Quirit

"Hay salamat. Human na ang kalbaryo"
Mao kana ang sampit pag-abot ug Marso
Wala gahuna-huna unsay mahitabo
Paghuma'g paminaw sa maestra'g maestro

Sa pagdawat sa diploma, kalipay masinati
Bayad sa mga kalisod niadto nga gibati
Si mama'g papa perti ang ngisi
Pagpangita'g kwarta hala perti ka grabi

Andam na ba musulod sa tinuod nga kinabuhi
Mao kana, matubag ra gyud og oo o dili
Apan kung nagduhaduha, lingkuri sa kadali
Kung makahuna-huna na, tindogig isulti

Sa pagbitbit sa diploma, padulong sa aplyan
Kakulba og kaguol, dili gyud mabayran
Pag-abot, tao perti kadaghan
Isa-isahon pa gyud ug tawag unta kaloy-an

Paghuman sa isa, baklay na pod pahawa
Padulong sa bag-o na pod nga nagapangita
Pag-abot, mao ra man gihapon
Isa-isahon pa gyud ug tawag, madawat unta puhon

Kung madawat, mapasalamaton sa Ginoo
Excited na kayo musulod sa trabaho
I-GM dayon tanan sa contacts
Replyan pod dayon ug congrats

Apan kung dili madawat better luck next time
Wala kabalo, you are next in line
Ayaw kawala'g pag-asa
Mao jod kana, kinabuhi paghuma'g eskwela

CHECKMATE

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

This parcel is the chessboard
Played by two valiant hands
Driven by perhaps boredom
Probably by tricky random

Pawns always be the bait
Life's essence is on late
Do this, do those
Just for job's sake.

Cavalier's may then come
With their horse adorned with L-charm
Or maybe metal, titanium or platinum
Bulletproof? Life not yet assured

Some do the rescue
Pace the black and white diagonals
Abruptly move without clue
Bishop's breathe at stake, alas!

Almost were lost, almost.
The hands at play has no other choice
But to protect the King from sudden lost
Using the initiative of Queen's poise

She is ever-powerful.
Always take the chances at full
Multitasking and oh, so awful!
Secret's "beauty is deceitfull"

Yet due to that clever manipulation
Her quest's over, and then adapts the situation
The rook may took over
Take the King in total cover.
Life's inevitable, so much death is

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Poor and pitiful are those chess pieces
Prompt to be a lure in a trap
Inspired by the license, whatta crap.

When everything's dark and unclear
When all the lights eaten by grave
Those lost pieces will never be the same
Fade away with time, due to that "checkmate"

This parcel is a bloody chessboard
Played by two tricky hands
Certainly driven by nasty intentions, penny
Joined in one manipulation, oh reality.

SEEN ZONED

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

It hurts to chat you,
Waiting for a reply, no more,
But a check and time.

DANGER ZONED

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Jumping a high cliff,
Thought, someone's catching below.
Too much love kills you.

FRIEND ZONED

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

I love you as friend.
Forever, we'll be the same,
Stay, my boy best friend.

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

Gerlie Lasat

What makes my fairytale different from others?

When I chose to be Cinderella, my Prince had no intention to find the owner of the lost pair of glass shoes.

Then I wanna be Jasmine, yet Aladdin didn't gave me the chance to ride on a magic carpet and witness the beauty of the world together with him.

I tried to be Bella, in dismay Edward wasn't there to save me when I'm in danger and I just tried my best to save myself.

Then, to be Aurora was my choice and again, my Prince didn't take the risk to search for me and bring me back to life.

Lastly, I became Rose but suddenly, Jack would just leave me dying in the sinking ship.

I get tired of being somebody else, I just wanna be ME
Still, I can't deny the fact that HE can't Love me the way I Love Him.

That's the bitter reality I want to escape...

Fairytales have happy Endings,
While mine is just a fantasy with no
"HAPPILY EVER AFTER"

WISH

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Wish I have the right,
Call you mine, care and love you.
Yet, wish is futile.

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GINTONG BUTIL

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Kay sarap makita ang bunga ng aking pinaghirapan
Dugo't pawis aki'y inalay, tagiktik ng luha'y puhunan,
Makamit lamang taos-pusong inasam-asam
Dumating ang araw, aanihin mga gintong laman.

Kay lawak ng lupain, kayraming sakripisyo
Suhol sa trabahador, pambili ng saktong punla
Baon mga medisina't pampataba
Buwis buhay'ng naghintay, tumubo lang itong munting palay.

Kailangan ko'ng sumugal sampu ng aking kabaro
Maikayod ang pamilya't matugunan ang pangangailangan
Mapakain mula sa lagablab ng gutom,
Mabihisan mula sa sungit nga panahon,
Mapag-aral mga kabataan mula sa pagka-uhaw sa edukasyon.

Subalit nagkalat mga leyon'g mapanlinlang
Handang kumitil ng buhay
Halang mga kaluluwa't budhi ay itim
Upang lalo lang mapaunlad, yaman ay mapalalim.

O nasan ba? Benepisyo para sa magsasaka?
Lupa'y tigang, uhaw, hinihintay milagro ng ulan
Mga punla'y 'di sapat, 'di ba maibigay ng tapat?
Daan ay lubak, pagbebenta sa ani'y dagdag hirap.

Ang laki naman ng epekto ng karahasang ito.
Dagdag presyo'y nakapatong sa merkado
Pati mahihirap hindi makabili ng sapat,
Pagka't pera'y kulang pambili ng bigas.

Ang daming rason, nagkalat, doon, dito.
Di umano'y umaangkat pa tayo mula sa ibayo.
Tanong ko'y, anong nangyari sa aming produkto?
Nakatago ba iyon at pinagkait ng kung sino?

Ngayo'y umiinit, isyu tungkol sa bigas
Illegal na gawi'y umusad, lumantad
Sino'ng dapat umangkin sa kasalanan?
Yaon ba'ng naghihirap mula sa kawala't kadukhaan?
Yaon ba'ng desperadong rebelyon laban sa nanunungkulan?
O yaong lagablab ng kapitalismo at ng nasa pwesto?

Ninais ko'ng sumugal sampu ng aking kasamahan
Piniling kumayod, iahon pamilya mula sa hirap
Ngunit ang nag-iisang puhunan at panlaban
Ay wari'y ginto sa mata ng kasukdulan.

GISING NA. BANGON NA.

Ruschelle Cossid

Marami na ang naghihirap
Marami na ang nasasaktan
Walang gumagawa ng kilos
Walang matatakbuhan

Hindi na tayo nagsawa sa lugar na ating kinasadlakan
Puno ng pang-aapi, pagdurusa at kahirapan
Kailan pa kaya tayo makakaahon sa ganitong sitwasyon
Kung makukuntento lang tayo sa pangako nilang walang aksyon

Palayain sa korapsyon, bayang nagdurusa
lahon sa pagkagalugmok mga mamamayang inalispusta
Gisingin ang damdaming uhaw sa suporta
Ipagsigawan ang mga hinaing nang marinig nila

Oh Juan dela Cruz, idilat mo ang iyong mga mata
Sa ganitong mga sitwasyon, wag kang magpapadala
Lumaban ka. Manalig ka.
Gising na. Bangon na.

HARD TO PRETEND I'M OKAY

Jason Boyd Aldanese

I walked out from my comfort zone
Now thinking I was and always be alone
Insisting things have been okay
But of course it doesn't go that way

This thing is harder than a mere math problem
It is solving life's greatest emotional mayhem
Wearing the fakest smile of all
Empowered with false confidence will call

I know you heard it on your ears
But your heart didn't listen
You saw me smiling without fears
You're naive I am bleeding

And now I'm facing the battlefield
With all the lies as my stoutest shield
This battle is between me and my ego
So at the end of this war: no loser, no hero

I am a poet so why not anger be written?
Man, there are things that's best when it's hidden
I can yell her heart is numb, she can't feel anything
Yet I have to consider this irrational feeling

This thoughts of self-infliction is bound to nowhere
But how can I help it? I have to burst somewhere
It's no less of a man to beg for her to stay
It's just hard for me to pretend that I'm okay

WITHIN ME

Janelle Tan

Why do this to me and cause me hurt?
You make my heart feel like it has been burnt.
Girls have been flirting here and there,
What makes you think I will not care?

Your eyes that sparkle have made me weak,
And that smile tattooed throughout the week.
Girls keep on asking if you have one,
Ouch! Its painful, it hurts! It is not that fun.

You have denied me, me you have denied!
My heart has come to a stop and died.
The girl and guy going together,
Like its they're happy ever after.

Now that I'm all alone in the dark,
I must remove and get rid of this mark.
You've never learned to fall inlove,
Gotta set free this lonely little dove.

Now that I've told what I felt for you,
I know you don't feel the same way too.
Give me a break; I should not rush,
This is what a girl feels towards her crush.

A POEM TO A LONG GONE LOVE

Janelle Tan

When she was first year you made her cry,
Like rain drops fell from the tears in her eyes.
You said to her once, don't fall in love with me.
She wondered and wondered why it should be.

Then second year came, she still loves you.
She thought and thought if you feel the same way too.
You said to her I love you; time went by,
She did not know it was just a lie.

Next was third year, she fell in love with someone,
But her heart was there to her only one.
She waited and waited for you to knock the door,
There wasn't any, not once anymore.

Fourth year came and she still waited,
But you made her a fool, dimwitted.
Not knowing that she already knew,
Your reply was always a no.

College came she said to herself,
I'm sick; I'm tired not thinking of myself.
I must move on so that what is lost will be gained,
I'll never be that same girl again.

MORBIDITY

Janelle Tan

His core gets agitated,
His being slowly shattered.
Morbidity, face unpainted,
Mourning for his sinking soul.

Waiting for the sun to rise,
Hoping for another day.

Bewildered to ask himself,
"Do I belong to this gentry?
Or should I dispise myself,
And make me feel I am filthy?"

Timid soul get out of the reef;
Restrain from the misery.
Impel yourself to be good,
And muster up your energy.

Waiting for the sun to rise,
Hoping for another day.

SNOW: TO A FILIPINO CHILD

Janelle Tan

I had dreamt if such a fairytale,
But I guess it was just an epic fail.
Listening to songs while I was watching,
To the Christmas balls that were glistening.
Snow, please when will you fall?
For now I have been growing tall.
Years, years, years and years had passed,
I hope that this waiting won't last.

Childhood memories make you sweet,
While Frosty the Snowman was at his feet.

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MISSED

Jex Anne Fajardo

I should have done this.
I should have done that.
I should have gone there.
Before I totally stayed here.

I should have laughed like crazy.
I should have played 'til I'm dizzy.
I should have believed in fairytales.
Before reality creates boundaries by rails.

I should have sung to the top of my voice.
I should have danced by choice.
I should have made use of my strengths
Before I'm paralyzed by the ends.

I should have travelled east.
I should have experienced these.
I should have eaten more,
Before staying in this core.

I should have made friends.
I should have made plans.
I should have slept long.
Before listening to that sad song.

I should have tanned my skin.
I should have made time with my kin.
I should have not missed the sunsets.
Before time freezes my moments.

I should have enjoyed the rain.
I should have tried to act insane
I should have enjoyed my age
Before I realize now I ain't sage.
I should have gone to parties.
I should have enjoyed luxuries.
I should have awoken early every morning
Before I'm left, forever sleeping.

I should have seized time.
I should have treated it a lime
These, I should have did.
Before I realized I'm already dead.

FAKED

Jex Anne Fajardo

I am pained yet I managed to smile.
I laugh though I think I have to cry.
I converse though I could hardly talk,
I step even when I know I couldn't walk.
All faked. Teeth are gritted.
Because these were what people expected.

WHO ARE YOU?

Jex Anne Fajardo

He smiled at me, didn't he?
He's familiar, isn't he?
Seems like I already met him.
I just don't know when.

Those conversant eyes stared.
Waiting to be registered.
No one dared to speak.
I could hear an awkward creek.

As I tried to remember who he is
His eyes were mad, "Why did you miss?"
That familiar smile quickly left,
Looking down, he wept.

Then came memories at last!
He left me hanging in the past.
He caused a scar in my heart
I believe it's not part of the art.

I felt victory inside
I'm happy I did not confide.
Knowing he left me by surprise?
I'm telling you, I became wise.

HOW TO DIE

Jex Anne Fajardo

Who wants to die? Who wants to die?
Who wants to see truths beyond the eyes?
Here are some tips. These are not lies!
Here are the ways on how to die.

Love someone who won't love you back.
That's better than drowning yourself on a water tank
Keep on loving someone who keeps on hurting you.
That's better than stabbing yourself out of the blue.

Stay far away from someone you love.
That's a lot better than hanging yourself above.
Trust someone who always breaks promises.
That's more painful than your flesh's slices.

Love someone who loves another being.
That's more hurting than jumping on the tallest building.
Tie yourself to someone who's already gone.
That's more painful than pulling off a gun.

Do everything for someone who won't do a thing for you.
That's more painful than setting on the highway without a cue.
Suffer for someone who won't have bruises for your expense.
That's better than drinking hundreds of unprescribed medicines.

You want to die? Just follow these.
These are better. You'll feel the bliss.
Do all these tips come what may!
Yes! Surely, you'll die every day.
Who wants to die? These are not lies.
Here are some tips! Who wants to die?

BENEDICTUS CHORALE

Kristine Jane Agad

The best thing ever in our life
To be in love and to be loved
Most of all to be with our God
These are the things we've been treasured.

Wondering like a little child,
Asking like a cute anxious child—
"Where is God?"
Have voyage in his watchful mind
Ladies and gents, "we say" —
"Where a tender word is spoken
Where a noble deed is done,
Where love is, God is there,
For God is love, my little One."

Things flowed out eagerly by heart
Like choirs of angel up above—
A glad song in the lips,
Brilliant sparks in the eyes,
Win some smiles on the face,
A wee bit of lithe grace.
These are the things we are in like,
We are BC, a melody in your heart
Strong affection
I thought I'm clear
But I'm so err
I thought I'm tough

But I was not good enough.

I thought I can deny this
But baby I can't.
I thought I can ignore you,
But mind here without you is so blue.
The more I hide this
The more it burst inside
The more I go away
The more I want you to stay.

Words were not enough
Appreciations were not enough
My heart beats fast and
My mind is getting rough.

I want to detour
But dead end instead.
I want to escape
But I'm cornered.

Do you feel what I feel?
Oh! Don't do this to me!
You stole my heart first
And now you hypnotized my mind with your dazzling fist.

Please don't look at me
'Cause I'm going to be melted
Please don't smile
'Cause with that I'm going to be frozen.

KABALIGTARAN

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Dangal

Dakila, marangal,

Hinahangaan, hinahangad, ipinaglalaban

Kumpiyansa sa sarili, respeto, kabastusan, kawalan,

Itinatakwil, iniwasan, pinapabayaan,

Suwail, marupok,

Walangdangal.

Mayaman

Maganda, matiwasay,

Iniidolo, pinapansin, hinahangaan,

Maganyak, pera, mahirap, pulubi,

Inaapakan, dinuduraan, binababoy,

Kaawa-awa, walang muwang,

Dukha.

Manloloko

Makapangyarihan, wais,

Kumakaibigan, nagtatago, nagsisinungaling,

Traydor, ahas, tanga, biktima,

Mapagparaya, nagtitiwala, naiiwan,

Luhaan, kawawa,

Nagpapaloko.

Buhay

Sagrado, maliwanag,

Nagpapatuloy, pinapasalamatan, itinatanggol,

Panalangin, kalayaan, katapusan, kadiliman,

Itinitigil, iniiyakan, winawasak,

Malabo, walang kulay,

Kamatayan.

ACQUAINTANCE

Kristine Jane Agad

The world is round
And we are in one-bound
You will be fully attached to Him soon
But forget me, NOT huh!

The joy we share together
The memories that we live forever
The path that we walk together
And the fate that guides us forever.

You are a friend
A very benevolent friend
Hoping that you'll remain to the end of
A true ally that I know.

At some future time
You will become a clergyman
A cleric where I can turn in
Someday at some place not specified.

Hopefully, if I feel so weak
You'll be there to heal my sickness
On the day that sorrow come
You'll be there when I have no one.

You will be my light
In the darkest fight
You will be my strength
In the weakest night.

Of all the memories
For having a good camaraderie
I don't know how to thank you for being able.
I can only say it's unutterable.

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“MOON EMBRACING THE SUN”

Merry Christine Jane Cabalbug

As the moon shines so bright like a diamonds with delight
The sun glimmers as it shines bright but hides so hard at night
As they dwell with a strong attacks that is brilliant might

If I would pick the righteous one to be fight
I can always see you through in my sight
But what I want is to see you both's part
And I just think if YOU and I confront

It appears dig lot just in a scene of eclipse
When I saw it with a beautiful scheme lime
It flickers a light that shines untrimmed insight
My heart and mind decides that I can pick the bright

ANXIETY

Merry Christine Jane Cabalhug

I always feel that I was all alone
I didn't even notice the people
My depression was about to erupt
Because I'm stuck thinking things so fast

I didn't even took care about them
Because they didn't give care for me too
I can stop my mind to be in a race
Nobody understands me, even me

All I want is love and care
But now I just have insanity
And I feel pity to myself
Because here's anxiety that breaks me.

FRIEND ZONED

Kristine Jane Agad

We were once strangers
In the midst of the darkness
I am not known as you were
You are good, you are great.

As time goes by
We became friends
I thought it will not happen,
But it is.

I don't know what I felt since we've met
A kind of feeling that I cannot distinguish
I keep on asking what this is,
Is this what they called love? Isn't it?

Yes it is, perhaps.
A kind of love that is not a natural love
A love that is not a friendly love,
But a love that is a genuine love.

You have been closed to my heart since then
You are liked a shining star in the sky;
No matter how hard I tried to reach you,
But you are still beyond my reach.

I love you
But I don't know if you love me too
You are sweet to me many times
But I know the reasons behind.

I know that it's not wrong to be sweet on someone
What makes it wrong?
When I think, expect, feel, and fall
If it's just an amiable love after all.
Though I'm contented on what we are now
But there are times NOT!
I want to go beyond our relationship
A relation that is intimate.

I have been thought like that
But I also thought the contrary
The side where we can keep each other
That's what we called Friendship.

I will just keep this feeling
To continue our earnest affiliation
If you love me too
But not the same sensation as I do.

Your love is just an amicable love
But my love is an intimate love
And this what I called Friend zoned
That's closed likely to one-sided love.

KURAKOT

Ruschelle Cossid

Sa atong panahon karun
Daghang tao ang gigutom
Ilang mga kwarta kay gipangkumkum
Sa mga politikong giuna ang ilang kaugalingon

Asa naman intawon ang hustisya
Sa mga politikong dili makunsensiya
Hinaut dili ninyo kalimtan ang inyong misyon
Para ang mga tawo dili makunsimisyon

Singgit sa mga tao kamo'y ikulong
Aron maundang na ang problema sa korapsyon
Ang among kwarta perti namong gihaguan
Gibayad namo na para sa atong kalambuan

Ikulong. Ikulong. Ikulong.
Mga kurakot sa'tong nasyon
Mao kini ang nag-inusarang solusyon
Sa walay undang na korapsyon

LIVE FOR YOUR DREAMS

Dean Paul E. Quirit

People want to soar high
To achieve their goals and dreams in life
Whatever it takes to be satisfied
Risks will be taken, not to be tired

In the road to success, sometimes not easy
Sometimes rough, it makes us feel empty
Without the faith, something's lacking
Motivation and encouragement to keep going

If people are poisoned by other people
Ready to devour their conscience and be in trouble
Who'll be united to keep their dreams strong?
To help and guide them from wrong

Living in this world full of temptations
Money and power all in possessions
Once these appear, eyes are blinded
Willing to work even souls are gambled

You need to fight to win
You need to strive to gain
Keep your minds straight to succeed
Don't let your dreams be wasted

MANYIKA

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Kadtong linghod pa ang huna-huna,
Wala'y laing ginapangandoy na makuha,
Kun dili ang manyika na ginabaligya,
Sa tinderang kwarta ang ginapangita.

Apan tungod sa kawad-on
Wala gyu'y higayon
Na makab-ot ko ang gamay'ng pangandoy
Na gikadalo sa pit-os nga panahon.

Pero niabot jud ang punto
Nga dili lang dulaan ang ginahandom.
Gusto ko mutungtung usab
Sa eskwelahan bisa'g hayskul lang.

Pero nganu ning kalibutan?
Lisod pa sa pit-os ang ginaagian,
Grasya lang makakaon katulo, isa ka adlaw.
Himala na ang mapalitan ug gamit sa eskwelahan.

Apan luyo sa kalisod,
Nangandoy ko sa kinabuhing haruhay.
Misulay sa mga s'yudad,
Ug mibiya sa pamilya uban ang paglaom.

Nakakaplag ako sa usa ka pamilya.
Ako isip usa ka mutsatsa,
Nitoo sa mga saad na makaeskwela
Ug makatilaw sa kinabuhing dugay nang gihandom.

Dako gayud ang kalipay nga natagamtaman,
Sa dihang duol na ang akong mga damgo.
Napalit ko na ang mga gusto,
Nakapadala sa pamilya'g nakaipon aron mulambo.
Naangkon ko na usab ang manyika,
Nga nahimong simbolo sa akong pangandoy.

Ang manyika na nakaplagan ning linghod nga hunahuna,
Nahimo usab simbolo sa tibuok kong pagkatao.
Tinuod! Naharuhay ako sa mubong panahon,
Tungod kay usa ako ka manyika sa s'yudad.
Usa ka dulaan nga ginabaligya.

LONGING

Ruschelle Cossid

As I sat looking at the stars
There I see an image of you
Smiling at me with sparkling eyes
That makes the night shine so bright

I remember those times that I'm with you
Vague dreams of mine seem to come true
Loving you is my total bliss
And will last forever until we rest in peace

How I wish to be with thee
Creating sweet memories with you dreamily
In the last few days of my life
I hope you will be here to stand by my side

How I wish to be a wondrous star
Guiding you unceasingly wherever you are
Even though you're not here by my side
Don't worry I'll think of you all the time

It's been years that we don't see
But my love for you will never fade
Love that no one can ever cease and replace
Memories will be treasured and will never be erased

Let us always keep our love aglow
Like an abundant river that continuously flow
Wishing to our omnipotent God that you are here
Is what I always pray for many years

*Kaalam
74*

OH! SO HOT!

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Oh! So hot!
Is the air from the west.
Trapped in the dungeon,
'Tis sweet tropical location.

Oh! So hot!
Even the freezing point of water,
Trembling and boiling,
Alas! A release of quivering air.

Oh! So hot!
Are those six-packs of Apollo.
An innocent deception
Bondage of own passion.

Yeah, so hot,
All of these stuff.
Yet the norms of sultry
Far beyond, far away.

Indeed, so hot,
You scorched me and thirst me.
You unlock the door
Embracing the luscious call of nation.

It is so hot,
Can't you feel?
It is so hot,
Aren't all aware?

Blazing fire from counting stars,
Scorching heat from hungry souls,

Oh fiery notion of rotten system
Red, yellow, orange craving eyes,
Still, aren't all got degree burns?
A degree of realists, activists and idealists?

Seriously, it's so hot,
Perhaps air condition's not enough.
Then what are we gonna do?
Empower fire? Reject fire?

Oh, so hot!
Not instigated by tropical location,
Neither paradox of heat,
Not even the desire of beautiful eyes
Yeah, so hot,
Stuff from compendium of people's guts.

DO YOU FEEL?

Dean Paul E. Quirit

Do you see what I see?
Our society full of jealousy
When one succeeds
The other one protests

Do you feel what I feel?
Our society full of scarcity
People long for betterment
People long for achievement

I hope you sense the reality
Despite of other's insensitivity
Maybe this world hangs over
If we take actions, this could be better

ONE HEART

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

We're gathered together,
We're equally made.
One, two, three
A hundred million breaths.

Lo! The top is there
Consider the bottom here
North, East, West,
South be not the least.

The head is one
Yet the body's vast
Still we have
'Tis li'l passionate heart.

Indeed, just a heart
Then why thee fight?
Over a small piece of parcel.
Over the freedom of power?

Oh heart, where art thou?
Would you healeth this broken land?
In need of love – the magic antidote,
Bind the arteries of people.

Thirsty, hungry
Satisfy me, feed me
Wait, just a moment
The core of worship is broken.
Uh-huh, how can thou cure?

There's a band-aid in your soul,
Slowly, pieces slowly growl
Seems a fading wish in the shore.
What's the matter?
Where's the wound?
The heart is rotten.
The conviction is beaten.

North rests for the cross,
South goes for the moon,
The star, all alone.
Indeed, the blood is dispersed.

Perhaps we found it
The probable cause of paucity.
Hand in hand, go work together
Heal that one heart for the better.

Different beliefs,
Different cultures
Hitherto, no matter what happens,
Search for the dove of silence.

Twenty seven at twelve,
Marks the hundred unfold of millions.
A manifestation of body growth,
Please, mirror it to love's growth.

There's just one heart,
Many, different body parts.
Make it work in collaboration,
Driven by that one organ's compassion.

INCEST

Pinky Jane Albarando

Isang ama. Isang ina.
Dalawang kaluluwang hindi nagkita.
Panahon ang naghiwalay.
Kapwa walang malay.

Karamay. Kapatid. Kasiping.

Hindi ko kasalanan!
Ang lagi kong sigaw.
Ako ma'y pinaglaruan!
Ngunit ang awa ay hanaw.

Mag-isa kong hinarap ang pahirap.
Tiniis ang mga patay na pangarap.
Kaya't sa iyong pagdating,
Masisi ba kung ika'y mahalín?

Sinong nakakaalam?
Pag-ibig ko'y hindi naparam.
Sinong mag-aakala?
Babala'y binalewala.

Kaya ang sarili'y pinawalan.
Sya at akoy nag-aliwan.
Huli nang malaman.
Sariling kapatid ang sinukuan.
Ngayo'y naging katuwaan.
Bulong-bulong ay nagsilabasan
Buntis si Ana!
Kapatid mismo ang tumira!

SSHH...

Pinky Jane Albarando

Sa malayo kita'y minamasdan.
Wag mo sana mapansin.
Sa dilim ika'y sinusundan.
Wag mo sanang lingonin.

Araw-araw ikaw ang laman,
Isip sa puso'y walang laban.
Boses mo'y syang pinapangarap.
Haplosin mo't nasa alapaap.

Ngunit pilit kong kinukubli.
Damdamin ko'y walang makakapagsabi.
Takot ko'y magalit ka.
Bakit ngiti mo'y di na makita.

Subalit ano itong aking naririnig?
Ikaw raw'y may ibang iniibig?
Sino syang humamak pumagitna?
Nahan sya't aking masira?

Sya'y aking sinundan.
Bibig nya'y binusalan.
Hindi na nakapanlaban,
Patalim ko'y binaon sa tagiliran.

Sshh! Wag kang iiyak mahal.
Tahan na't ang hinagpis ay bawal.
Papahiran ko't hahagkan.
Bawa't luha'y pupunasan.

Irog wala na ang sagabal.
Mahalika'y aking pinaglaban.
Ikaw sa aki'y walang aagaw.
Si kamatayan man ang lumigaw.

KAPARIS NI EBA

Pinky Jane Albarando

Alam kong ikagagalit nya.
Paniguradong masusuka sya.
Hindi nya na ako hahagkan.
Bagkus kanyang pandidirihan.

Ang kaparis ko'y isang manlilinlang.
Isang ahas, suwail, makasalanan.
Tama lang na ako'y parusahan.
Ang kamatayan ay sapat lamang.

Ngunit masisi ba nya?
Kung ang hangad lama'y mahalina sya?
Kung ang bawat pangarap ng puso
Sa kanya lamang magkakatotoo?

Pagsinta'y di tinanggap.
Ako raw'y isang Adan na mapangarap
Ahh! Kay pait!
Pag-ibig na di maipilit.

Ngunit ako'y nagmamahal.
Handang magpakahangal.
Sakit at pahirap ay ininda.
Maging kaparis lamang ni Eba.

Kaya't ikaw na nakakaalam.
Ang bibig ay busalan.
Hayaan mong ako'y magpakasya.
Sa piling ng aking sinasamba.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA

Jason Boyd Aldanese

Push the button, Windows Open
Click the Browser, you're doing it often
Enter the address, press the key
You're in Social Media that easy
Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
Some of your online Headquarters
Where there are sweet, bland and bitter
And tons of hideous cyber bashers

Internet molds a new kind of atmosphere
A free environment enticing people to adhere
But what entails to this new world we see
Would it be beneficial for you and for me?

The speedy global trend
Rapidly spreading without no end
Thus violence sprouted out
Creating chaos from north to south

And then pornography was now established
"we have freedom, we can't be banished"
The innocence of children converted to curiosity
Then Presto! Here comes teenage pregnancy
Yet, there is always another side of the coin
The fact that every man regardless of status can join
That a community is born beyond our PC's screen
United, with freedom, that's a majestic scene



SUNDIAL

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Sundial, it gives us time
Determines our exact lifespan of vine
Only for the knowledge of Creator
Caring and warning us, it's His monitor.

Sundial, we are dependent to its scope
Every grain of dust falling means wasted hope

Or perhaps, productive deeds we do
Contribute to the welfare of people, nation too.

Sundial, provides chances to mistakes
Undo the past, redo the present
Copy and paste the future's stake
For no more regrets, no more resents.
Sundial, how long would you live?
Are you satisfied, are you filled?
Things you want to do before you leave?
Realizations, confessions, submissions before God's, are sealed?

Sundial, live life to the utmost.
Time is gold can't be brought
Back to the place of the alpha,
Crap! Relativity is the company of omega.

Sundial, dust falling fast
Couldn't lead, no conscious control
Sabotage of natural sundial
Grave is vogue, definite and vocal
Hush! Stillness' total.

TWO LITTLE PIGS

Juven Nino Villacastin

Two little pigs lived in a farm
And they almost lived perfectly.
If it wasn't just for a bad misunderstanding,
They could've made everyone else happy.

The first pig was Sam,
And he was to become ham.
Mr. Farmer loved Sam dearly.
And also did Sam.
The second pig was Jason.
And he was to become bacon.
Mr. Farmer loved Jason dearly too.
And also did Jason.

One fine day,
In a hot, Saturday morn'
The two pigs argued
Over a barrel of corn.

"I'm Mr. Farmer's favorite!
People really love ham."
Exclaimed with faith,
Poor little Sam.

"No, I'm Mr. Farmer's favorite!
More people love bacon."
Angrily rebutted,
Poor little Jason.

"Now now, calm down you two
Mr. Farmer loves both of you.
If you keep fighting over this matter,
I might just nuke moo the two of you."

Calmly interrupted Mr. Cow,
But the two pigs wouldn't listen.
They simply don't know how
Pointless their fight had gotten.

Day and night, hour by hour,
They fought all over the farm.

Throwing things over each other,
Hence putting everyone else's way in harm.

Until one day,
Every animal in the farm fled.
And when Mr. Farmer knew this,
He became very very sad.

"Why are the two of you fighting?"
Asked with a wide frown, poor Mr. Farmer.
"We we're arguing over who was your favorite."
Said Jason, throwing an apple grenade at Sam after.

"But don't you see, the two of you,
That I love both of you the same?
Now look what you have done,
Surely, you two are to blame."

Mr. Farmer angrily said,
And he became very very mad.
The two pigs ruined the farm
And it was all that Mr. Farmer had.

Poor little pigs,
They didn't know
That they were arguing
Over who would first "go."

'Cause at the end of the day
To becoming pork both of them will go
If they'd just realized that sooner,
Maybe things would've been better.

Didn't get the message, did 'ya?
Well, it's pretty easy.
God is represented by Mr. Farmer,
And the pigs are the religious who believe
That they are God's true chosen saviors.

Simply put, whatever religion you belong to
There's some truth in it too.
"Mr. Farmer" loves us all with no exception
Regardless of what "dish" we end up into.

THINK WISELY

Dean Paul E. Quirit

We hear them say "Vote for me, vote for me"
Voice out loud, we hope to see
Men holding papers
Giving them to the voters

On the day, "I'll vote for them" I say
Not in mind, how deserving and responsible are they
In shading circles, we hope to prosper
But when taking over, we slowly suffer

In need, they're there to know
Thinking we're in a class of low
Seeking for help, we crave it most
Concern! Mercy! Have you been lost?
In projects they implement and do
People really longing for them to
Money they spend, in pockets where it stays
Conscience! Conscience! Don't let them live this way

Who wants these to happen?
Only careless people will remain in silence
While wise men try to do something
Change! Change! For this kind of governing

We hear them say "Vote for me, vote for me"
Voice out loud, we hope to see
Men holding papers, giving them to the voters
Think wisely! Think wisely! For our better future

WHATEVER YOU SAY

Jason Boyd Aldanese

So what if I am Black and You are born White?
Don't look at the color, language or the height
'Cause God has given us the world equally
You don't judge a person based what you see

Asian or Hispanic, it's the same Earth we share
Nothing good will happen when we will be unfair
This racism problem, we all must be aware
It's a worldwide issue that anyone should care

Be proud if you're male, female or LGBT
Your worth is not measured by your sexuality
It's the good deeds you made in the society
That gives the respect to your own identity

Whether Protestant or Catholic
Hindu, Muslim, or you're Agnostic
Jew, Buddhist or even Atheist
We are all human, we coexist

We must not criticize other religion's laws
For we all have our beliefs, our proofs and our flaws
We have different convictions, different views
But we are all humans, there's no need to argue

Discrimination, gives us nothing but conflict
Yet this could be stop if we will fight against it
Whatever is your color, preference or race
'Cause that is what we are, we all need to embrace.

YOLO

Juven Niño Villacastin

Life is short.
Enjoy it while you can.
But that isn't an excuse
To live like you got nothing to lose.

In every moment that's new,
A lesson's always learned.
But no wisdom lies in one
In moments you act absurd.

Every breath is a blessing
And you're life is well-plot.
So, with it, don't start abusing
'Cause that's all you got.

You only live once
That's a fact that you should know
Spend your time wisely though
So your last words won't be #YOLO.

PARADOX BEHIND THE TRUTH

Juven Niño Villacastin

Life

Is filled with paradoxes
That only a few can understand:

It takes liberty to understand
That the more we are united,
The more the world is divided;

It takes solitude to understand
That in silence
Will man be united with himself;
It takes humility to understand
That the less you know,
The more you see;
It takes guts to understand
That the more you see,
The more you get hurt;

It takes pain to understand
That the more you get hurt,
The more you are capable of loving;

It takes love to understand
That the more you love something,
The more you have to let it go;

It takes wisdom to understand
That in order to be truly happy,
One has to understand how life works;

And

Once you realize the paradox of the truth,
Only will you understand life:
In sorrow comes joy;
In death comes life.

IT'S MORE "FUN" IN THE PHILIPPINES

Juven Niño Villacastin

Totoo talagang sa Pilipinas
It's more "FUN,"
Pinipilit ng mga tao dito na ngumiti
Kahit sila ay nasa kahira-FUN.

Sa kabila ng FUN-durukot
At maramihang Fun-daraya.
Walang magawa ang mga Pinoy kun'di
Mag-pabiktima sa FUN-tastic na mga buwaya.
Kaya nga naman kung saan man sulok pumunta.
May HoldaFUN, KidnaFUN at FUN-gahasa.
Kaya nga naman it's more "FUN" dito
FUN in a sense na parating biktima ka ng FUN-loloko.

FOREVER HAS A LIMIT

Juven Niño Villacastin

We both thought it would never end;
The empty spaces of our hearts seemed to fit perfectly.
But, that was what we thought
In all those moments we spent,
When every second was infinity.

It was all too human to be exact:
Our love was built upon a lie...
For every "I love you forever" that we said
Only ends up in that one decisive goodbye.

Everything must come to an end:
Forever isn't meant to be;
Forever has a limit
And that's our reality.

GANYAN TALAGA

Dean Paul E. Quirit

Masaya ako nang makita ka
Pusoy bigla nalang sumigla
Araw-araw nais kang makita
Hanggang gabi iniisip pa rin kita

Pangalan mong napakaganda
Tulad nang iyong maamong mukha
Labi mong napakapula
Hay naku! Nakapanghihina ang iyong ganda

Ngunit isang araw nawala ka
Hindi na kita muling nakita pa
Puso'y biglang tumamlay na
Ngunit nasa isip pa rin kita
Naiintindihan ko na talaga
Hindi ko namamalayan na
Bagay dito sa mundo naririyá't nawawala
Ganyan talaga

FORBIDDEN EYE CANDY

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Our eyes met. I looked at you.
And you looked at me, too.
Why? Did you feel the same way as I did?
Or did you know what I felt for you?
And you just had rapt me if it were true.

You were flirting, weren't you?
Didn't like me for a girlfriend show?
Alas! You had one more pretty,
More feminine, more ideal than me.
Who am I to assume?

So many girls deserve enough for your eyes to set on.
Who am I to have a crush on you?
You're too handsome and so far away.
You would not know nor notice me.

But you're confusing me, my attractive mystery.
I always tried; harder not to glance your way.
No! You're silhouette's haunting me, conquering
'Tis hypothalamus, aorta's system. Holy bull!

Why oh why?
There's something in the way you catch my eye.
Eye to eye, soldering through my soul.
Piercing my gullible heart with that pretentious eyeball.
Please stop! I'm begging! It's forbidden.



PUSAKAL

Kent Bryan L. Navarez

Gabi sa lansangan
May mga pusang kumokulo ang t'yan,
Mga anak ng makukulay na ilaw
At sa karampot na sentimo'y nasisilaw.

Mapupulang mga labi,
Hubog ng katawan,
Makapal na pulbo sa pisngi,
Mga dalagang kinagigiliwan.

Neneng, sa'n ka pupunta?
"Hahanap ng pambaon sa eskwela."
Inday, para sa'n ang benta?
"Bulate ko'y gutom na!"

Para sa ikabubuti ng buhay
Kahit 'di alam ni inay
Sila'y gagapang na
nakahubad,
Kinabukasa'y hinahangad.

Isa, dalawa...
Tatlong boteng nakatumba.
Apat, lima, anim...
Kakapit sa patalim.

Pito, walo...
Tara, magtago tayo.
Siyam, sampo...
Sila'y dumarami na po.

SABI-SABI

Bonn Bolosan

"Oo, tanggap ka"
Iyan ang paulit-ulit na sabi nila
Ngunit mata ay araw-araw nangungutya

"maawa ka pa!"
'king daing habang nakagapos kamay't paa
Habang si nanay umiiyak 'lang magawa

"pantay ang batas."
Sigaw ng mga nakaupo sa itaas
Nang hinging ikasal ako'y pinalalabas

"magmahalan"
Walang sawang paala-ala ng simbahan
Ngunit nang papasok, ako ay pinagsarhan

"Oo, tanggap ka"
Iyan ang paulit-ulit na sabi nila
Sa totoo tanggap ka ba nila talaga?

BIRD'S FLY

Proceso Orcullo

How I love to think of the reverse
The irony, the ambiance, the obscurant, and the satire
Nor ethereal that meets the eye
The esoteric, a life and what life gets, from fire

Life is bestowed of two
One failure, the other success
Like a person's being
Non-conforming and conforming

This is life for some, but not for few
Mixtures of black and patches of white
This is life for one or two
The questions of what, where, and why

Human person cannot be towed
Like lower forms, from nose to ear
Sensical to move and to decide
To express, to act, to give meaning of passion and intellect combined

BEYOND HOPE

Proceso Orcullo

Man toils not for him but for all
He builds, designs, farms the land even not his own
He struggles, labors, count the days, the present and before
Hoping to have some, for rainy days to come

Often times, he dreams of things beyond
As payback from sacrifices of quite distant past
Only to find out, one's failing bond
Back to square one, will Heaven's find just.
Man's life put in episodic struggle
From day 'til night to dusk 'til dawn
To satisfy hunger of spirit and matter
It is the way to live, but not to his own.

To dream again, of good life fresh
Too, bad, neither mystery nor action in a day
Decided to retire both mind and flesh
Still hoping, dreaming one day and beyond, faith Him and me.

DIDTO TA SA NGIT-NGIT

Kent Bryan L. Navarez

"Alas nuebe sa gabii babe ha."
Magkita na sad ta
Sa lugar nga kita rang duha
Ikaw, ako, magsalo sa gugma
palipayon tika sa akong halok
maglaway ka sa akong lihoc
Lumsan tika sa akong mga mata
Kay karon, akoa ra ka.

Pinahipi atoang panag-uban
Supakon nato silang tanan
Tungod bawal man kita
Kay ako kabit ra.

SA MGA MATA NI DODONG

Bonn Bolosan

Si kuya nagakaon ug lami
Lamisa puno ug pagkaon nga sari-sari
Pero iya hulagway gapangita pa
Unsa pa'y kulang sa iyaha lamisa?

Si ate bago nasad sanina
Iya mik-ap sad kabaga
Sa iyang kamot, selpon, alahas ug relo.
Reklamo siya kay kulang pa kuno

Sa pag-abot nako ug balay
Akong Nanay naningkamot pinaypay
Iyang tinak-ang lugaw nasad
Ang sud-an asin, toyo ug bulad?

Hinubuang uniporme naglaray
Aron ipagpag na ni Tatay
Sul-ubon nasab to ug balik ugma
Gamay'ng mantisa di unta mahalata

Pagtapok sa lamisa
Akong manghud gakisi-kisi na
Nalipay siya sa nakita sa plato
Dali-dali nagpasalamat sa Ginoo

"Ginoo, salamat sa lugaw ug toyo
Nga sa gugma ni Nanay, giluto
Ayaw sad pasagdae tong uban
Sa ilang lamisa wa'y mabutang."

"Salamat Anak!" ingon ni Nanay
Dako ayo ug ngisi sa iyang hulagway
"Mangaon na tal" ambit ni Tatay
Bibo nasab ning among balay.

OF RED AND WHITE

Bonn Bolosan

She wears red and white
Proud in her every stride
Beauty in its apogee
Her face shines iridescently

A symbol of love
One she rarely upholds
Her heart filled with apathy
Is she who she claims to be?

She was taught to care
Feel the pains of the few
She wrote him a covenant
I have a frisson it's not true

She was taught to speak
Use her voice to be heard
But she restlessly prattles
In flat canard, time she squanders

She's taught to listen
Her eyes empty glistens
She never hears their wailing
If she does, she's disregarding

Of red and of white
She stands out and she's bright
People look at her in awe
Her façade blinds them as they do

Of red and of white
Symbols of what she fights
Taught compassion and kindness
Yet lives in apathy and numbness

Is this who we are?
Is this who we will be?
Questions seeking for answers
Answer hiding under our sleeves

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ANNYEONG

Jason Boyd Aldanese

Girls Generation, EXO, Yoona, Lee Min Ho, Kimchi at marami pang iba. Tila bagyo kung humagupit ang impluwensya ng mga Koryano sa ating bansa; Mula sa pananamit, istilo ng buhok, pananalita, at pati na rin ang musika. Sa pagdating ng mga puting asyano sa ating bansa ay dala nila ang instrumentong tila humipnotismo sa ating mga kababayan. Ano nga ba ang nasa mga singkit na ito't humaling na humaling tayo sa kanila? At ano ang dulot ng "Korean wave" sa modernong kultura ng mga Pilipino?

Drama

Kung ikaw ay laking dekada 90, malamang nakilala mo si Marimar, Rosalinda, Sergio Santibañes, at Facundo. Ito ay mga sikat na karakter sa naunang dayuhang telenobela sa bansa; ang Latino Mexicanovela. Patok na patok sa panlasa ng mga Pilipino sa panahong ito ang mga kwento tungkol sa mga babaeng inaapi na naging mayaman at naghiganti sa kontrabidang may kaya o ng dalawang batang pinagpalit na pagkatapos ay nagkabaliktad ang kapalaran. Naging usap-usapan sa lahat ng sulok ng bansa ang ganitong mga palabas sa telebisyon, sa katunayan maraming mga batang ipinanganak sa panahong ito ang ipinangalan sa mga sikat na karakter. Subalit, pagsapit ng ika-21 siglo ay nagbago ang panlasa natin nang lumabas ang kauna-unahang Asianovela; si Xian Cai at ang F4 sa palabas na Meteor Garden, nakuha nga ng mga Taiwanese ang hilig nating mga Pilipino sa mga palabas na hindi masyadong komplikado at magaan lang. Ngunit di nagtagal ay sumunod ang mga Koryano nang ipalabas sa ating telebisyon sina Vivian at Carlo sa palabas na Lovers in Paris na humakot ng napakaraming manonood at tagahanga, simula noon ay nagbago na ang pagmumukha ng mga ipinapalabas sa TV. Ang dating mga Mestiza at maalindog na babae ay napalitan ng mga babaeng singkit, balingkinitan at tila manikin sa ganda. Ang karaniwang matikas at Adonis na "leading man" ay napalitan na ng katamtamanang laki at

mapormang mayamang lalaki. At ang istorya mula sa mabibigat na sampalan at iyakan ay pinagaan at ginawang payak ng mga koryano. Marahil nagsawa na ang mga Pilipino sa paulit-ulit na mabibigat na pasakit na karaniwang buod ng kwento. Sa pagbabago ng buhay ng mga Pilipino ay nagbago na din ang panlasa nang ating mga kababayan.

Musika

Sa pagsikat ng mga artistang Koryano sa ating bansa, napuna nating mga Pilipino na mayroon silang naiibang uri ng musika, tunog "K-Pop" kung tawagin, mga musikang halos paulit-ulit na ang mga lirikong hindi naman natin naiintindihan (maliban na lang sa mga Pilipinong nahasa ang kahusayan sa wikang Koryano). Subalit may kasabihan nga na ang musika ay para sa pangkalahatan, ang mga tunog na ito ang pumatok sa ating mga Radyo, sa Myx, at maging sa mga videoke bars at tindahan. Kinilala natin ang mga kantang "Nobody but You" ng Wonder Girls "I Don't Care" ng 2ne1 at "I Got a Boy" ng Girls Generation at syempre ang kantang "Oppa Gangnam Style" ni PSY na itinanghal ng Guinness World Book of Records na Youtube Video na may pinakamadaming nanood. Ang mga tunog-dayuhang kantang ito ay bumenta at humakot ng mga kababayan nating tagahanga. Kabi-kabila ang mga konsyertong ginanap sa ating bansa ng mga grupong ito.

Pananamit, istilo ng buhok at pagkain

Pagdating sa pakikiuso, hinding-hindi magpapahuli tayong mga Pilipino. Nang napuna ni Juan dela Cruz na laos na ang bagsak at mala-Jose Rizal na buhok, binago na nya ito at sumunodsa "K-Pop look." Ang pagsusuot ng mga aksesorya sa katawan, mga matitingkad na kulay at ang mga damit na Koryanang-koryana kung tignan ay nagkalat na sa Pilipinas. Marahil na din sa madaming Koryanong turista ang nagpupunta sa bansa kaya naiimpluwensyahan tayong mga Pilipino ng kanilang pagkain, kalat na kalat ang mga Korean restaurants sa mga malls, hotels at pasyalan. Ang maanghang na "kimchi" ang "bulgogi" na pinakoryanong bersyon ng bulalo, at ang "kimbap" na

pinaghalong kanin at gulay. Ang mga pagkaing ito ay naka inganyo sa ating panlasa, ang kulturang ito ay niyakap natin ng buong puso at idinagdag natin sa ating malawak at halu-halong kultura.

Ang mga impluwensyang ito ng mga kapitbahay natin sa Asya ay nagdulot ng mabuti at masama sa ating kultura. Nabigyan tayo ng pagkakataong makadanas ng bago at naiibang kaugalian, natuto tayo kung paano sila mamuhay at makisalamuha sa iba't ibang uri ng tao at nalinang natin ang malawak na kaalaman tungkol sa kultura nila. Ang bansang dati ay tinaguriang "Hermit Kingdom" ay nagpamalalansang ng malaking kontribusyon sa ating bansa. Subalit tila tayong mga Pilipino'y nagpaalipin na naman sa iba nang kinalimutan natin ang ating sariling kultura. Walang masama kung tumangkilik at mahal natin ang kultura ng iba, subalit diba mas mainam na mahal natin ang sariling atin. Nang pumasok ang mga Koreanovelas, naisantabi na ang mga palabas na gawa mismo nang ating mga kababayan, itinuring nating "cheap" o mababang kalidad ang talento natin sa paggawa ng mga ganitong palabas. Nang napasok sa ating tainga ang mga lirikong koryano, nakalimutan na natin ang kundiman, ang orihinal na musikang Pilipino o OPM at ang mga klasikong kantang nagmulat sa atin at nagpapakita ng ating kahusayan sa paggawa ng musika. Binihag na ang ating mga kabataan ng mga singkit na ito, mas alam pa nga ng ilan ang Oppa Gangnam Style kaysa sa mismong pambansang awit ng Pilipinas. Ang natural na kufis ng mga dilag natin ay binago na upang magmukhang Koryana, nag mistulang ignorante tayong sumusunod sa kanilang mga hilig. Hindi man lubusan at hindi man lantad, nagmistula na naman tayong alipin nang tinalikuran natin ang ating mga kaugalian. Gusto nating mga Pilipino na magkaroon ng sariling pagkakakilanlan at umukit ng marka sa daigdig, ngunit sa halip na unahin ang sariling atin ay iginapos na naman nating muli ang ating sarili sa kamay ng mga singkit na Koryanong ito.

OUR WORLD NEEDS LOVE

Khristine Jane Agad

It is nice to love and be loved. People in the world need a genuine love— love of family, fellowmen, and country. A love that is uncountable just like the love of God.

People need the Lord. People need to love the Almighty Father. He is the giver of life. He is everything. Loving Him is to follow His commandments, praising and worshipping His Holy Name, and stand out that you are a believer of God. All religious sectors of the world: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and others, have different teachings to love and obey the Superior Being.

Loving our fellow men means we respect their beliefs, cultures, and teachings in life. It is the starting point in no more aggression. In the scripture, Luke 10:27 says, love the Lord your God with all your mind; and love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Loving others also loves God. People should also love their own country. Giving respect and obeying the laws are ultimately the need to make one’s country stays at peace.

Love is eternal. Love is patient and kind. Love conquers all things. We should love with no regrets and excuses. Loving without measuring. Love all things without any exchange. Love everything because in loving, we can create intimate bonding and peace to the world.

PANGARAP KO. MAG-AARAL AKO.

Ruschelle Cossid

Maraming taon na pala ang ng minsan natanong ko sa sarili ko kung ano ang gusto kong mangyari sa buhay ko. Sa murang edad, naikintal na sa isipan ko ang palagi nilang sinasabi: "Libre lang ang mangarap." Natuto na akong mangarap ng mataas at umasa. Inisip ko kung paano ko ito makakamtan at ano ang gagawin ko para matamasa ang tamis ng tagumpay. Isa lang ang pumasok sa isipan ko, ang pag-aaral. Alam kong isa ito sa mga importanteng paraan sa pag-abot ng aking mga pangarap. Minsan nga pinagarap kong maging nurse, doktor, abogado, guro, psychologist, historian at pulis. Nakakatawang isipin na ang dami ng gusto kong maging propesyon ngunit hindi ko man lang naisip kung gaano kagastos ang pag-aralan ang mga ito. Sa panahon natin ngayon, iilan na lamang ang mga masusuwerteng nabibigyan ng pagkakataon para makapag-aral lalung-lalo na sa kolehiyo. Masakit isipin sa mga gustong mag-aral na hindi sila makakapag-aral sa kadahilanang wala silang pera. Magkano nga ba ang isang semester ngayon? P20,000 – P40,000? Ang mahal! Mas nanaisin na lang nilang ilaan ang panahon na magtrabaho kaysa ang pag-aaral. Pero teka, nasaan na pala ang suporta ng ating pamahalaan? Meron nga, pero sapat ba?

Nasaan na ang pondong inilaan para sa edukasyon? "Kulang." Iyan na lang palaging naririnig natin. Kulang sa pera, suporta, classroom, guro, materyales, pagkain, gamot, bitamina, pagmamahal, pagkalinga at iba pa. Ang mga pangarap nilang matatag na binuo noong nagsimula pa silang mangarap ay unti-unti nang natitibag at naglalaho. Marami silang nasa ganitong sitwasyon ngayon at patuloy na lumalaban at nagsusumikap para may maitustos sa kanilang pag-aaral. Bilib din ako sa kanila sapagkat lahat ay kakayanin nilang harapin. Kadalasan reklamo ng mga estudyante ay mahirap ang mag-aral. Maraming assignments, quizzes, projects, requirements, activities, samahan pa ng mga mahihirap na subjects at mga terror na guro. Masusubukan mo ring

magkaroon ng naglalakihang mga eyebags dahil sa kakulangan ng tulog, mapagalitan ng mga magulang dahil late nang umuwi galing sa practice, mabutasan ng bulsa dahil sa dami ng mga bayarin at iba pa. Ang hirap diba? Lahat ng iyan ay kulang pa sa kailangan mong pagdaanan at paghirapan. Sa madaling sabi, ang pag-aaral ay mahirap at hindi biro. Ngunit gaano man ito kahirap, para sa mga determinado at masakap na estudyante ay wala lang ang mga ito. Naitatak na sa kanilang mga isipan na ang importante ay may natututunan sila, magkapagtapos ng pag-aaral at magkaroon ng magandang trabaho.

Naalala ko nga noong hayskul pa ako ay narinig ko mga kaklase kong nagsabi na makakapagtapos sila at makakakuha ng magandang trabaho ngunit wala namang ginagawa. Kung mangangarap tayo, dapat may kasamang aksyon. Hindi puro salita at pangarap lang, dapat may kaakibat na pagtitiyaga at pagsisikap. Ngayong nabigyan ako ng pakakataong makapag-aral at nasa kolehiyo na ako, alam kong malapit na ako sa rurok ng tagumpay. Alam kong marami pa akong pagdadaanang hirap at pagod pero tatandaan ko na may mga pangarap ako, ito ang magsisilbing lakas at inspirasyon ko upang magtiyaga at magpunyagi sa hinaharap.

Sa kabila man ng mga umuusbong na hadlang sa ating pag-aaral, manalig tayo at lumaban. Hindi hadlang ang mga ito para sumuko bagkus tayo ay magsikap at higit sa lahat tayo ay magpakatatag at magtiwala sa ating sarili. Panatilihin natin ang ating mga pangarap dahil ito ang magsisilbing liwanag at nagbibigay kahulugan sa ating buhay. Pagbutihin natin ang ating pag-aaral nang sa gayon ay mararating natin ang tamis ng minimithi nating tagumpay.

RESPE TO

Ruschelle Cossid

Minsan natanong ko sa sarili ko, kung ako ay magiging bading o tomboy, ano kaya ang mararamdaman ko? Ano kaya ang kahihinatnan ng buhay ko sa gitna ng mga taong handang kumutya at manghugsa sa pagkatao ko? Magiging masaya ba kaya ako o iisipin ko nalang na hindi lumabas para maiwasan ang mga masasakit na panlalait nila?

Alam kong marami sila, ang iba lantaran na habang ang iba ay nanahimik lang, takot na kung malaman ng iba, pandirihan at kamumuhian sila. Minsan madalas manghugsa ang mga tao sa usapang sekswalidad. Simula pagkabata ay naging tampulan na sila ng mga panlalait at tukso ng mga tao na nagiging dahilan rin ng pagbuo ng takot sa kanilang mga damdamin na lumabas at lumantad. Kagaya na lang ng housemate na si Fifth Pagotan ng Pinoy Big Brother, matapos niyang aminin ang kalituhan niya sa kanyang sekswalidad, agad siyang napuno ng mga panghuhugsa at panlalait mula sa mga tao. Mga panghuhugsang sagad hanggang kaluluwa at naapektuhan na ang buong pagkatao.

Sino nga ba sila? Saan sila lulugar? Saan sila tutungo? Magkaiba man ang mga paningin natin pagdating sa mga usapang sekswalidad ay hindi natin maiiwasan na husgahan at hindi ituring na parte ng lipunan ang mga katulad nila. Nagkakagusto sila sa kapwa nilang lalake at babae o di kaya'y parehong sa lalake at babae kaya alam kong para sa iba ay hindi kaaya-ayang pakinggan. Hindi naman yata nila ito ginusto at alam nilang naging parte rin ang lipunan sa paghubog na karakter, sekswalidad at pagkatao nila kaya hindi ko maintindihan kung bakit sa panahon natin ngayon ay patuloy pa rin ang walang hanggan na panlalait at panghuhugsa sa sekswalidad nila. Mahirap para sa kanila ang kalagayang ito, hindi lang sila problemado sa kung ano ang sasabihin ng mga tao pati na rin ng kanilang mga kaibigan at pamilya. Mahirap magkunwari at ikubli ang isang bagay na nagrerepresenta ng tunay na pagkatao mo. Mahirap itago ang isang bagay na unti-unting lumalabas sa paglipas ng mga panahon.

Hindi nila maisip kung ano ang sasabihin ng iba kung ilalabas nila ang tunay na pagkatao nila. Malimit yata pumasok kanilang mga isipan ang paglabas at ipahayag ang tunay na sila dahil alam nilang na sa pag-amin nila, magiging tampulan sila ng mga panghuhusga. Hindi naman siguro dapat maging basehan kung ano ang uri ng pagkatao nila para husgahan na hindi sila kaaya-aya at walang naidudulot na maganda sa ating lipunan at nakasisira pa. Mga panghuhusgang unti-unting bumabago at pumupukaw sa kanilang mga damdamin para lumaban at ipagtanggol ang kanilang mga karapatan. Natitiis nila ang mga panlalait ng mga tao ngunit lahat ng kasobrahan ay masama na at dapat lagyan na ng limitasyon. Sa kabilang banda, masuwerte ang iba dahil malugod silang tinanggap ng walang pag-aalinlangan ng mga taong nakapaligid sa kanila at mismo ng lipunan nila. Kung iisipin lang natin, hindi naman masama ang pagiging iba, magiging masama lang ito pag nagiging sobra na at labag na sa utos ng Diyos.

Paano nga ba nila bubuksan ang kanilang mga damdamin at buong pagkatao sa lahat ng magkakaroon nang interes na tumunghay at mangutya? Saan nga ba sila dadalhin ng takot na ito?

Bubuo na lang siguro sila ng isang lugar kung saan ang mga katulad nila ay magiging tanggap maging sino ka man malayo sa mga mapanghusga at mga mapanlait na mga tao. Hindi nila kayang ikubli ang mga katotohanang kailangan nilang panindigan dahil alam nilang ito ang kanilang magiging kaligayahan.

Bading, Tomboy, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender o kung ano man ay mga tao pa rin sila. Yun nga lang, mga katauhang nasa maling katawan. Mahirap ang pinagdaraan nila at mas lalong naging mahirap ito kung hindi sila magiging tanggap sa ating lipunan. Isa lang naman ang kailangan nila, ito ay RESPETO.

THE ILLUSION OF GLORY

Juven Nino Villacastin

Excellence

In a school built upon a history of prestige and honor like Cor Jesu College, excellence itself has been one of the main pursuits of every student enrolled in academia. And, what more would encompass this pursuit in a nutshell than the College Intramurals itself? Every year, college students of different divisions excelling on their respective different fields in sports, academics, and socio-cultural events battle it out for campus supremacy and division pride. However, the clash for supremacy often becomes too personal and chaotic. This leads us to the question: Is winning really worth it? Are students clashing out against others to the point of putting aside their respect towards each other just to attain a title with no worth at all? At the end of the day, whether you like it or not, being Intramural champion means nothing at all. Moreover, putting aside one's honor and respect towards others for the sake of becoming champion isn't a pursuit for excellence; it's a fool's own way of amusing himself.

First of all, students should understand the true nature of any Intramural events. Since the 1840s, colleges, universities, and institutions all around North America have organized these said events for the benefit of recreational, social, and competitive activities designed to help students or employees wind off from all their work and just have fun. Yes, it may be competitive by nature but it's mostly just for the sake of recreation. It may be important to note here that most were not aiming for championships, everyone just competed for fun.

However, as a century and a half had gone by and as the tradition lay it sails thousands of kilometers through the pacific towards our country and our school, the spirit of recreation has drastically been replaced by the spirit of supremacy. Fun has been replaced by self sh desires solely aimed upon winning using whatever means necessary.

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And worse, Intramural events have literally been changed into war zones where divisions are divided by the barrier set by hatred and contempt.

So, what does it really mean to be excellent in this kind of event? Simple, just give your best in everything you do while competing. And, win or lose, keep your cool and learn to accept the outcome of events. After all, it takes a champion to congratulate an opponent who had just defeated him and cast out all his egotistical biases aside; on the other hand, it takes a fool to refuse to accept the outcome of an event. Because, true champions are ones who compete against themselves, they think of competition as a way to find out his/her limitations and assets and learn to adapt to them. People who think competing is only about winning don't know what competition really is all about.

Now, we ask ourselves, what's the purpose of Intramural activities in the first place? Of course, it's for fun. And finally, it's to compete against one's self in order to find out one's own limitations and skills. However, it's not competition for the sake of winning a title that means almost nothing at all. Even if a certain division wins for a couple of years straight, if the students didn't even have a single ounce of fun in their hearts as they battle out during their respective events, the title will only remain a title; eight pointless letters that mean nothing else. After all, if you do become champion, it's not like you're going to get extra grades or have a good thing to write in your job resume. And, if you would say the experience is enough as a reward, would you like to have memories of desperate hatred and contempt acting out on foolish schemes against others as a reward? Good for you then, you have something that will haunt your conscience for the rest of your life.

ANGHEL SA KARIMLAN

Lester G. Padilla

Maswerte ang mga bulag. Kahit hindi nila angkin ang katangiang makakita, may puso pa rin silang tumitibok. Hindi katulad ng iba'y pinagkaitan na ngang masilayan ang liwanag, pinutol pa ang ugat na nagpapatakbo sa makinarya ng kanilang buhay.

Tuluyan na ngang nasa bingit ng panganib ang mapanlinlang nating daigdig. Talamak na ang pagkitil sa isang kayamanang hindi matutumbasan ng milyong-milyong salapi. Kahit saan mang dako ay naglipana na ang mga taong pusong bato ang ipinapamalas. Nag-aanyong-tupa iyon pala'y itim na budhi ang taglay.

Hayok na hayok na makamtan ang paraiso ngunit kapagka nagbunga ay hindi marunong manindigan sa kasalanang nagawa. Alam nila na yaon ay malalim na sugat subalit maghihilom din kaya nga lang ito'y mag-iiwan ng peklat. Nanaig ang takot nabaka pagdating ng panahon sila'y pandirihan sa mundong kinsasaklawan.

Kaawa-awa ang mga inosente at walang kamuwang-muwang na nabiktima ng mga kriminal na walang ibang iniisip kundi ang pansariling kapakanan. Mahimbing lamang silang natutulog sa isang malambot at masikip na lalagyan pero sila'y ginagambala at kung minsang papatayin nang karumaldumal. Pinapainom ng mga bawal na gamut na maaring mag-udyok sa pagkahinto ng gintong buhay. O kaya'y, hinay-hinay na pipisilin ng isang bakal hanggang sa ito'y sumabog, magkawatak-watak ang mga parte at tumalsik ang mapula-pulang likido sa loob ng kanyang higaan. Matapos, hihigupin ng isang malakas na hangin papalabas sa kinalalagyan papunta sa panibagong lugar ngunit dito siya'y masasadlak sa karimlan magpakailanman.

Habang isinasagawa ang nakahihindik at nakapanlulumong prosesong ito, siya'y pilif na kumakalawa at nagkikilos ala-palos matakasan lang mala-demonyong adhikain ng mga kriminal. Subalit,

kahit anong gawin pa niya'y wala siyang ibang magagawa kundi ang magpalugmok na lang sa kabaong.

Popular ito sa katawagang pagpapalaglag ng bata o sa isang salita, aborsyon. Ito ay ang sapilitang pagtanggap ng bata sa sinapupunan ng isang babae o ang pagpapatay ng isang hindi pa ipinanganganak na bata.

Nanganak na naman ang mga pesteng sumisira sa mayabong na palayan ng moralidad ng sangkatauhan. Sikilin natin ang katotohanang ito at palitan ng magandang realidad. Isa pa, tandaan lamang na walang gamot sa konsensyang babagabag sa iyo dahil sa nagawa mo. Hindi lamang ito labag sa batas ng tao ngunit labag pati sa batas ng Panginoon.

WALANG KATAPUSANG TELESERYE: JUAN DELA CRUZ AT ANG MGA ASWANG

Lester G. Padilla

Ang kwentong nakapaloob dito ay may malaking pagkakahalintulad tungkol sa palabas sa ABS-CBN na Juan Dela Cruz kung saan ito'y tumatalakay sa yugto o kwento ng mga aswang. Kung maaari ay basahin ninyo nang masinsinan ang artikulong ito nang sa gayon ay malaman ninyo ang natatanging pagkakaiba ng dalawa, eh 'yun kung mayroon man.

Sa mga nakapanood na sa nasabing teleserye, isa sa primetime bida ng ABS-CBN, masasabi nating ang mga karakter dito ay pawang kathang isip lamang o kaya nama'y posibleng hango sa totoong pangyayari sa buhay kung kaya't ibibigay ko sa inyo ang kalayaang humusga. Pero, dito sa aking istorya ay tiyak ang mga karakter ay talagang totoo at nakikita mo hindi mo lang sila pinapansin, masusulyapan sila kahit saang sulok o dako man ng mundo lalung-lalo na dito sa ating kinatitirikan – sa poging-pogi o sa anak-pawis nating bayan. Ang bansang Pilipinas.

Hindi ko alam kung ano ang tumpak na petsa nang sinimulang isulat ang kathang ito, dahil ang tanging nalalaman ko ay walang sinuman ang makapagsasabi o makapagsusulat kung paano matatapos ang kontrobersyal na palabas na ito, wala ring nakaka-alam kung may happy ending ito dahil talagang nakapanlulumo ang kwentong nakasaad dito. Tila hindi napatunayan ang kasabihang "nagwawagi ang liwanag sa kadiliman" dahil nilipon na ng mga aswang ang bayan ni Juan.

Hindi na nga mahulugang-karayom sa dami ng naninirahang aswang tapos habang tumatagal ay nagmumultipliy pa ang pwersa ng

kampon ng kadiliman. Lahat sila ay mga buwayang sagad sa buto ang kasakiman at walang ibang nalalaman kundi ang lamunin si Juan dela Cruz. Hindi sila nakokontento kung ano ang mayroon sila at patuloy pa rin sa paghahasik ng lagim.

Nasaan na nga ba ang pana ng karunungan, latigo ng katarungan, sibat ng kagitingan at espada ng katapangan ni Juan dela Cruz? Mahahanap pa kaya niya ito? Kung makikita ba niya ito ay hanggang doon na lang ba at walang aksyong magaganap? Masapul kaya ni Juan ang karunungan, may ngipin pa kaya ang kanyang katarungan, matulis pa ba ang kanyang kagitingan at mala-bakal pa ba ang kanyang katapangan? Ewan.

Nakababahala na talaga ang sigalot na ito sapagkat marami na ang nagdudurusa. May iilan ang pinili ang tuwid na daan pero karamihan naman ang ninais tahakin ang baluktot at lubak-lubak na patutunguhan makuha lang ang kanilang inaasam-asam na kaban na naglalaman ng ginto at yaman ng sinilangan ni Juan.

Hindi ko batid kung sino nga ba ang hari o nagpasimuno nito. Nagsimula ba ito sa pamahalaan, mula sa mga matataas na tao at kumalat na lang sa baba papunta sa ating mga pangkaraniwang mamamayan? O nagsimula kaya ito sa ating mga pangkaraniwang mamamayan at ang mga tiwaling pinuno natin ay bunga lang ng kung anong lipunan mayroon tayo? Para itong tanong na kung ano ang nauna, itlog o manok? Ngunit, hindi ito ang punto dito. Kailan pa kikilos ang bawat isa, kung lugmok na ang poging-poging anak-pawis ng Perlas ng Silanganan sa kumunoy?

Nakasisiguro naman ako na isa sa dahilan ng paghihirap ng masang Pilipino ay dahil hindi pantay-pantay ang paghahati ng yaman nito dahil ang yaman ay nakasentro lang sa iilang kamay. Tatsulok ika-nga. "Habang may tatsulok at sila ang nasa tuktok, 'di matatapos itong gulo."

Nasubaybayan na natin ang kwento ni Juan dela Cruz sa primetime bida at nalaman natin na nakita niya at nagamit ng buong-buo ang bakal na krus upang ipagtanggol tayo mula sa mga mang-aapi. Pinuksa niya ng walang pag-aalinlangan ang mga aswang. Samantala, sa mga karakter dito sa aking kwento, gagawa naman tayo ng hakbang upang makita at mamulat ang mga Juan dela Cruz na panahon na para tayo ay maging karapat-dapat ding humawak sa bakal na krus ng pagbabago.

Sabi nga ni Juan, kahit ano mang problema, hindi ako dapat mangamba, dahil sigurado ako resbak kita. Yun o!

#JuanDelaCruz



GALLERY

Kent Harvey

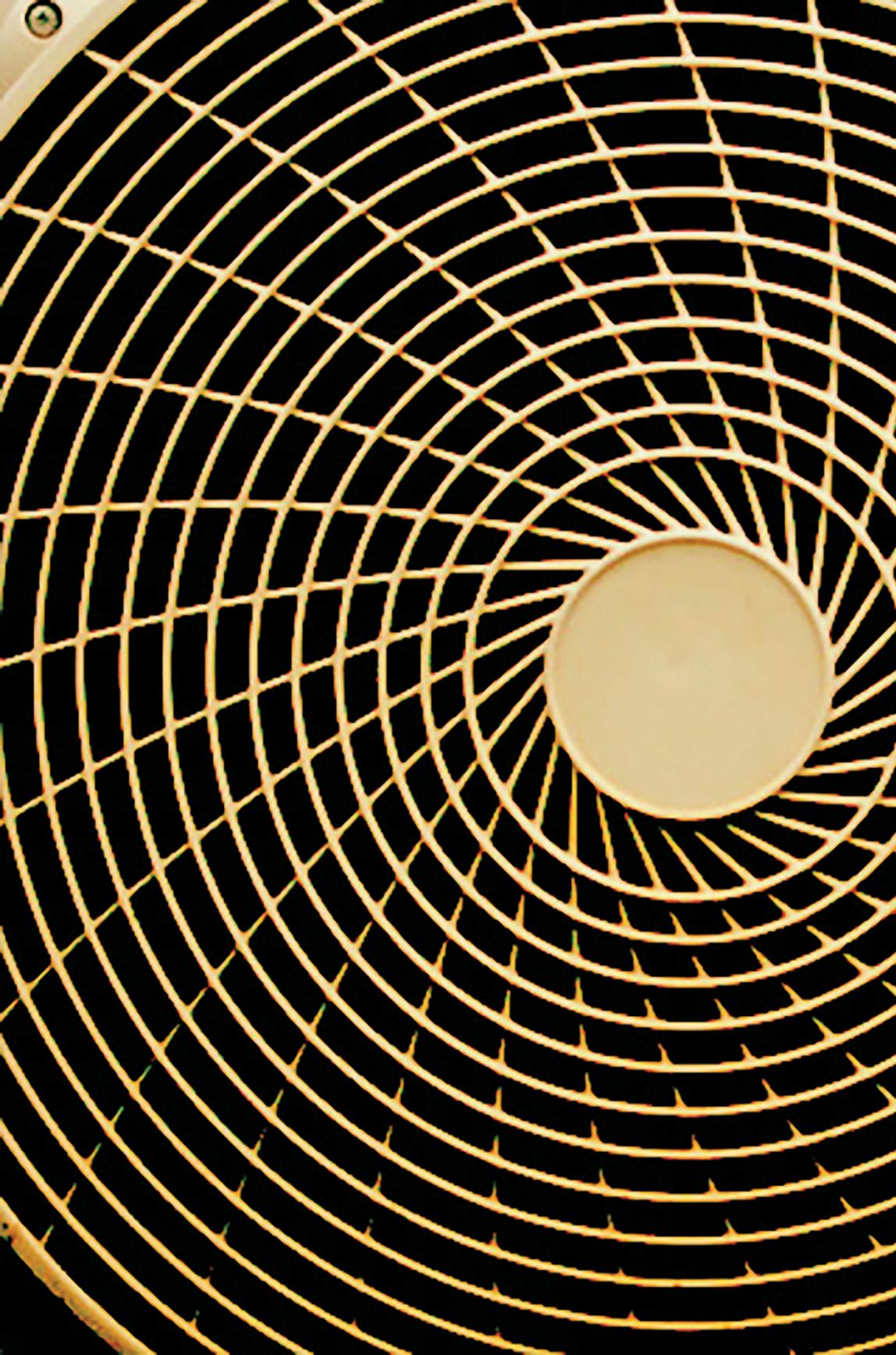


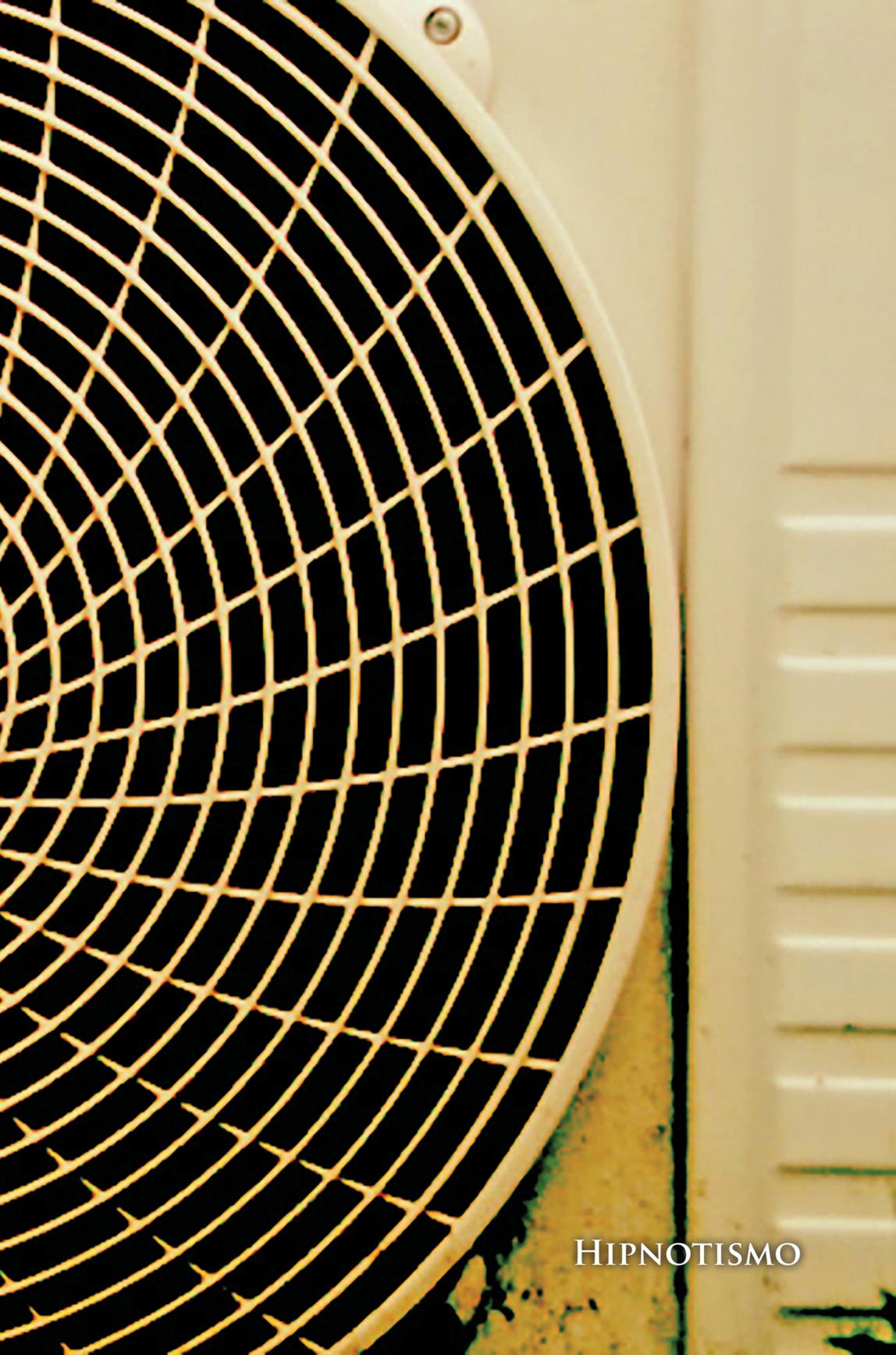
RENDEZVOUS





PAGPAMALANDONG





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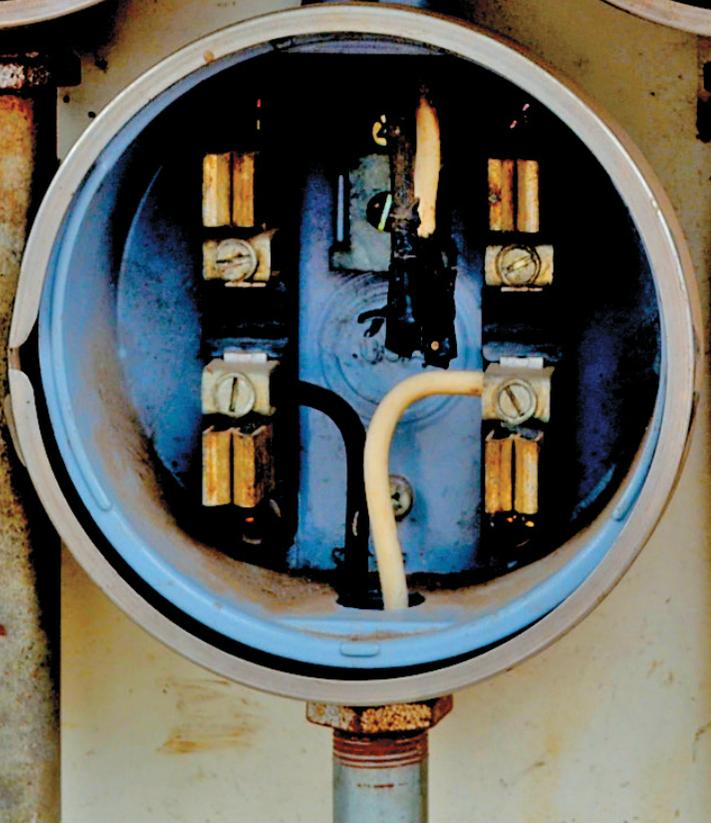
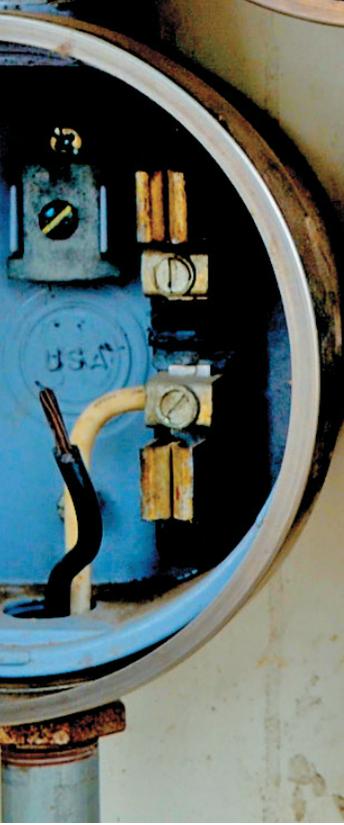
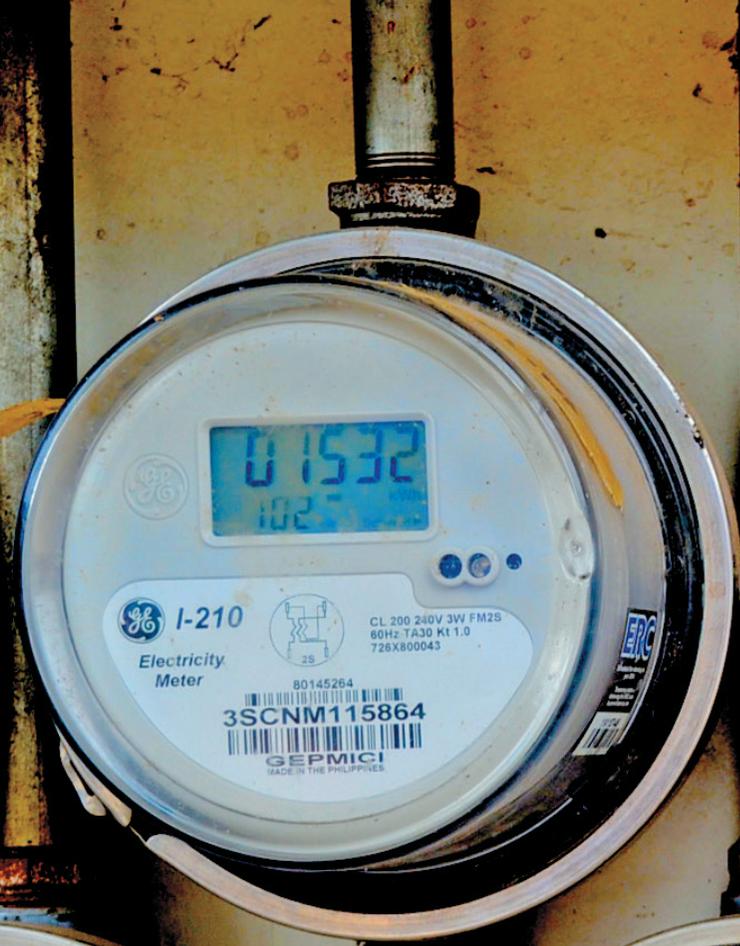
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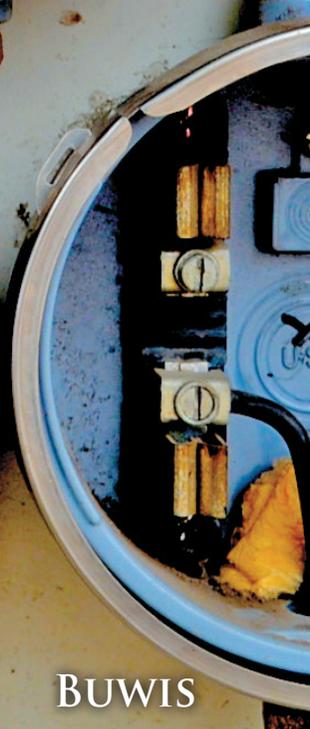
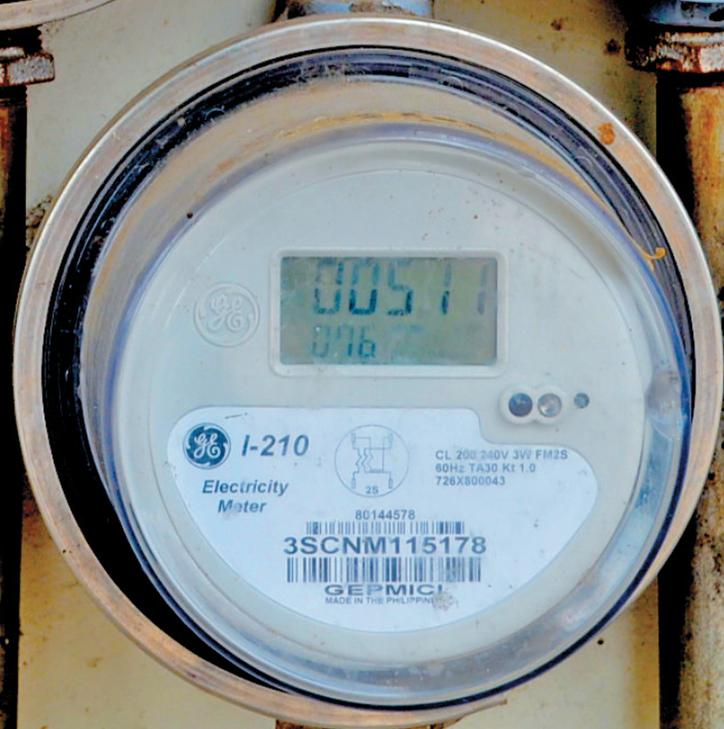
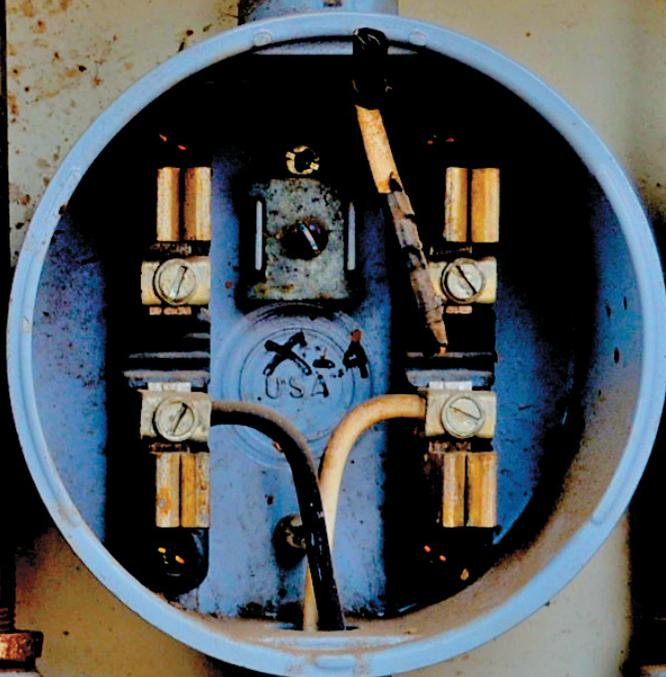
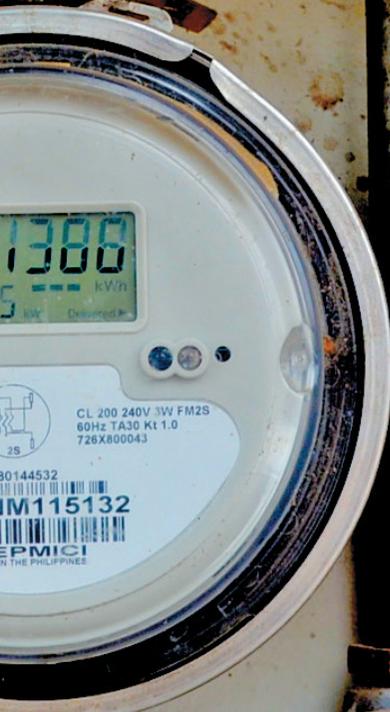


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DEMAND FOR PAYMENT





BUWIS





SYNCHRONIZED





VIGOR FOR LIVING





PADYAK





KUGI





PRICELESS INNOCENCE





LUHA



LEFT
TURN
DTC



DIREKSYON



PANAN-AW SA MALAUMON



PALIMOS NG AWA





NALISANG, NAHASI





KALEIDOSCOPE



SHADE OF GREY



LAMBOD





INNOCENT HOSTILITY



UNTITLED





PANGAMBA





GULONG NG PALAD



MORALS



HIDDEN MICKEY





ANOTHER STORY

BULLIED, BULLY



Kent Harvey

DAP







FLIRTING WITH DEATH



Art Flamingo

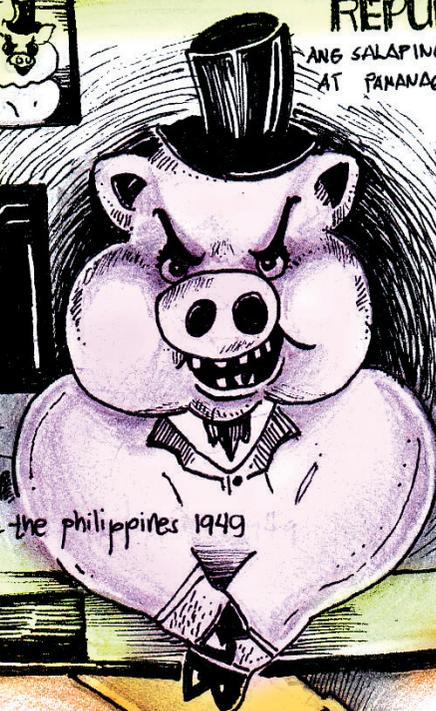
PANGAKO

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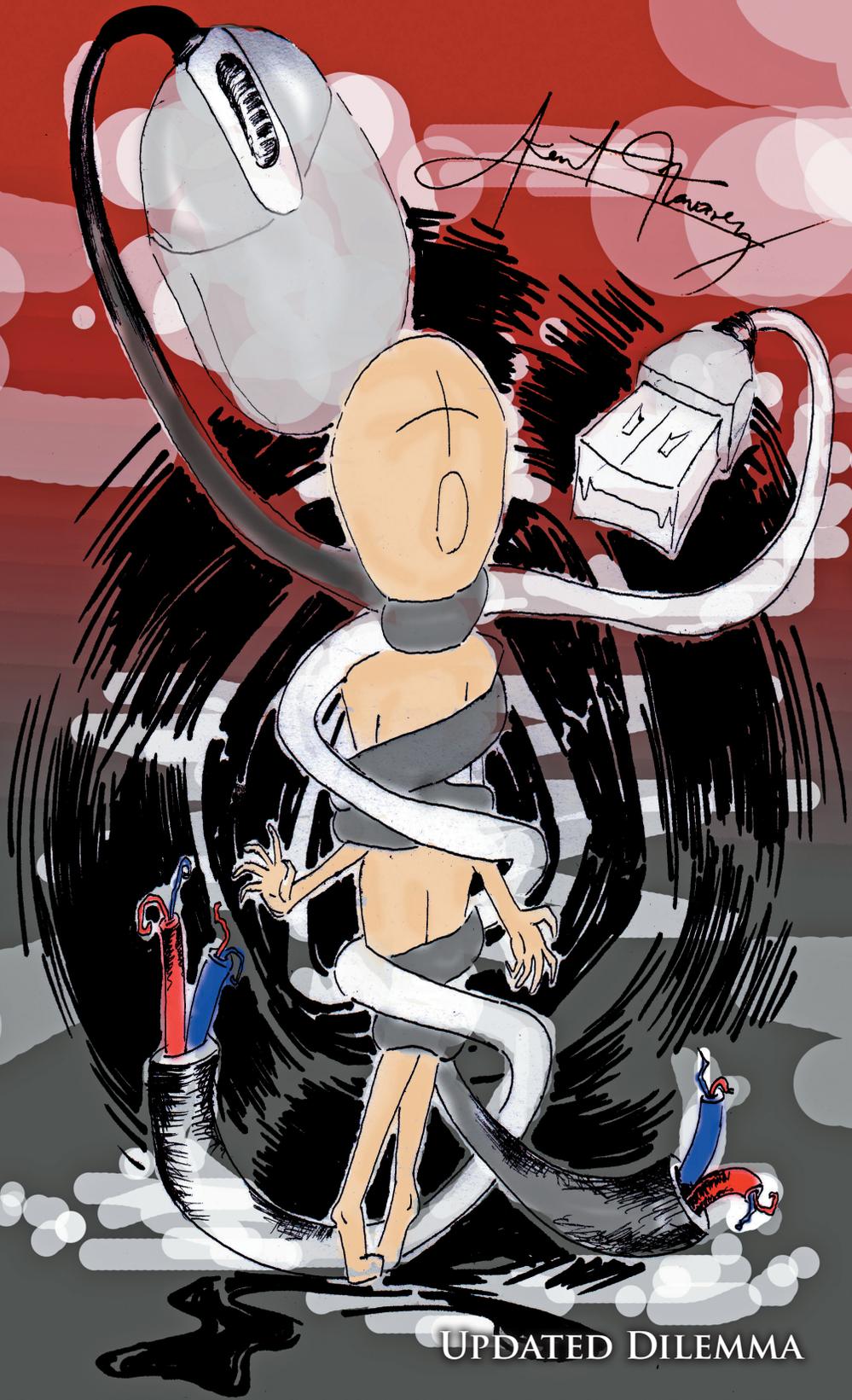


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STOLEN INNOCENCE

Antony



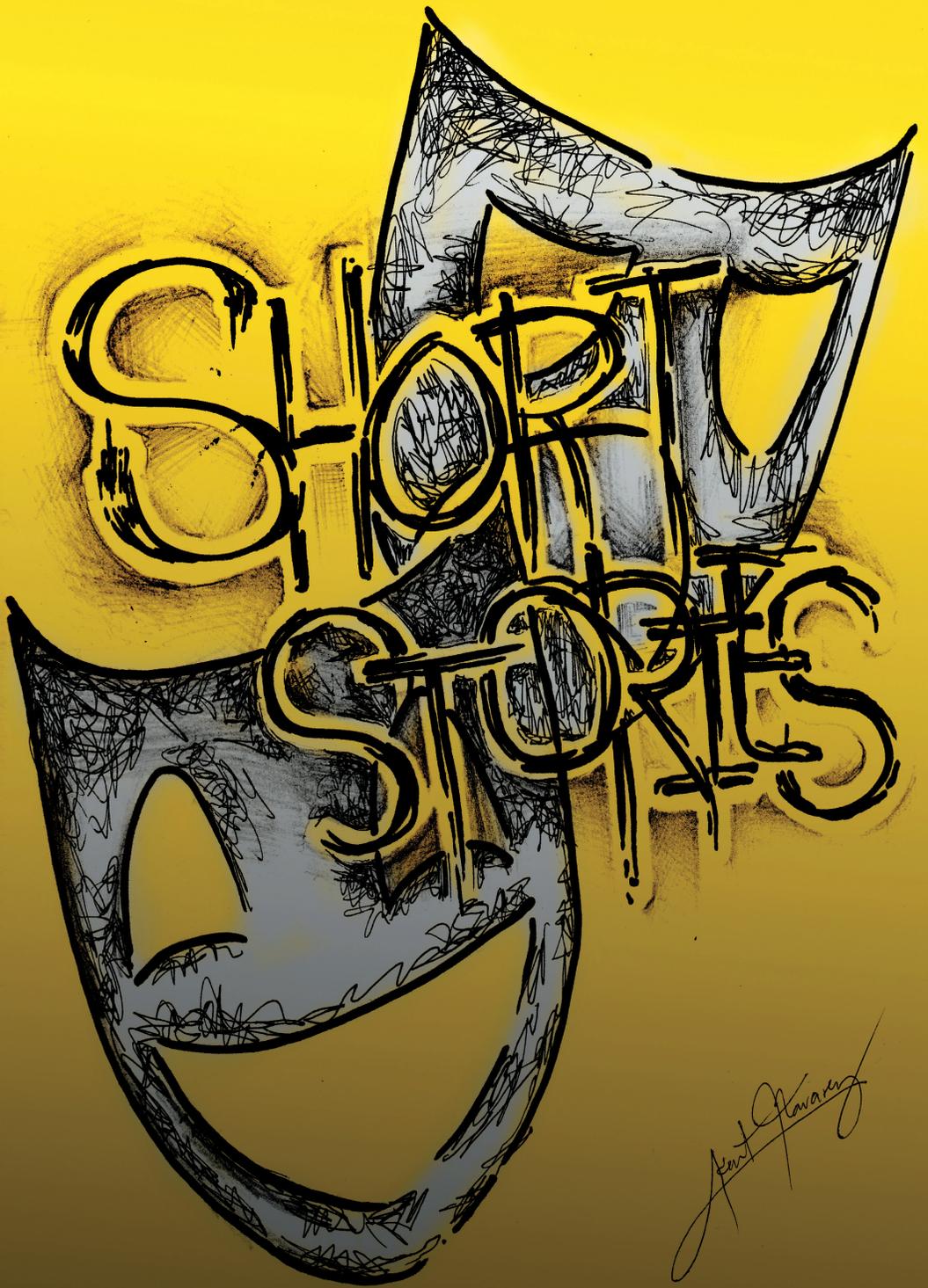
UPDATED DILEMMA



TAKUMI PAVO '13
HEART BEAT 2014



ARY BURCH



Art January

APARTMENT

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Mahirap talaga ang buhay sa kolehiyo lalo na kapag bago ka pa lang salta. Ang daming pagbabago – pagkalayo sa pamilya, paghahanap ng bagong mga kaibigan, panibagong kapaligiran at pamumuhay mag-isa sa tulong lamang ng sariling mga paa. Kailangang bumangon sa umaga, magluto ng makakain, maglaba ng sariling damit at iba pang gawaing bahay upang umusad ang buhay sa araw-araw.

Ngunit, sa aking pakiwari, hindi ko gaanong naramdaman ang hirap sapagkat nakahanap ako ng pangalawang pamilya sa bubong ng aking inuupahang apartment. Iba rito, maliban sa tahimik at may kalumaan na, masaya naman sapagkat nagtutulungan sila at inaalalayan nila ako. Kung minsang gumigising na ako sa umagang may nakahandang pagkain sa hapag at nakaplantsang uniporme. Ang kaibahan lang ay ako lamang ang natatanging estudyante rito na pumapasok sa paaralang aking pinapasukan. Karamihan sa kanila ay tila mga trabahante ngunit hindi ko naman mawari kung saan sila namamasukan. Medyo makaluma kasi sila pagdating sa pananamit. May isang pamilya rin sa apartment, kasama ang mga mumunting bubwit na mahilig maglaro.

Minsan, dahil sa kakulitan, nakapasok ang dalawang bata sa aking kwarto isang gabi. Hindi ko siguro naikandado ang pinto ng gabing yaon.

“Halika kuya, maglaro tayo,” nakangising sambit ni Nena.

“Kayo talaga mga bata, gabi na o. Pasado alas-onse na. Ginising n’yo pa ako,” buong pasensya ko’ng sagot.

“Sige na kuya, gusto naming maglaro,” nakanguso’ng tugon ni Bunsoy.

“Hay, bukas na lang. Wala naman akong pasok sa hapon, maglalaro tayo.”

“Pangako?”

“Peksman,” nakangiti na ako. Ang kyut naman kasi.

“At saka bumalik na kayo sa kuwarto niyo. Hindi ba kayo hinanap ng mga magulang niyo?”

Hindi na nila sinagot ang tanong at buong tawang naghahabulan palabas ng pinto. Malayo man ako sa aking pamilya, hindi ko talaga gaanong naramdaman ang lungkot dahil sa pamilyang kasama ko sa apartment. Masaya sila. Larawan ng isang kontentong pamilya.

May mga kaedad din akong kasama sa apartment. Marami sila. Lalaki. Babae. Palakaibigan ang karamihan. Sa katunayan, wala na akong ganang makipagkaibigan sa eskwelahan dahil sa kanila. Maliban lamang sa aking seatmate na walang imik. Medyo may pagkakatulad sila – hindi gaanong nagsasalita. Ngunit, masarap sa pakiramdam sa t’wing masisilayan ko ang matatamis nilang ngiti na umaabot sa katamtamang lamlam ng kanilang mga mata. Tila ba may hipnotismong nakabalot sa aking katawan kapag nangyayari iyon. Tinutulungan din nila ako sa paglalaba kung minsan. Ang nakakapagtaka lang ay hindi ko pa sila nakitang naglaba ng kanilang damit kahit na meron namang ibang nakasampay. Hindi ko lang siguro makita kasi pumapasok ako at nag-aaral. Hindi ko rin sila nakikitang lumalabas ng gate sa katunayan. Minsan, inisip ko na lang na baka hindi ko lang matiyempuhan.

Sa lahat ng kababaehan sa apartment, nagkaroon ako ng matalik na kaibigan. Siya si Marta. Maganda ang kanyang kabuuan. Kulay-dugo ang perpektong labi. Maitim at abot baywang ang malambot na buhok. Matangos ang ilong at nangungusap ang mga mata. Balingkinitan ang katawan. Siya’y ubod ng puti na parang wala na siyang dugo sa katawan. Hindi naman kasi siya lumalabas ng bahay. Ang totoo niyan, hindi talaga siya umaalis sa kanyang kuwarto na katabi ng sa akin. Nakilala ko lang siya nang isang gabi, galing ako sa kusina, narinig ko siyang umiiyak. Bahagyang nakabukas ang pinto kaya pumasok ako. Nagulat ako dahil lahat ng bagay sa loob ay antigo. Saglit akong

nakiramdam sa mahalumigmig at makalumang paligid na siyang dahilan sa unti-unting pagkalula. Ngunit, bigla akong natauhan nang natanaw ko siyang may idinikit na punyal sa may pulso.

"Huwag!" Napatingin siya sa akin. Doon lang siguro niya ako napansin.

"Sino ka?" May halong galit ang malamig niyang tinig.

"Ako si Ryan. B-bagong nangungupahan rito, sa may kabilang kuwarto," nakaramdam ako ng takot, bumilis ang sasal sa aking dibdib. Iyon ay, paano kung tuluyan niyang gawin ang kanyang masamang balak? O di kaya'y ibaling sa akin ang punyal? Ngunit, kailangan ko'ng magpakatatag at manindigan sa aking kapangahasan.

"Bakit ka umiiyak binibini? A-anong gagawin mo sa punyal? Pasensya ka na, bukas kasi ang pinto kaya pumasok ako. Nais ko lang sanang makatulong," tuluy-tuloy ko.

Lalo pa siyang umiyak, mas malakas. "Hindi ka na sana pumunta rito," garalgal ang kanyang boses.

Sumibol ang pagkaawa sa aking kaibuturan. Lumapit ako sa kanya at akmang kunin ang punyal nang bigla-bigla niya akong niyakap. Ang lamig ng kanyang katawan, ng kanyang kamay.

"Tulungan mo ako Ryan. Tulungan mo kami."

"Bakit? Sabihin mo lang anong problema."

Hinagod ko ang kanyang buhok at napatingin sa antigong salamin sa harapan. Bakit duguan ang kanyang damit? Dali-dali akong napabitiw mula sa kanya at sinipat ang kanyang suot ngunit wala naman akong makitang dugo.

"Bakit Ryan?" usisa niya.

"Dugo," at napatingin ako sa salamin ngunit takang iba na ang aking nakita. Isang malinis na repleksyon ni Marta.

"Dugo? Wala namang dugo rito Marco"

"P-pasensya na. B-baka namamalikmata lang ako. M-medyo pagod rin ako kanina sa paaralan, pasensya na," utal-utal ko'ng sabi.

Iwinaksi ko sa aking isipan ang imahe at buong-pusong nakinig sa kwento ni Marta. Nalaman kong mabigat pala talaga ang dinadala niyang problema. Namatay 'di umano ang kanyang mga magulang nang lusubin ng mga rebelde ang kanilang bayan. Nawalan siya ng ganang pumasok sa paaralan o lumabas man lang ng kuwarto. Dagdagan pa ng pagtataksil ng kanyang nobyo na si Badong at kaibigang si Juana na kapwa kasamahan namin sa apartment. Nakaramdam ako ng galit kay Badong kasabay ng pagsilay ng awa para kay Marta.

Mula noon, gabi-gabi ko ng naririnig ang hagulhol ni Marta dahilan upang di ako makatulong ng maayos. Pumupuslit ako sa kuwarto niya upang pagaanin ang kanyang loob. Naglalaro kami ng jack-en-poy kahit malalim na ang gabi at nagtatawanan kahit sa mga walang kwentang bagay. Sa tagal din ng panahong magkasama kami, nagustuhan ko ang aking ginawa. Ninais kong alagaa't protektahan siya mula sa sakit ng kanyang kahapon.

Hindi ko naintindihan ang aking naramdaman hanggang sa nalinawan ako ukol dito nang isang gabi, binangungot ako tungkol kay Maria. Kasabay nito ay ang nakakagimbal na titig ni Badong mula sa pinto ng aking kuwarto. Oo, nakasilip siya sa pintuan at hindi ko batid kung bakit bahagyang nakabukas ang pinto gayong kinandado ko naman ito. Sa realisyong iyon, hindi agad ako nakagalaw, nanigas ang aking mga kalamnan. Gumapang ang lamig sa aking buong katawan. Sa kabila nun, nagawa ko pa ring magtanong sa kanya.

"B-bakit Badong?"

Tumalikod siya, walang imik. Lumapit ako sabay ng kanyang paglingon.

"Lumayo ka kay Marta kung ayaw mong magkaproblema," blangko ang kanyang mukha, walang emosyon. Doon ko lang nakitang may dugo sa kanyang leeg.

"Anong nangyari Badong? Bakit may dugo ka s—"

"Wag ka nang magtanong dahil hindi mo magugustuhan ang sagot."

Ngumisi siya na naging hudyat ng pagpatay sindi ng ilaw. Takot. Mabilis ang tibok ng aking puso. Nagsimula siyang maglakad papalayo sa akin.

"K-kaibigan ko si Marta. Matalik na kaibigan at gusto ko siya Badong. N-nalaman ko rin ang tungkol sa inyo. P-poprotektahan ko siya." Naghintay ako sa kanyang sagot ngunit hindi na siya lumingon.

Kinabukasan, nakita ko si Badong sa salas. Ngumiti siya sa akin. Lumabas ang dalawang biloy sa kanyang pisngi. Napagtanto kong may hitsura siya at matipuno ang kanyang pangangatawan. Inaamin kong naiingit ako. Hindi dahil sa angkin niyang kaguwapuhan, kundi dahil sa nagkaroon sila ng relasyon ni Maria. Dumungaw sa aking isipan ang nangyari kagabi kaya sinilip ko ang kanyang leeg ngunit wala akong nakitang bakas ng sugat dito. Ang hindi ko maintindihan ay kung bakit parang iba ang awra niya ngayon. Animo'y iba ang Badong kagabi. Tila isang masamang panaginip.

Pagsapit ng gabi, hindi na ako nakatulog. Maliban sa pag-iyak ni Marta, naging pabalik-balik ako sa banyo sapagkat palaging bumubukas ang gripo. Sabi naman ni Marta na baka raw sira na ito at kailangang ipaayos. Kung makakaidlip man ako, yun ay panandalian lang dahil bigla-bigla akong makakarinig ng isang nakakabinging tunog ng kung anong makina na di ko mawari kung ano. May tawanan

na parang iyakan din ng mga babae mula sa salas. Hindi ko nalang pinansin dahil baka nagkakasiyahan lang sila. Nakakapagtaka lang ay malalim na ang gabi para magkatuwaan pa.

Dahil mag-umaga na nang tuluyan akong nakatulog, hindi na ako nakapasok sa aking unang klase. Dumiretso na ako sa pangalawang asignatura sa umagang 'yun. Ngunit sa kasamaang palad, pinalabas ako ng aming matanda at masungit na propesor dahil palagi akong humihikab. Ayaw niya raw sa mga inaantok sa klase dahil pakiramdam niya'y nakakaumay ang kanyang pagtuturo. Hayun, pinili ko na lang umuwi sa apartment. Naisipan ko ring sorpresahin si Marta kaya bumili ako ng softdrinks at biskwit.

"Bago ka ba rito iho?" usisa ng matandang tintera.

"Opo, nasa unang taon po ako diyan sa Colegio de la Merced."

"Napapansin kong palagi kang napapadaan dito. Saan ka ba tumutuloy?"

"Ah opo, ito lang po kasi ang alam ko'ng daan patungo sa apartment na aking inuupahan."

"Pero wala namang ibang apartment sa daang ito maliban sa Apartment del Barrio iho. Naku, mag-iingat ka sa pagdaan diyan."

"Bakit po? Wala naman po'ng masama s—"

"Bago ka kasi rito iho. Hindi mo alam ang misteryong nakabalot sa lugar na ito, lalo na sa Apartment del Barrio na yan. Sus, mas matanda pa yan kesa sa akin. Buti at hindi ka pa pinakitaan ng kababalaghan sa pagdaan-daan mo diyan. Lahat ng taga-rito iniiwasang magawi riyán."

"Mawalang galang na po Ale, pero hindi ko po maintindihan ang sinasabi niyo," kunot-noo kong tugon sa kanya. "wala naman pong

nakakatakot sa lugar at marami pong nangungupahan sa Apartment del Barrio. Kabilang na ako dun”

“Susmaryosep! Kahabagan ka nawa ng Panginoon!” Namutla siya. May halong pangamba at takot sa kanyang boses.

“Wala ng nakatira o nangungupa diyan mula noong nagkaroon ng chainsaw massacre noong kabataan ko. Inabanduna na ‘yan ng may-ari dahil maraming mahiwagang nangyari matapos nung trahedyo.”

Bumalot ang lamig at kilabot sa aking katauhan. Ramdam ko ang pagtakas ng dugo mula sa aking mukha’t nanginginig na mga kamay. Gusto kong umiyak, sumigaw ngunit tila nalunok ko ang aking boses. Gusto kong tumakbo ngunit ako’y estatuwang di makagalaw. Galit. Poot. Takot. Kasabay ay ang pagdilim ng aking paligid at pagbagsak ng softdrinks at biskwit sa tigang na lupa.

A TYPICAL LOVE

Ruschelle Cossid

His eyes locked on mine. He kept staring at me since I arrived in the classroom. I didn't know him. He was just sitting there at the corner doing nothing. I stole a glance at him, and his eyes were still on me. I felt a sudden weirdness about that guy. Honestly, he's cute with his black hair, hazel eyes, and I even noticed his smile when he caught me staring back at him. I suddenly blushed seeing his cute smile plastered on his handsome face. I didn't understand why I was blushing and fascinated by this guy whom I didn't totally know. When the class ended, I gathered all my things up and started to walk but he unexpectedly approached me.

"Hi, I'm Angelo," he said. His soft eyes trained on me.

"Hello, I'm Jane. You're unfamiliar, are you new here?" I replied shyly.

"Yeah, I noticed that you didn't have any seatmate. Can I sit beside you next time?" he said.

He was right; nobody dared to sit beside me. I was that typical nerd girl who didn't have any close friends. I rarely talked to anyone and I much preferred to spend my whole time studying alone in the library or anywhere. I didn't mean that I really have no friends, I had few friends but I preferred to be in solitude than to mingle and to join them having their fun.

I thought before answering, was he serious of what he was asking, I mean how come that there was someone who wanted to sit beside me?

"Hey? Are you okay?" he asked.

"Aa-a, yeah, yeah, you can sit there. No one sits beside me until you would," I said as I started to walk towards the door.

"Thanks. See you next meeting!" he replied happily.

The next day, he really sat beside my chair. I thought he was just kidding that time, so, I didn't take it seriously. I even noticed that no one attempted to talk to him. As if he was invisible. He was just sitting there with a blank face. I walked towards my seat and put all my things.

"Hi Jane," he said.

I smiled back at him as a response and prepared myself for the next class.

Thirty minutes had passed; still our teacher hadn't arrived yet. Angelo was still sitting beside me. He kept on talking and honestly, I had fun listening. I thought Angelo was friendly but I wondered why everyone never tried talking to him. I thought they were avoiding Angelo because he befriended me. Angelo chatted with a nerd girl.

Days passed, we became good friends. Angelo was kind and that was the reason why I was starting to like him, perhaps. He made me smile always. And I found myself smiling whenever he smiled, too. When I looked at him, everything made sense. He treated me like I was his only close friend, and so did I.

"You know Jane, I don't want someone to be alone and sad. That was the reason why I approached you the first time I saw you. I wanted to make you smile Jane. You looked beautiful whenever you smile."

I felt happy the moment those words entered my system. Did he really mean it? I was more surprised when he gently touched my hands. I didn't know what to say. He had been the only one who made me happy and feel loved like this.

"Thanks for always making me smile Angelo."

He smiled and continued writing. He loved writing, which was one thing I did notice about him. One time, he composed a poem for me. As I read it, I was filled with joy.

Months passed, I was surprised when Angelo invited me for a date. I thought I was just a friend to him so I asked him why. He said that he loved me and he wanted to court me. I didn't want to reject his invitation so I said yes and we went on our first date. Many dates followed since that time. And I realized that I was starting to give my heart to him, too.

After months of courting, I came to a point that it was time for me to accept Angelo in my life. That day, I finally uttered my sweet yes to him. I could see a big smile plastered immediately on his face.

I never had thought how amazing he was. He made me happy. I felt special and beautiful. Nobody ever made me feel like that before. He had my heart. I just loved looking into his eyes. He made me feel so damn special.

One time, I felt a sudden weirdness. I didn't know why I felt this. I was thinking of him but I could sense that something bad might happen. I didn't totally know Angelo yet. I wanted to ask about his life but I thought he didn't want to talk about it. Whenever we had a chance to talk about our lives, I was just the one who was opening up. I rarely heard him talk about his life. He mentioned some things like what he did like and didn't like. That was it. I loved Angelo and I needed to understand him.

Days went by, I noticed Angelo became cold. He was starting to avoid me. I was hurt. But despite his avoidance, I still managed to ask why he was acting like he didn't want me anymore. He didn't answer me. Instead, he sadly looked directly through my eyes with tears falling from his eyes. I didn't want to see him crying. It made me feel guilty. As if I was the one who made Angelo cry. As if I deprived the Angelo who usually smiles. Perhaps, I thought, I should

have never tried to ask him about that thing that bothered me for a moment.

"Angelo, what's wrong? Is it about us?" I said as the tears in my eyes began to fall, too.

He gently wiped the tears on my cheeks then touched my lips.

"Shhh. Don't you cry Jane. It's not about us. We are alright," he said as he hugged me. I felt his warm tears on my arms as I hugged him back. We hugged so tight. That hug was like that first day I accepted him to be part of my life. No words came out of my mouth. I just wept there, on his arms.

"Always remember Jane that even though I am not around, I will always love you. Always," he said softly.

There was so much pain in my heart. Why did he sound like that? Did he have a problem? What did he mean? I really didn't understand what was going on. I couldn't fathom his words full of unbearable sadness and grief.

"I don't understand you Angelo," I replied with a broken voice.

There was a long silence between us. He embraced me again, tightly. I hugged him back. I cherished the remaining moments and embraced him like there was no tomorrow. I could sense that there was something wrong about him. As I was about to ask, he stepped back and said.

"I love you Jane, always remember. But, I don't think that this relationship is going to work anymore," he said grimacing.

I was about to reply but he suddenly turned his back from me. With heavy footsteps, he walked away leaving me hopeless.

"Angelo, please, why are you doing this to me?" I asked hoping he would stop and answer me but didn't.

Hot tears flowed from my eyes and cascaded down my cheeks. Was he breaking up with me? What did he really mean? Why did he need to leave me? Did he have a new one? What made him turn his back away from me? What is wrong with him? Or should I say, what is wrong with me? Am I not enough?

My mind was scuffled with so many questions. I totally didn't know. Seeing him walk away tore my heart into pieces. I loved him. He loved me, right? Why would we end up like this? I didn't want to lose him. Not yet, I was not ready. He was my first love and supposedly my last.

Standing hopelessly alone in the middle of the hallway, I wiped my tears and started to walk. The sound of silence in the empty hallway made me cry all the more. I was lucky that no one was around. Nobody would watch me wept for a boy who left me.

Days went by but I didn't see Angelo. I was back to my old self again. I always spent my time alone in the library reading and not talking to anyone. Where was he? Was he sick? Did he transfer to another school? I missed Angelo. I wanted to see him, hugged him and cuddled the way we used to do before.

One day, there was an event in our school. All classes were postponed. So, as my usual habit, I went to the library to study and to wait there until the event would finish. I went straight to a pile of dusty old books at the corner of the library. I checked the title of the books and I found an old book about the school.

"Perfect," I said remembering that we had an assignment in our History class. We should know the history of our school.

I grabbed the book and examined its pages. I went to the nearest table and as I was about to open the book, an old yellowish

paper fell on the floor. It looked really old. Its marks showed that it hadn't been touched for many years. I picked it up and noticed something. It was an old school newspaper dated back in 1982. I was about to put it back when I perceived something that made me startled and shocked. I couldn't move. Tears began to form in my eyes as the newspaper fell on the floor.

"This isn't true, this isn't true," I said repeatedly as I picked up again the old newspaper. I couldn't hold my tears from falling when I read the name "Angelo dela Cruz" printed in the newspaper with a handsome picture of him smiling at the top of the page. I felt a sudden coldness when a gust of wind flipped my hair and I was surprisingly filled with aghast when I heard the wind whispered "I love you Jane."

CONFESSION OF A BULLY

Mary Joy C. Vantilan

Were they staring at me?

Or was I too paranoid?

Yes. I mean. They were not really staring. No. Not at all. Don't get me wrong. They were just glancing my way in the very least. What was with their eyes? Well, all I could read is pure FEAR with sort of admiration. I deserved this. So much. I should be, because I was not the same anymore. Really, I was proud of it. PROUD.

So much for the self talk, I chose to annoy one of my classmates. Whoa, here I come.

"Hey oily pigleeeet," my teeth was screeching!

"I thought you're only a fatty-oinky-pig," my eyes were thrusting and squinting, "You're also a careless dead tornado! Can't you see? You're running on me!"

Her eyes were red. Blood escaped from her face. She was trembling to the bones. And I took the break.

"Won't you say sorry or would you like me to thrust a needle to your nasty balloon-like structure so that you would get thin in a split second!?"

"S-Sorry R-Regine," she was teary eyed.

I got thrilled by the scene but I could sense their eyes boring at me. I couldn't apprehend the message behind, yet, I was able to attain my dear composure.

"What the hell were you looking at? Oh! You gotta know where you stand. Mud!" and they bowed down their head. Almost in synchronized manner.

Every weekday, that would be my routine – turning everyone to a pitiable crybaby, rolling my eyes here and there, spitting venom at their styles. I didn't have friends. They were simply scared to get to know me. Some were trying hard and I was very smart to figure out what they were really doing – aiming whatever weak points in my life and stabbing me to a harsh downfall. I knew they were really up to something – my inherited wealth, my instant fame, my unresisting beauty and my heavenly status. If they were lucky, I took the chances to play with their deceitful tricks. I just went with the flow, reversed their plan and pushed the bullet back to their mouth before they even knew it. In short, I was attractive to fake friends – hiding in sugar kisses and sweet smiles. Needless to say, the odds were always on my favor.

I lived in every boy's fantasies. All of them—inside and outside the campus—were looking up to me. But only arrogant and assuming ones did get the chances to be hooked up with. They were handsome with flattering four-wheels. They were everything every princess should have and every girl dreamt of. Only, they didn't meet my standards. I was on the top level, they were on the middle.

"Are you capable? You don't have much looks!"

"How dare you ask me like that? You're not even my type!"

"I believe your car needs a bathroom! Be sensitive boy!"

"Your hair is messy. Aren't you ashamed?"

Those were only few of the insult they garnered from me. Then, the day after tomorrow, news would spread throughout the campus how they had just wasted their lives. Yes. For just a girl and

her "NO," they would end up being an alcoholic, a dropped-out, or worst, an addict.

They couldn't blame me. I was just ME! It was their entire fault. That was it. Neither the teachers nor the principal have the guts to confront me because honestly, I was just playing and fooling around. I was having fun messing other's mood with my bloodcurdling glare and venomous tongue. Besides, I came from an influential family. I was not after the name really but for the sake of freedom and power, I would be taking advantage on it. I loved it when they curled down like turtles on their shells beneath my shoes whenever they heard my family name. My father's the Prime Minister and my mother was the big time stakeholder of the company to which the school campus was fueled by finances. Basically, I was the school owner's daughter. Definitely, they had nothing to do with it anymore.

It didn't matter to me whether you're a poor cutie little girl, a disciplined boy, a good old professor, a handsome prince charming, an intelligent lady. Whatever. Nobody's deserving of my sympathy.

I am MEAN, right? Aye! But they were worst than me. There were so many things you did not know about. I was just returning the favor. Why would you not pay attention on my side first? I dare you, come on! Take a look on my struggles first because unfortunately, I was just a victim of other villains. A victim whose story was untold.

Seven years ago, I was not who I am today. I mean, the world was very much different. The wheel was simply crushing me down to unbearable pains, shattering my soul to unbreakable breakdown.

You didn't know how much it hurts when they called me by a "pig" name. I was fat for reasons science and I didn't even know. We were not rich. Yes, that was the thought I was used to live. Tatay and Nanay were just maintaining a small part of farmland. They were farmers but they were not in abundance because the tax collectors

were blinded over the power of money. That made the three of us eat at least thrice a day and me ended up to a far-flung grade school.

At school, I was the center of laughter. They threw crumpled pieces of paper over my seat making the teacher grew wild, whacked my butt and reprimanded me with that "sitting-in-the-air" with bundle of books at the back of my hand. When I walked through the corridors, boys just threw some pebbles over my forbidden big body and girls often pasted a paper at the back of my skirt with a "piggy-oink bank" written on it.

Yes, I didn't have friends and that was the worst because I just kept those self-breaking insults all by myself. I was not going to confess it to Tatay or Nanay for the reason that it would break my heart seeing them hurt, too. So, I just have to satisfy myself asking why people didn't like me. Nobody volunteered to sit beside me, to share my lunch or to walk home with me. No one offered a comforting smile or a hand whenever I stumbled. Instead, all they could offer were those loud hilarities from their aching tummies.

Anyway, I could still manage those inhuman things; but to think of my parents at home suffering also from discrimination made me wish to fade like those invisible bubbles did.

One night, while Nanay and I waited Tatay to celebrate his 47th birthday, we heard a sound of a gunshot. Nanay frantically went outside to check what happened but ended up collapsing. Tatay was wounded and was dying. I couldn't understand the whole situation until right after the burial. I heard from a family friend that Tatay was joining an activist group against the government. That moment, I was dumbfounded. What Tatay wanted was to gain back the rights of his efforts stolen away from him. He wanted to provide our needs and to send me to a high-quality school. Were they too cruel? If only they gave poor people like us the freedom to live without the involvement of evil's plan, perhaps, Tatay would still be alive and Nanay would not be sent to an isolated mental hospital.

I was all alone. Nobody wanted me so they sent me to an orphanage. There, I thought, were no more bullies just like I experienced in school, but I was wrong. Yes. It was even worst like hell.

I learned to stand on my own, all by myself. Learned to defend my rights, my life in ways I did know. Most, I learned to made a promise for myself – someday, somehow, vengeance would favor me.

Fortunately, odds were on my favor. I was being freed by an unexpected report. I was an adopted child. No. Don't get me wrong. Tatay was once a driver of my true father. When I was born, Nanay and Tatay, being an infertile couple, stole me from my biological parents. That was it, life was so unfair! Or was it? So, it was like a reunion with those two strangers-but-not-really on that very bamboozling moment.

Years later, my biological father got the highest position of the country. Along that, Nanay had undergone euthanasia because her neurotic illness was beyond the power of medicine. Was it? Or was her presence a big threat to my father's image? That drove me to rage. Though all of me was a lie, I still love her, and Tatay. They were the ones who remained in me despite those fatty sheaths all over my body. They were the ones who accepted me, loved me, and gave me hope to stand firm against those bullies.

Couldn't you see? I was just a victim of the cruelties of this fate, of those people, of this unfair world. They should not blame me really. They already implanted an embryo of anger and rebellion in my life. Rehab couldn't do, I guess. I was certain, justice was the best solution. As long as I see inequalities amongst the people, I would never change my plot of reprisal.

Take note, every bullies were once oppressed, coerced and bullied!

I am Regine. And this is my confession.

GROW OLD WITH YOU

Dean Paul Quirit

"I wanna make you smile whenever you're sad, carry you around when your arthritis is bad. All I wanna do is grow old with you."

Sumisikip ang aking dibdib. Nakatayo ako ngayon sa may pinto ng simbahan habang sinisilip ang nagaganap sa loob. Kasabay nito ay ang pagsaliw ng tugtugin sa paglalakad ng isang babaeng nakasuot ng puting damit papuntang altar kung saan naghihintay ang lalaking nakasuot ng barong tagalog na magiging kabiyak niya sa kanilang susumpaang pagsasama.

Ang lalaking una ko'ng minahal at unang nagmahal sa akin na akala ko'y magiging karamay ko habang buhay.

Buwan ng Disyembre nang pumunta ako sa Boracay upang ipagdiwang ang nalalapit na kaarawan ni Hesus. Doon ko nakilala si Edward. Magaan ang aking loob sa kanya at ganun din siya sa akin. Nagkamabutihan kami. Bagama't ganoon, nanatili kaming magkaibigan. Hindi ko minadali ang pagkakataon na umibig muli sa kadahilanang hindi pa ako handa. Dulot na rin ng rasong nasaktan na ako minsan. Natatakot ako sa pwedeng mangyari muli.

Sa paglipas ng panahon, hindi ko namalayan nahuhulog na ang loob ko sa kanya. Sa pagkakataong ito, nilabanan ko ang takot at sinunod ang udyok ng puso at saya. Alam kong minahal niya ako tulad ng pagmamahal ko sa kanya. O, alam ko nga ba? Bawat araw na kasama ko siya, labis-labis ang tuwang nadarama. Kailanman, hindi namin alintana ang sinasabi ng ibang tao sa t'wing naglalakad kami habang pinapapatugtog ang kantang paborito namin. Basta alam namin na mahal namin ang isa't-isa. At walang sinuman ang makapagbabago no'n.

Lumipas ang mga taon, tuluyan na siyang tinanggap ng aking pamilya. Wala rin naman silang magagawa maliban sa tanggapin na sa kanya lang ako magiging masaya. Sa sobrang tuwa, naisip ko kung bakit 'di nalang kami magsama. Kinausap ko si Edward ngunit kumunot ang noo niya sa dahilang hindi ko alam. Nabigla ako sa kanyang reaksyon at aaminin kong natakot ako kasabay ng pagnulay ng sakit sa aking pagkatao. Gayunpaman, tinanong ko siya kung ano ang problema ngunit sabi niya'y hindi niya alam kung ano ang magiging reaksyon ng kanyang pamilya.

Sinubukan naming pumunta sa bahay nila. Linggo iyon para siguradong walang trabaho ang mommy at daddy niya. Kinabahan ako habang papalapit kami sa kinaroroonan ng kanyang pamilya. Pinagpawisan ako ngunit pinunasan niya ito agad gamit ang kanyang panyo upang hindi umano ako magmukhang madungis sa mata ng magiging biyenang ko.

Nang makarating na kami sa hardin kung saan nagkakape ang kanyang mga magulang, nagmano kaagad si Edward. Gayundin ako bilang respeto sa mga nakakatanda lalo na't sila ang mga magulang ng mahal ko. Sinimulan ni Edward ang pakikipag-usap at ipinakilala niya ako. Sa bawat salitang lumalabas sa bibig ni Edward ay kinakabahan ako. Nagtatanong ang aking diwa kung maiintindihan ba nila ang aming mga puso at kung paano iyon mangyayari. Napaigtad ako nang sa wakas, pormal na niya akong ipinakilala bilang karelasyon. Nagtinginan ang dalawa at saka ibinalik ang tingin sa amin. Kitang-kita ko ang pag-iba ng timpla ng mga mukha nila. Gumapang ang kaba at takot sa buong katawan. Sabi ko na nga ba at hindi nila kami maiintindihan. Kailanman, hindi nila ako matatanggap. Hindi na iyon mangyayari.

Bigla akong nahiya sa ginawang pagpilit ni Edward sa kanyang mga magulang na tanggapin ako. Mahal niya ako at mahal namin ang isa't-isa ngunit sadyang galit ang dalawa. Pinalayas nila kami sapagkat hindi nila matanggap ang kondisyon ng pagmamahalan na mayroon kami. Wala kaming magawa maliban sa tuluyang umalis at pumunta

sa lugar kung saan pwede kaming mag-usap ng masinsinan. Sa lugar kung saan tahimik at walang pwedeng makakadisturbo.

"Paano na ngayon? Hindi sang-ayon ang mommy at daddy mo," malungkot ko'ng tanong sa kanya.

"Hindi ko alam," agad niyang sagot sa akin.

"Paano'ng hindi mo alam? Ang ibig ko'ng sabihin ay ano'ng gagawin natin ngayon?" sagot ko sa kanya.

Napaluha ako bigla. Nilapitan niya ako na may halong pag-aalala. pinunasan ang luhang umaagos sa aking pisngi at saka nagyakapan.

"Kriiiiing.. Kriiiiing," tunog ng telepono ko. Sinagot ko ang dagliang tawag. Hindi ko batid kung magiging masaya o malungkot ako sa natanggap kong tawag. Ayaw ko'ng iwan si Edward sa ganitong gusot na aming napasukan.

Sumakay na kami sa kotse upang ihatid ako sa bahay. Nagtaka si Edward kung bakit ako tulala at walang imik. Habang nagmamaneho siya ng sasakyan, tinanong niya ako kung bakit. Tinanong niya ako kung sino ang tumawag sa akin at kung bakit ito tumawag. Nabigla ako at napalunok. Nagtaka siya at inakmang agawin ang telepono. Dahil sa ayaw ko'ng ibigay, nag-agawan kami. At sa isang iglap, sumagitsit ang isang nakakabinging tunog saka kami nawalan ng malay.

Nagising na lang ako na nakalatay sa isang kwarto. Nagtataka kung bakit may babaeng nag aasikaso sa akin na naka-uniporme na kulay puti. Tinanong ko siya kung saan ang kasama ko. Sagot niya ay nandoon daw sa Intensive Care Unit ang aking tinutukoy. Agad akong bumangon at pumunta sa kinaroroonan ni Edward. Hindi ko lubos maisip ang kinahihitnatnan ng aking mahal.

Nakalabas ako ng ospital kinabukasan sapagkat galos lang ang aking natamo. Hindi ko alam ano aking gagawin sapagkat ngayon na

ang nakatak dang araw ng aking pag-alis papuntang Canada. Ginusto ko ito noon, ang mangibang bansa sa tulong ng aking matalik na kaibigan. At ngayong dumating na nga, gusto ko'ng umayaw. Nag-isip ako ng mabuti at sinubukang timbangin ang mga sitwasyon. Naisip ko na kung iiwan ko siya ay siguradong magagalit siya dahil hindi ako nagpaalam ng maayos pero paano ako magpapaalam kung ganyan ang kondisyon niya. Naisip ko rin na mabuting aalis na lang ako kaysa magkasama nga kami pero galit naman ang mga magulang ni Edward at pilif naman kaming paglayuin. Ayaw ko ring gawing miserable ang buhay niya dahil sa akin.

Napagdesisyonan ko nang umalis at mag-iwan na lang ng liham para kay Edward. Sinulat ko roon ang aking nadarama at dahilan kung bakit kailangan ko siyang iwan. Labag man sa aking kalooban ang aking gagawin ngunit kailangan. Alam ko'ng napakalaking pagtataksil ang aking ginawa ngunit para rin naman sa kanyang kalagayan ang aking desisyon.

Nawala ako sa piling niya ng limang taon at ibinuhos ang aking atensyon sa trabaho sa Canada. Limang taong walang komunikasyon. Wala lahat. Bumalik ako ng Pinas dala ang bigat na noon pa man aking dala-dala. Bumalik ako sa pagbabakasakaling balikan at ayusin ang pagmamahalan na aming binuo sa matagal na panahon. Isang pagmamahalan na nawasak dahil sa isang sakripisyo at hangaring mapabuti ang lagay ni Edward limang taon na ang nakalilipas.

Dumaan ako sa simbahan upang magdasal. Dahil marami akong iniisip, pumasok ako na hindi pinansin ang mga taong nakapaligid. Pinili ko'ng umupo sa pinakadulong parte ng mga upuan. Pagkatapos ko'ng magdasal, agad akong lumabas upang puntahan sana si Edward sa bahay nila. Ngunit, tiyempong paglabas ko sa pinto ay tumunog ang musikang pamilyar sa aking pandinig.

"I'll get you medicine, when your tummy aches. Build you a fire if the furnace breaks. Oh it could be so nice, growing old with you."

Lumingon ako sa likuran at nakita ko ang lalaking aking iniwan. Gusto ko siyang lapitan pero napahinto ako ng makita ko ang suot niyang barong tagalong, tila may hinihintay at tinitingnan. Sinundan ko ang tingin niya at nakita ko ang babaeng naglalakad papunta sa kinaroroonan ni Edward kasabay ang tugtugin na iyon. Hindi ko maintidihan ang mga nagaganap. Doon ko lang nalaman nang nakatayo na silang dalawa sa harap ng altar. Napaluha ako ng bigla, sobra-sobra dahil sa sakit at pagsisisi.

"I, Edward Estrella, take you to be my wife. I promise to be faithful to you, in good times and in bad times, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life," panata ni Edward sa babaeng kaharap niya.

"I, Melissa Lim, take you to be my husband. I promise to be faithful to you, in good times and in bad times, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life," sagot ng babae.

Umagos ang luha sa aking mukha. Kumirok ang aking puso. Ako dapat ang sasagot sa panata ni Edward. Ako dapat ang kasama niya ngayon. Ngunit, hindi ko na kaya ang lahat ng bigat sa aking kaluluwa. Lakad-takbo ang aking ginawa habang nilalaban ang paglupasyang aking pagod na katawan. Ngunit tila ako'y pinaglalaruan ng tadhana at sa aking paglayo, dinig na dinig ko pa ang mga boses nila. Mga boses na nagpapadugo sa aking luhaang puso.

"You may kiss the bride," sabi ng pari kay Edward. Gusto ko'ng bumalik upang pigilan ang nangyari subalit wala na akong magagawa pa. Hindi ko alam kung matatanggap pa ba ako ni Edward at ng ibang tao kapag nalaman at nakita nila ang isang mala-Eba na umiibig sa isang Adan. Hindi ko na rin gustong sirain ang sinumpaang dalawang nag-iibigan na tanggap ng buong lipunan.

Alam ko'ng mali ang aming pagmamahalan sa mga mata ng mapagpanuligsa at mapaghusga pati na rin sa mata ng Diyos ngunit

mapipigilan ko ba ang aking nadarama kung sadyang tunay kaming nagmamahalan? Ngunit ang pagmamahalan na iyon ay nasayang lamang. Alam ko ring pareho kaming lalaki na nag-iibigan noon na kung tanggap lamang ng mundo at ng Diyos ay siguradong magiging matibay ang aming pagsasamahan. Sana, kami sana ang nagsumpaan sa harap ng altar. Tanong ko na lang sa aking sarili, "Kailan pa kaya ito magiging maaari?"

Habang papalayo sa simbahan, nasagi sa aking isipan ang liriko ng paborito naming kanta kapag naglalakad.

"I'll miss you, kiss you. Give you my coat when you are cold. Need you, feed you. Even let you hold the remote control. So let me do the dishes in our kitchen sink. Put you to bed when you've had too much to drink. Oh I could be the man, who wants to grow old with you."

"I want to grow old with you," bulong ko sa sarili ko.

DISGUISED REALITY

Charisse Vinz Bucoya

I was walking down the slippery aisles of my hometown with a bag full of food. It was a drizzly afternoon and I went up to a fast-food chain to grab some snacks before I went home. Tired as I was, I walked slowly and patiently as if savoring the tiny droplets that slowly penetrate my skin. I must call it as a lonely afternoon, perhaps, because I got low scores on my exams and all I wanted to do was to cry myself out but could not. It would be too embarrassing for me in school. And now, here I am with drifting thoughts with the dark sky to join me on my reverie.

My head was slowly wandering into negative possibilities of what would be the reaction of my parents if they knew about my failed grade in my calculus midterm exam. Suddenly, a bunch of kids approached me. They had greasy faces and torn out clothes. Their slippers had big holes in them. I wondered if the color of their hair was originally blonde and not black. Their eyes expressed the emotion that could soften anyone's heart. Seeing them in that state made me want to run away to avoid them, because inevitably, they showed to me the reality that I wanted to escape.

If it weren't because of my failed grade. I would've joked and asked the kids if their hair were dyed or not. But now, I'm not in the mood to ask silly questions that may add me up to Santa's naughty list. So, I ignored them and I continued to walk. To my surprise, the kids followed and showed their small palms. I was even afraid that they would touch me considering the fact that they were dirty and tiny blisters could be seen in them.

I flinched and was ready to yell at them when I saw one of them eyed the bag of snacks in my hand. The little boy was staring at it like it was a treasure chest full of gold and diamonds. I could see his eyes twinkle as he gazed at my food. His other friends continued to

stretch their hands at me and even if they were not saying anything, I knew that they were begging for something. I was not that cold to ignore their hungry looks. But in my mind, I thought about my favorite food in my hand. Should I give it to them?

I glanced at it and then back to the hungry little kids. If I would give my food to them, I wouldn't be able to buy another for myself. I only had ample amount of money for my jeepney fare and I was not in the mood to risk my stomach into being a hungry lion for tonight. My second choice was to pretend not noticing them and to continue walking without being moved by their pleading looks. Come to think of it, if I would choose between the two options, it also means I had to choose whether I would think for myself or if I would think for the sake of others.

Right there and then, I became conscious of what it felt to be confused by two things that would change two sides. And then the thought of how did my professor make the decision on whether he would fail me or not dawned into me. Did he have a hard time in choosing which was better? Did he have been confused whether he would let me pass in the midterms or not?

I looked back at the kids; their eyes told me their stories. I didn't know what came up to me because without a word, I gave my snack to them. The three kids stared at the bag in awe and smiled up to me. They couldn't seem to believe that somebody had given them food. I nodded towards them and motioned them to eat it. They shared the meal joyfully, not even minding to wash their dirty hands, and bits of food clung to the side of their mouths. What amazed me was even if they were choking up on their food, they were still muttering their thanks to me.

Watching them as they ravage the food I gave, it made a big impact to change my dim mood. I muttered a simple thank you to my professor in my head, for he played a big part in my realization. If Sir had given me a passing grade, he would get himself a demerit for

not doing his job well because of his consideration. Then if he chose to give me a low grade, I would hate him at first but eventually, that hate would just subside if I dug deeper on his purpose for failing me.

He wanted me to believe in my capabilities. And that I should think first of other's sake rather than prioritizing my own. If he had given me a passing grade that wouldn't give me a true realization on what should I improve on his subject. Then maybe I would not think of doing more extra efforts and diligence to study hard in order to pass. Perhaps, I would not ponder on how to dedicate myself into studying hard. My reaction was a natural reflex. But if I dug deeper on the issue, it wasn't that bad. I shouldn't have reacted like I hated him to the core. I owed him more and he didn't deserve the hatred that I am feeling right now.

All the bad things that made me down that day melted and I was touched by what they made me realize. I might be unfortunate when it comes to my grades but then, there were other people – even younger than me – who had experienced a tougher side of life, some had the toughest. I should look on the brighter side of life, rather than stuck in a corner and did the 'hate this' and 'blame that' act. Life is a beautiful plot if you would think of its deeper meaning.

HARI-HARIAN

Pinky Jane D. Albarando

"O pare tagay pal" Ipinasa ni Berto ang baso na ang laman na mumurahing alak ay natapon pa at agad ding nilamon ng lupa na parang isang gutom na buwaya.

"My bad dude. My bad" at nakuha pa mag Ingles ng mokong! Napangisi si Dodong at nagsalin pang muli. Lasing na nga sila.

Malalim na ang gabi at tanging ang mga ulilayaw na lamang nila ang pumupunat sa nakakabinging katahimikan.

"Di ka yata umiinom parekoy? Ako lang ata ang nalalasing eh! Hihih." "

Tinungga ni Dodong ang laman ng baso. One shot.

"Pare kumusta na ba kayo ng syota mo? Hihi. Balita ko'y malaman daw. Haha"

"Ha? Sino kamo?"

"Si Ana! Yung syota mo!"

Anna. Pamilyar. Tama si Anna! Ang syota niya. Tsk tsk. Pangalan pa lamang nito ay nagbabalik na ng mga makukulay na alaala sa madidilim na gabi. Seksi si Ana. Napatunayan na niya ito sa maraming gabing magkasama silang nag-aaliwan. Sa bawat mahaliparot na tili nito. Sa bawat pagkembot ng maganda nitong katawan. May itsura rin naman si Anna. Papasa na rin sa potsyo-potsyong beauty pageant sa kanilang lugar. Pero seksy si Ana... Seksi...

"Hoy Parekoy! Haha nanaginip ka atal"

"Wala. Ok naman kami rekoy"

"Patatali ka ba? Akala ko ba Bachelors tayo?"

Napaisip siya. Patatali nga ba siya? Matagal na itong sinisingit ni Anna sa kanilang mga pag-uusap. Nitong mga huling araw ay mas naging madalas ito. Ngunit parati niya itong iniwasan na parang isang masangang na amoy ng kung anong patay. Ngayo'y binabagabag na naman siya ng kanyang bangungot.

"Hindi parekoy! Wais yata to! Hihi." At nagsalin pang muli si Dodong ng serbesa.

...

Magkahiwalay nilang binabagtas ang daan pauwi sa kani-kanilang hari-harian. Pasuray-suray siya at ang makikitid na daan ay lalo pang nagpahilo sa kanya. Masisikip ang mga daan na kundi man pinakipot ng mga barong-barong na parang mga kabuteng sumusulpot, ay nang mga munting bundok ng basura.

Masikip. Mabaho. Marumi. Tondo.

Nagpatuloy siya sa paglalakad at nilinga-linga ang paligid, naghahanap ng palatandaan ng kanilang bahay. Ngunit wala siyang makita. Nagsasayawan ang bawat bahay. Naririnig niya ang mga maharot na kiliti ni Anna, nag-aanyaya. Anak ng! At ini-engkanto ata!

Nahagip ng kanyang mga mata ang isang pamilyar na poster ng Coke. Jackpot! Nasabi niya sa sarili. Ang bubong ng bahay nila yun! Yahoo!

Madali nyang tinungo yaon ngunit nadapa siya sa paanan ng kanilang pintuan. Naaninag niya ang mukha ni Maja Salavador sa poster na kanilang pintuan. Sinubukan niyang tumayo ngunit mahina siya at muli nagpagapi sa nag-aanyayang tulog.

...

"Walang bigas, walang sabon, walang load! Akol Ako! Ako! Ako lang ba ang utak dito mga kumag? Hoy magtrabaho kayo!"

Ginising siya ng bulyaw ng kanyang ina. Ngunit nanatili siyang nakapikit. Ayaw pa niyang bumangon habang patuloy sa pagtatalak ang kanyang ina sa loob. Narinig niya ang pagbukas ng pintuan sabay ang pagtilapon ng tubig sa kanyang mukha. Napabalikwas siya.

"Arrgh! Ermat naman!"

"Hoy Dodong wag mo akong ma-ermat ermat diyan! Ano hindi ka ba mag-aaplay?"

"Mag-aaplay na ho"

"Bangon! Kumag nito!"

Hahay Home sweet home! Napaisip niya sa sarili.

...

Malamig ang tubig na naglalaro sa kanyang katawan habang siya'y naliligo. Dinig na dinig niya ang huntayan ng mga tambay sa tindahan. Maaga pa't naglalasing na. Tondong-Tondo. Nasusuka siya sa katamaran ng mga tao sa kanyang paligid. Kontento na sa kakarampot na pagkain sa mesa at sa maruming lugar na kinasasadlakan nila.

Ngunit hindi siya tutulad sa kanila. Iba siya at babaguhin niya ang kanyang buhay. Kagragradweyt lang niya sa dalawang taon na vocational course sa paghohotel. Puno siya ng pag-asa na makukuha sa isang hotel na may limang bitwin. Yayaman na siya at makakaalis na sa mabahong lugar nila. Ngumisi sya, maliwanag ang kinabukasan nya. Ngunit isasama ba niya si Anna?

...

"Pormang-porma ata tayo Dodong? San bang lakad natin?"
Paputol-putol na tanong sa kanya ng tambay.

"Mag-aaplay ako. Hihi. Susubukan ko lang."

"A ganon ba? Ayaw mo bang tumagay muna? Good luck charm
ba. Hihi."

"Hindi na rekoy. Baka mapadami."

"Edi babay na. Hihi. Break your leg!" Nginisihan siyang muli ng
tambay at nagpatuloy na sa pagbabaraha.

"Break your leg? Haha eh paano ako makakalakad non? Bobo
haha." Napailing siya at lumakad na. Naisip niyang muli si Anna.
Mamaya'y makikipagkita siya rito upang makikipagkalas. Delikado na.

...

"Dodong mahal mo ba ako? Tiningnan siya ni Anna. Katatapos
lamang nilang maglaro sa dilim at ang kanilang mga hubad na katawan
na puno ng pawis ay nababalotan lamang ng manipis na kumot."

"A oo naman. Diba sinabi ko na sayo dati yan?" Wala sa loob na
sagot ni Dodong.

Kabaligtaran sa plano niya kanina, nang magkita sila ni Anna
ay di niya magawang hiwalayan ito. Bagkus ay pumaibabaw ang
pangangailangan ng kanyang katawan. At muli, natagpuan niya ang
sarili na bumibigay sa kalaswaan.

"Paano kung tumaba ako at pumangit?" Tinanong ulit siya ng
kasintahan. Ngayo'y nakatutok na ito sa kanya.

"A marahil hindi. Hihi."

"Paano ba yan, eh tataba talaga ako at papangit."

Bumalik si Anna sa pagkakahiga at ipinikit ang kanyang mga mata. Ang kanyang mga kamay ay marahan na ipinatong sa kanyang puson.

"Paano ba yon?" nakapikit din si Dodong.

"Kasi buntis ako," nakapikit pa rin siya.

Dagling tumayo si Dodong at tinutukan ang nakapikit na nobya. "Ano? Nagbibiro ka ba Anna?"

"Hindi. Dalawang buwan na," payapa nitong sagot at hinaplos-haplos ang sinapupunan.

Nabato si Dodong at tanging nasa-isip niya ay ang mga sinabi ni Anna. Buntis ito. Sino ang ama? Siya ba? Sa kanyang balitaw ay naglalaro ang imahe ng knayang pangarap. Unti-unting lumalabo at lumalayo sa kanya. Ang kanyang kaharian ay naglahong parang bula. Nayari na!

...

"Hoy Dodong ano bang balita don sa inaplayan mo ha?" Kumakain sila sa kusina ng ina at mga kapatid.

"Aba'y mag-iisang buwan na al

Nabilaokan siya at inabot ang tubig. Kinakabahan na siya. Hanggang ngayo'y hindi pa niya nasasabi sa ina na hindi siya nakuha sa trabaho. Lalong-lalo na ang tungkol kay Anna.

Nagagalit na si Anna. Unti-unti nang napapansin ang tumutubong taba sa sinapupunan nito. Nagbabala itong magpapakamatay kung

hindi pa niya masabi. Ngayon niya dapat sabihin. Uminom siya ng tubig.

"Sobra naman ho kayo Inay. Syempre may good news din," pinilit niyang ngumisi ngunit ang kanyang tuhod ay nanagangatal sa kaba.

"Aber ano naman? Dapat lang! Ho!"

"Ngiti muna kayo. Haha. At sumumpa kayo na di kayo magagalit."

"Ako ba niloloko mo ha?" ngunit ngumiti pa rin ito.

Ito na! Wala na tong atrasan. Huminga siya ng malaim at sa pilit na masayang tinig ay pinawalan ang good news.

"Nay. Lola na ho kayo!"

Dumilat ang mata ng kanyang ina. Nabato ang pilit na ngiti sa labi at walang babalang nalagmak sa sahiig.

...

"Kelan ba tayo bubukod Dodong? Apat na buwan na tayo dito al Mabuti sana kung tanggap ako ng nanay mo. Aba'y sa araw-araw na ata na ginawa ng Diyos ay pinapamukha niya sa akin na ako ang sumira ng buhay mo. Hal Bakit ano naman ang sisirain ko? Wala ka din namang buhay! Hoy Dodong!"

Pitong buwan na ang tiyan ni Anna. Malaki na ito at tila isang pangit na bolang kumakain sa katauhan ni Anna. Nangayayat ito. Wala na ang dating ngiti nito na siyang nagpapatingkad sa kanyang mukha. Ni hindi na nga ito ngumingiti. Minsan ay ngumiti ito. Ngunit hindi matamis kundi puno ng pait at panlilibak. Naawa siya rito ngunit mas nakakabingi na ang pagtatalak nito.

"Ginagawa ko naman ang lahat al" Paturol nitong sagot.

“Ang lahat? Hahaha. Aba hanggang ngayon nga’y wala ka pang trabaho! Palamunin pa rin tayo ng nanay mo! Paano ang bata Dodong? Ano pakakain mo? Hangin?”

“Gagawa ako ng paraan.”

“Na naman? Yan at yan na lang ang sinasabi mo! Hay Dodong. Ni hindi mo pa nga ako mapakasalan.”

“Ginagawan nga ng paraan.”

“Huwag mo nga akong gawing tanga Dodong! Narinig ko kayong nag-uusap ni Berto kahapon. The Bachelors.”

Hindi na siya nakapagpigil. Hinampas niya ng buong lakas si Anna. Sa lakas ay nabuwal ito sa pagkatayo at nahandusay sa sahig. Dumaloy ang pulang likido sa payat na paa ni Anna. Pumula ang sahig at namutla si Anna. Nabato si Dodong. Tila nawawala sa sarili.

“Ahhh!” Tumili si Anna ngunit hindi gaya ng mahaliparot nitong tili na kapwa nilasap nila sa mga makasalanang gabi. Ito’y tiling puno ng pait, nagpupumilit makatakas sa sinakdalang hari-harian.

THE CONSEQUENCE

Charisse Vinz Bucoya

My gaze turned hazy as raindrops continued to pour its way to the ground. It was not a big deal at all. I needed it. I yearned for it. It gave me the numbness that I needed to escape the reality that I started to hate. I had too many questions in my mind that simply needed an answer. Am I that ugly? Am I too needy? Tell me? What's wrong with begging? What's wrong with fighting 'til the end? Is it wrong for you to stay? Or it simply doesn't work that way?

It never crossed my mind that I'd experience a life-changing situation like this. It was the most awaited day of my life. Nobody knew how much I waited for it, but then just as I was about to have the moment I've been yearning, she left.

Two weeks had passed and I never got a word from her. Her parents even wondered why she ran away. All thought that our fairytale would have its happily ever after but it happened otherwise. It never had a warning signal, we were too happy days before the wedding but then when she walked down the aisle, tears welled down her rosy cheeks. Her smile never reached her eyes and just as she came face to face with me, she muttered "I'm sorry" and ran away.

Today, as I walked in this empty highway waiting for a truck to bump me to the emptiness, I am very thankful that the rain camouflaged the tears from my eyes. I don't want to feel the pain anymore. I don't want to have a string to her, no more. If this would be the way to stop my heart from bleeding, I would gladly take the chance. I closed my eyes and waited.

The white light was blinding my vision. Here it is, the moment that would tear the pain in my heart. "I am ready," I said to myself. A loud noise got through my ears, and I could really feel that it is near

me. Loud thumps jumped in my chest, and with one last breath I took the opportunity to inhale all the air that I could.

It was perfect. I was holding a white bunch of well arranged flowers and was wearing the perfect dress that had no stain at all. The veil covered my face like it was a transparent partition between reality and fantasy. All nodded and cheered with beaming faces as I walked down the aisle full of white petals.

And it got into me. I didn't deserve this, I was not the right person for this. Tears began to fall like rivers in my eyes as I looked up at the man in his tux at the end of the aisle. His face was happy; it was even more than that. Anyone who could see him would say that I am the luckiest girl in town, for I'd marry this perfect man. And it brought me to reality. I'm not perfect for him.

Earlier today, I stayed in my hotel room waiting for the make-up artist to come. I was so excited for this to happen 'cause finally after all those years we endured, today would mark the day that we'd be one. Suddenly, a knock in the door disturbed me from my reverie. I hurried and got it straight. It was the make-up artist and her assistant. They came in and I led them to the vanity mirror. Then they began their job. The assistant cleaned my toenails first while the make-up artist styled my hair.

I was having a nice chat with the make-up artist when her assistant finished her job with my toes, and now she said if I'm ready to have my fingertips cleaned. I nodded and she took my right hand. At first, I wondered why she held it longer. Curiosity got into me when instead of cleaning my nails, she opened my palm and began to trace it. I was shocked because it was weird, but the make-up artist suddenly asked her assistant for what she saw?

I looked up at her with a confused face and she began to explain that her assistant is an expert in palm reading and that she never had

a failed interpretation to those entire customers who got their palms read by her. I was amazed by it. I began to ask her what did the lines of my palm says. Then a look of hesitation flooded her face. She said that it was a waste of time. I asked her why but she just said that it was just an interpretation and that I should not be bugged about it.

Why would she hesitate to say what she had read? Curiosity got into me and I insisted about spilling the beans of her interpretation. So, she explained everything and it bothered me to the core.

"It said that you're about to have a good thing to happen. But even though it was that good, a very bad thing would follow after and it might cause you to lose something precious." The assistant's words kept on ringing to my ears. Today would mark the day for something good to happen – my wedding, our wedding. Would this mean that something bad might happen after my wedding? I ask them about what's bothering in my mind, but then the assistant said that it would be all that she had read. She didn't know what would happen and she could only know if it were true when it would finally happen.

The make-up artist and the assistant got worried about me but I assured them that I'm okay and that I didn't believe in palmistry. But then, something bugged me inside and I couldn't stop worrying about it. What if today was it? What would I lose? Would it be my career? My freedom? Or someone I love? I don't know. The more I thought about it, the more bothered I am.

Just then, a loud crashing sound interrupted my conversation with my make-up artist. Pieces of glass sprawled out on the floor. I became nervous, but I shrugged it off. We called the maintenance personnel to have it cleaned.

Not long enough, they finished doing my make-up and my hair. They left me, and I was alone in my room, waiting for my parents to come in. And it got me thinking, what if the broken glass was a

bad omen? What if I would lose him after the wedding? Am I ready? Would I accept it?

The bell rang in a festive mood. The mahogany door opened, and I entered the church with trembled feet. I tried to smile but it never faltered the things that burdened me. I realized that I wasn't ready to face the new life that I was about to begin. Then I made an impulsive decision that changed my life. I ran away in the day of my own wedding.

He kept on reaching me but I restricted myself from answering his call. My parents were searching for me but I kept on hiding. I really thought that when I made the decision to run away, I would be able to prevent the bad thing from happening as said by the assistant. But it didn't. And I hated to admit that it was worse than I expected.

A year had passed and I came back. The first thing I did was going to the church where I left him in the altar. I saw a man sitting in the front row. And even if his back were all I could see, I still knew who he was. With tears welling in my eyes, I slowly walked towards his place. As I was near him, he turned to me and smiled. He stood up and greeted me 'hello' with a smile.

I was surprised by what he did. I expected to have a confrontation but what I got was a hello. With tears, I said, "It's nice to see you" then hugged him immediately. He seemed surprised but he didn't move. Then he said with a knot on his forehead, "Excuse me miss, but do I know you in the past?"

What was he talking about? Then, without hearing the query in my mind, he said "I'm sorry if I couldn't recognize you, I had an accident a year ago and had lost my memory."

Now I got the consequences of my actions. I was erased in the memory of my beloved. That was the bad thing. I might be different if I was brave enough to pursue the wedding, but I wasn't. That gave

me a realization that, in life, I shouldn't just rely on impulse decisions and sudden prophecies. As what the infamous saying "Life is full of mysteries." Those mysteries were the challenges I needed to unfold in order for me to have a good outcome. I should not need to hurry, for this was all about a cliché "good things come to those who wait." Don't be like me. Don't be a coward. Be brave. Believe in your heart because it is often right.

TIMELY GIVEN

Charisse Vinz Bucoya

Thick clouds blocked the orange rays of the sun. Heavy rain poured and the galvanized iron that roofed the old yet cozy vacation house sounded tic tac as every drop of water touch it. A young lady was seated on a wooden chair on the balcony looking as if a big chunk of thought had been given to her by the event.

The vacation house looked empty and quiet. It's never yet summer nor even a holiday. The house was built for a family of seven members. It was the place that witnessed almost all important events, may it be birthdays or anniversaries. The day was perfect for reminiscence within oneself.

She stared at the sight in front of her and thought about how things went over the past five years. Memories came running back to what it seemed and as if the hands of clock had turned counterclockwise. She could now see herself wearing again that blue plaid skirt paired with a collared blouse. An ID rested on her neck and her hair was flowing in harmony with the wind.

She was back on her salad days. On the scene that happened way back ten years ago. She was walking under the dim lighted street of her hometown. The background was a busy street. Certain memory had never faded nor removed. As a year added up after another, the nostalgic effect of the reminiscence still made her tears want to roll down her cheeks.

It was never perfect. Nothing special had ever occurred, but instead, a common typical boy meets girl story arose. A feeble, gawky girl and a proud, cocky boy. A book left opened on a library desk, unoccupied seat, and a girl carrying tons of books. It started with a "can I sit here?" and followed with few more encounters. Familiarity came and they became friends.

Heartfelt laughs, valued times shared and just a little push in the cliff, a sprout of new beginning might grow fonder. Her eyes showed the sweetest gaze and undeniably a tinge of light was evident on his emotionless face.

Time strengthened the sprouted friendship and it grew into a big and strong tree – watered with concern and lighted with love. Neither of them did admit nor denied. Playing safe as all have called it. But for the two hearts with its own understanding, it was for all for the better.

But then, smooth sailing seas were never constant, ships were rocked with a huge storm and so was their little understanding. The happy moments were bound to an end. Graduation came, and it signified that it was time to cross different paths. That commencement resulted into two people walking side by side in a street and neither one of them wanted to speak. The crossroad was drawing nearer as every step but no words came. Not until it was the time for them to take separate ways.

“See you in the next few years,” his cold voice spoke.

She smiled, but never did it reach her eyes. The unspoken feelings needed to be expressed; hence it was too late to show. Trying all her might to speak, she said “Do well” and walked away.

Tears streamed down her face as she took the other path. It was not the ideal kind of ending that she’d wanted to happen but then blame it to her mouth that couldn’t just express what her heart was trying to confess, she’d acted differently for him to know what she felt. But maybe, sometimes words speak louder than actions instead of actions speak louder than words.

A last glimpse was taken and she was back to the present. A tear rolled down her delicate face. Five years had passed and the unwritten promise had been nailed. Time had been wasted in waiting, and so it might be a sign to put a period in the sentence.

Gathering all the memories that served an important treasure to her, she went outside. Bathed in the rain, and sat on the ground. Hugged her knees while burying her head between her thighs, it gave a warm and comfortable sensation on her cold and numbed heart.

Feeling the cold wind, she sat still, hoping that by waiting under the midst of a pouring rain, somebody that would never come back would come to fetch her. She stayed there for almost a couple of hours, and got up, noticing that the rain had ceased.

Sunshine rose between the pillows of clouds. A rainbow was perfectly arched between two distant endpoints. It was a start of a new beginning. A heavy load had been left somewhere in the dessert. A whole new individual was born. A smile curved on her lips and heard the bell rung. She headed through the entrance, and saw a car parked out of the wooden fence. Wondering who it might be, she began to speak. "Exc—"

She held her breath as a tall silhouette of a man appeared at the back of the car.

"I came." He simply said. The stoic face was emotionless as it was. The hidden message of the smile of his eyes was still there and it overwhelmed her.

Frozen, she stood still. He came to her and gathered her in his arms. "I missed you."

And there, she broke into tears. She hugged him back, and right there and then, her fairytale had its own happy ending. The feelings were shown without worries, no more hindrances, and regrets were forgotten. True love might take all of your hopes away, but never would it fail a heart that knew the true meaning of waiting for it to come.

PYRITE (FOOL'S GOLD)

Juven Nino Villacastin

What is wealth's worth?

One's blood, sweat, and tears... or one's own life and dignity?

I thought being wealthy only meant drowning into a luxurious trench of riches; being a kid who lives in a house no larger than a suburban bathroom with cardboard box cutouts both for a bed and a table, I thought I was far from wealthy. But what I didn't realize sooner was that I was almost the richest person in the world all along. If I had just realized sooner that casting everything else for the ultimate search for material wealth was nothing more than a meaningless pursuit for Pyrite, I would've been the happiest child on earth. But, I didn't know what was wealth's worth then. I was just a blind fool chasing for fool's gold.

—

That day start as usual as chaotically hectic it was: the people wake up to the sound of large trucks slowly making their way towards the heart of the mountain and the clacks of large sledgehammers crushing piles and piles of oars; the cold morning breeze that slowly kissed the people's cheeks were accompanied by jabs and hooks from rock debris. This was the typical day in the life at Mount Diwalwal, a place where people coming from all over the province live and risk their lives over a single pursuit of finding gold. And, our family wasn't any exception. It's already been two years since me and my parents moved here from our land in Mati. My dad wasn't growing any good crops and we we're almost starving to death from poverty. That's when father decided to join the gold rush. It all just happened so fast. One morning, he just woke me and mother up in the break of dawn and told us to pack everything that we could bring. And from the peaceful fertile land, we moved into this barren kill-zone with barely anything to keep us alive but hope that one day, dad would find that sweet spot where most gold was

hidden. But years have gone by, and still no luck. The pursuit had gone hopeless to the point that father was slowly becoming insane. He would seldom return in the night, still digging in the mountains. When his tools broke, he would take all the little money we had left to buy new ones. Consequently, we had to eat about only once every three to four days or even worse, weeks! The place was literally hell; it looked like hell and it certainly felt like it! While mom was slowly becoming sickly and weak doing all she could by working odd jobs like carrying half a hundred kilo rocks for kilometers just to feed the family, I did all I could to help.

But that day was different, I just knew it somehow. That morning, I was squatting on the card board boxes, chiseling a small ore hoping to find a little gem nugget. As I chiseled the hours away, I also constantly checked on my mom lying on her back in the left, barely moving at all. She had been sick over the past few days and I had to keep an eye on her. Because of that, we weren't able to do jobs around the neighborhood. And consequently, we had to sustain ourselves with only a handful of rice meticulously portioned into three small portions, each was crudely equivalent to a meal a day, and an almost empty bottle of salt. I stopped chiseling every five minutes to check mom's temperature, she was very hot. After constantly checking, I tried to help her go to sleep. However, as I tried to tuck her, the door violently swung; Dad came heavily breathing. It seemed like he ran a very long way from home without even thinking of stopping to catch a breath. His face was filled with an indescribable expression of excitement; something I haven't seen in a very long time.

"This is it! We're finally gonna be rich!" He said excitedly while trying to catch his breath, "I found it, I finally found it!"

"Found what?" Mom tried to ask in a very soft, weak voice barely opening her eyes.

"Gold, lots of gold! Come son, I'll show you!" He replied. Mom

and I looked at each other out of disbelief. And, for the first time since a while, I saw her rare, sweet, smile masked by her sickly, thin face.

"Son, why don't you go with your father and have a little look?" she encouraged me.

"But Mom, who's going to check on you while I'm gone?" I tried to protest.

"It's going to be okay," she assured. "Come now, son!" father interrupted as he grabbed my hand and led me out of the house. I waved goodbye to mom as I was helplessly dragged outside. We circled around a few boulders until we reached a secluded spot at the edge of the mountain in front of what seemed to be an abandoned tunnel. Father took his flashlight and flicked it open. The small amount of light that emanated from its almost twisted bulb lit up a small entrance to another tunnel. Father then told me to crawl inside it, and I did what he said. As I crawled, doubts swirled all over my mind. This isn't actually the first time father said this to us. "Maybe this time, it's just another mistake." I thought to myself until I arrived at the small tunnel's end and as came tumbling down into a small cavern. "Ouch!" I exclaimed, as I checked on my arm. But, as I gazed forward, I immediately forgot about the little bruises and scratches I got; there it was: walls of rocks with sparkling crystals all over it. We finally found it, gold. Lots and lots of gold.

"Beautiful, isn't it? After two years of suffering in this hell hole, we finally found it son." Father exclaimed as he arrived at the scene. "Promise me son, don't tell anybody about this!" he continued. I smiled at him and gave him a big "okay." It was the first time that I smiled in front of dad in years; it was the first dad has ever seen in a very long time. Just the site of it almost brought him to tears. However, the joy was short-lived; when we got out of the tunnel, there were people waiting near the entrance. It seemed like they

overheard dad earlier back at home (after all, we lived in a squatter area) and managed to follow us.

"What did you find there, Tasio?" one of them tried to interrogated.

"No-nothing, I was just showing my son around these parts," Dad replied.

"Don't lie to me! You know what happens when you try to lie to me!" he threatened as the men gave us a very suspicious look pressed us again with more questions. They even tried to go into the tunnel. But Dad knew that they would never find the entrance to that cavern so he let them in to break the suspicion. When they got out, disappointment hanged in their faces and they decided to go home except for that man who kept staring at dad but eventually left us alone. After a couple of moments to collect ourselves, Dad and I went home as well.

It was already night time when we arrived home. Dad was able to pick out some nuggets back at the cavern and sold them to some dealers on the way home and we went by the town to buy food to eat. Finally, we we're going to have dinner! And not just any dinner, but the first complete meal we had since two years! I just couldn't wait to see the smile on mom's face when she knows that we're finally going to have a break from the usual rice and salt for the first time!

However, when we arrived back home, there was a person sitting in the house asking her some questions. And this was no ordinary person. He was tall and well groomed wearing three-piece suit.

"Tasio, son. You're home," mom greeted after noticing that we arrived. "Someone is looking for you," she continued as she pointed to the man in the corner.

"Mr. de Vega, pleasure to meet you Tasio, isn't it? I was sent by Gemini Mining Corporation to offer you a business deal. I believe that you have found something that we might be interested in," he said in a casual, business tone as he slowly and coyly turned towards Dad and extended his arm.

"I'm very sorry sir but I don't have any idea of what you're talking about," Dad immediately replied.

The man paused for a moment then made a proposition.

"The company is willing to give you P100 000, Tasio," he offered.

"I'm sorry, but I really have no idea what you're talking about," Dad replied.

"P500,000," he asserted

"I'm really sorry bu-

"P1,000,000!" he interrupted. Everyone was astonished after hearing the offer.

"Dad, that's enough to help us get mom to a hospital. And the rest is enough for us to start a new life!" I whispered to dad as I tugged his arm. Dad closed his eyes and tried to think for a couple of minutes leaving the room in anxious silence. Then, as he opened his eyes, he gave a decisive and firm answer.

"No. I'm sorry sir, but I seriously have no idea of what you're talking about," he replied

"I'm raising it to P2,000,000! you name the price-" the man desperately asserted but dad kept his ground. It was a "no." Finally, he decided to leave. But, as he left, he smiled at me and walked out

of the door with a chilling expression on his face as if he wanted dad to say no.

"Dad, why did you say no!? We could've raised it to any amount that we wanted! Why would yo—"

"Look son, do you know what happens when you make deals with these kind of people!? Look around you!" he angrily said as he pointed to the desolate landscape that surrounded us. "Everything turns into hell! Look at the people who live here. For years, they've been promised by the same corporations with the same lies. Now look at them! Do you see any rich persons!?" Dad scolded. After that, we ate dinner but the three of us were silent during the meal. Finally, it was time to sleep, but, I couldn't help but not close my eyes and stare at the ceiling thinking of what we could do with that kind of money. Imagine, P2,000,000! That's enough to take our lives into a lighter side! After hours of thinking, I got up and went outside to get some fresh air.

But, as I got out, someone hissed at me to come close to a corner. I stopped and looked around. At first, I couldn't see anyone. But, as I drew closer, I found the man from before standing, puffing a cigarette. "I knew you would come to me," he grinned as he saw me and began talking to me in a calm voice.

"Do you know anything about what your daddy found earlier today, kid?" he asked. I wasn't sure if I should answer or not. If I tell him the truth, I finally get money to save the family from poverty, but, what how would dad feel? And, if I lie, an opportunity like this might never come again in our lives! Unable to make a decision, I decided to run away from him. But, as I was almost a few meters away from him, he asked me a question that put me to a halt.

"Tell me kid, are you really willing to watch your parents suffer everyday while trying to get rich even though they'll end up like everyone else rotting in this God-forsaken mountain? Hell, kid! When

the day comes that both of them will die, you ain't gonna have half of what they worked their blood, sweat, and tears for! But, if you tell me the truth now, you could help them not suffer anymore; it's either you take the easy way or the hard way kid. But if you take the hard way, it will take you more than just the lives of your parents to get you what you want." After he said that, I said nothing else, grabbed his arm, and took him to the spot amidst the pitch black path with only his phone to give us light. We arrived at the tunnel and I showed him the secret passage. We went inside and he took a few pictures of the place. After that, he slowly took a check off the pocket of his suit, scribbled some numbers on it, and gave it to me.

"Thanks kid. Enjoy it while it lasts." He mischievously laughed as he patted my head and left the cavern. After he left, I took a look at what was written in the check: P5,000,000! I was left speechless and dumbfounded, staring at it for a long time. "This is it! we could start a new life!" I kept thinking to myself. I was getting giddy and all with excitement and started to run back home.

It was already nearing to dawn as I ran towards home, racing against the vivid imagination that flooded my mind with things that I always thought of as a fantasy but now are within the grasp of my hands! For once in my life, I felt what it was like to be filled with ecstatic joy. I was literally screaming for joy as I ran back home! Who cares if dad will scold me on the top of his lungs? He would only hug me after knowing that I got him a large deal!

However... who knew that my so-called "happiness" was short-lived, too short-lived. As I arrived at home, the P5,000,000 in my hand instantly lost its value. I slammed the door open ecstatically shouting "I'm home!" But, no one greeted me "welcome home"... Someone greeted me though.. Two dead bodies... one with a knife stab wound off his back, trying to protect another one that died out of traumatic shock. I was left standing still with tears slowly dripping of my eyes and falling to my cheeks as a spectacle crowd outside was neutralizing the culprit, the man father lied to yesterday outside the tunnel.

--

What is wealth's worth then? Well, I'm sure that it's not worth P5,000,000. Wealth is being able to go through suffering and joy with your family despite the circumstances you're in. Now, all of this money is worthless... it's just fool's gold; a shard of pyrite.

SOLILOQUY

Bonn Bolosan

"Ako si Junior. Ganito na lang ba ang buhay ko?"

Tanong niya sa sarili habang nakaharap sa salamin na napaglumaan ng panahon. Napakalayo ng nilakbay ng kanyang diwa saka nagpakawala ng isang malalim na buntong hininga.

Mestiso, matangos ang ilong, mamula-mulang labi, mapupungay na mga mata, makapal na kilay at malagong piluka. May katangkaran din si Junior at nagsisimula ng lumalaki ang kanyang katawan. Nagbibinata na kasi. Sa kanyang itsura at postura talagang maraming magkakagustong babae sa kanya.

Suot pa niya ang kanyang unipormeng namantsahan ng ketsup. Kanina kasi sa eskwelahan, may isang lalaki siyang nabangga ng di sinasadya. Natapon sa kanya ng lalaki ang burger habang nilalagyan ng ketsup. "Salot ka na nga, tanga ka pal" Sigaw ng lalaki sa kanya matapos tapunan ulit ng ketsup. Yumuko si Junior at hinayaan ang pagmumura ng lalaki sa kanya.

"Hayaan mo na Jun. Talagang shallow waters are louder. Puro lang naman satsat ang alam niyan. Huwag kang pumatol." Bulong niya sa kanyang sarili.

Napaigtad si Junior at agad bumalik sa kasalukuyan. Hawak-hawak pa rin niya ang dalang baso mula sa kusina. May namumuong galit sa kanyang mga mata.

"Ayun sa pilosopiya, men are rational beings. That makes us better than animals." Sabi niya habang patuloy na tinitingnan ang sarili sa salamin.

"Bakit kinakailangan pang may label na bakla, closet gay, binabae.

maya at kung anu-ano pa? What makes me different pala? Di naman ako hayop kagaya ng aso.”

“Pag nabuhay sa kalye, ang label, Askal. Pag yung may breed naman, let’s say for example, German Shepherd. Kung may kaya lang ang Askal na ipagtanggol ang kanyang sarili siguro sasabihin niya na ‘Aso din naman ako kagaya ng German Shepherd. Kasalan ko bang mabuhay sa kalye?’ ”

Tiningnan niya ulit ang sarili sa salamin na waring naghihintay ng sagot.

“Wala! Walang kasalanan ang askal. Wala rin akong kasalanan.” Padabog niyang sabi. Kapag may nakakakita sa kanya siguro iisiping nasisiraan na siya ng ulo.

“Noon pa man alam ko na. Alam kong ako’y naiiba. Nang tinanggap ko kung ano talaga ako, liberating iyon. Pero nang nilagyan na ako ng label, panibagong kulungan na naman. Hindi na ba ito matapos-tapos?”

“Yang lintik na label na ‘yan! ‘Yan ang dahilan kung bakit araw-araw akong pinagtatawanan. ‘Yan din ang dahilan sa bawat tinginan ng schoolmate, kklase o kahit ng di ko kakilala pag ako’y papasok sa CR ng gentleman o kahit kapag ako’y napapatabi sa kanila. Para bang may sakit akong nakakahawa o ano ba.”

Ang galit sa kanyang mga mata ay nakakatakot na para bang makapatay ng tao. Unti-unti na rin itong namumula.

“Baklal! Baklal! Baklal!” Paulit-ulit na sinabi niya habang tinuturo ang sarili sa salamin. “Iyan ka! Ikaw ay salot!”

Di niya napigilan ang mga luha sa kanyang mga mata. Hinayaan niya itong umagos. Siguro sa paniniwala ng kahit papaano, maibsan ‘yong sakit na kanyang nararamdaman. Pero sa totoo, walang nagawa ang luha niya.

"Ano nga ba ang lalaki? Ano nga ba ang babae? Ano nga ba ang bakla?" Pahaguhol na tanong niya. "May libro ba para diyan? Manual? Yan ba ang binabasa nila? Dahil ang galing-galing nilang manghugsa. Ang dali lang nilang sabihing 'Ito ang tunay na lalaki. Ito ang babae. Ito ang salot.'"

Napangiti si Junior sa nangyayaring argumento sa kanyang sarili. Kumbaga, ngayon lang pumasok sa isipan niya na siya lang mag-isa at kinakausap ang sarili.

"Bakla – ito ang kulungan ko. Dito ako nakapiit dahil sa kasalanang naiiba ako. Salot – iyan ang hatol sa akin ng sosyalidad. Ito ang parusang habangbuhay kong pagbabayaran." Tiningnan niya ulit ang baso habang nanginginig sa takot ang kanyang kamay. Dahan-dahan itong nilapit sa kanyang bibig. Pinikit ang lumuluhang mga mata at saka ininom ang lason na kanina pang hawak-hawak niya.

"Junjun, nandito ka na ba anak?" Tawag ng kanyang ina. "Nasaan ka ba? Hinayaan mo na namang nakabukas ang pintuan ng bahay."

Hinanap ng kanyang ina si Junior at nagulantang nang natagpuan niya ang katawan nitong nakalatay sa sahig at bumubula ang bibig.

Sumigaw ang kanyang ina habang hinahagkan ang nakahandusay na katawan ni Junior. Hindi siya makapaniwala sa nangyari at sinisi ang sarili.

"Anak, bakit mo ito nagawa? May pagkukulang ba kami ng tatay mo? Masama ang magpakamatay anak."

Nandito sila ulit sa kwarto kung saan nangyari ang lahat apat na araw ang nakalipas. Tiningnan niya ang kanyang sarili sa salamin. Parang walang nagbago maliban sa malulungkot niyang mga mata. Agad itong napaluha. "Buhay man ako o patay Nay, sa impyerno pa rin ako patungo. Kaya lang, dito iba ang mukhang demonyo."

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Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:58

#IstoryaGamay

Kana ganing feeling na NAHUMAN NA JUD ning literary folio *insert confetti here* #Kapwa #Hayahay #ParteePartee (unta naa'y outing haha). Really, words are not enough to verbatim the happiness we, writers felt right from the moment this literary work of passion and art was conceived, consolidated, realized and published (pwede magpafireworks?). Of course, in the very first place, you would not be reading this publication until this very last part of the pages without the torches of inspiration, guidance, encouragement, support and love from the following person, things and Divinity.

#ThankYouLord

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Kaalam
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a superb counsel (I encourage you to use your real names, not pen names, because when you reveal your identity as writers, it signifies responsibility for your articles as well as pride #instaNosbleyd), for being a generous motivator (Ganahan kaayo ko ninyo run ayy kay COHESIVE kayo mo *duh, unsa daw ng cohesive besh? HAHA* and with that, mag-outing ta this semestral end, either sa Samal or Bukidnon. PERO *wa nal ang mga dagkong ngisi sa staff nahanaw pina-abrupt WAHAHA* kailangan pa na ug approval sa President. *ayy okidoki i-pray namu na haha*), for being a kind open-handed (Mag-presswork mo? Mag-meeting mo? Sige maghatag lang ko ug snacks and kay wala pa man ta'y office for the meantime, you can use my conference room. *resulta sa staff? BUSOG-LUSOG ug mura'g nagpalNSTA-BELO tungod sa aircon HAHA* Kung makagasto gani mo sa inyong personal money tungod sa presswork, just present to me the O.R. kay ipa-refund nato *duh, dato si brother *) and for being a man of fortitude and consideration. (Asa man mo? Naa mo sa Abreeza? Sige ipa-kuha lang tamu diha about 4 pm. *unya nag-sine man diay sila Dean, Ruschelle ug Boyd* Ok sige, 4:30 pm tamu ipakuha para sayo ta makauli. *nasaag bitaw sa parking lot plus long stressful traffic, yahanay ug tulog-tulog ang writers uyy #Paraparaan* Dugay kaayo mo ba *insert pokerface here* (after a few seconds) Nalingaw mo sa inyong laag? Nag-tan-aw diay mo'g "Into the Storm" ug "Lucy"? Nice kayo nang "Lucy" ba. *insert smileyface here*) Really Brother, thank you for guiding us through the process perfectly (Kung naa gani mga negative comments sa facebook ug sa surrounding, ayaw lang pansina #ArtOfDedma).

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kung naa wahaha* (PAASCU Accreditors: "You have a very beautiful school, aren't you proud?")

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#ThankYouReaders

Finally, to every gentle hands and fingers flipping through the pages of this folio – Cor Jesian ka man o dili – we give back all the THANK YOUs for reading. And advance thank you for handling this with all the care. May this book be a stepping stone for vast socio political awareness and be an inspiration for individuals to be prime-movers and catalysts of positive change amidst the broken realities of life.

#IstoryaGamay

Before you flipped shut this manuscript, we would like to reiterate this phrase as our expression of gratitude and joy.

Daghang salamat!	*Cebuano*
Maraming salamat!	*Tagalog*
Thank you so much!	*English*
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Mahalo nui loa!	*Hawaiian*
Kamsahamnida!	*Korean*
Merci beaucoup!	*French*
Muchas gracias!	*Spanish*
Grazie infi nite!	*Italian*
Khawp khun maak!	*Thai*
Blagodar ju vas!	*Russian*
Mage takk!	*Norwegian*
Terima kasih!	*Malay*
Gratias vobis ago!	*Latin*
Toda rabah!	*Hebrew*
Efharisto poli!	*Greek*
Feichang ganxie ni!	*Chinese Mandarin*
Shukran jazilan!	*Arabic*

To God be the glory!



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