

WEATHERED

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CHAPTER I



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EDITORIAL

NO UNWANTED EXPERIENCE WILL SERVE ITS PURPOSE UNLESS PEOPLE LEARN LESSONS FROM IT.

FLOODS HAVE TAUGHT MAN THAT INDISCRIMINATE CUTTING OF TREES IS UNWISE.

AIDS HAVE TAUGHT AN ADULTERER THAT BEING UNFAITHFUL DOES NOT PAY.

DEBTS HAVE TAUGHT FOLKS THAT SAVING IS IMPORTANT.

DEATH HAS TAUGHT HUMANITY TO APPRECIATE PEOPLE.

CURFEWS HAVE TAUGHT AUP STUDENTS THE VALUES OF SAO.

CR-CLEANING HAS TAUGHT AUP STUDENTS THE IMPORTANCE OF MORNING WORSHIP ATTENDANCE.

FAILED EXAMS HAVE TAUGHT AUP STUDENTS TO STUDY.

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS HAVE TAUGHT AUP STUDENTS TO HAVE A RESERVE.

AUP HAS TAUGHT STUDENTS THAT THERE IS A GOD THAT CAN BE LEANED ON.

STUDENTS ARE YOUNG, BUT DEFINITELY NOT INEXPERIENCED. EACH HAS A STRUGGLE TO TACKLE EVERYDAY.

FOR EVERY BATTLE WON, IS A TEAR OR TWO. FOR EVERY WAR TRIUMPHED, IS A SCAR.

FOR ANOTHER DAY SURVIVED, IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT CAN BE TREASURED.

THUS, WEATHERED.

—NAHUM



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Rhythmic TORRENT

VALUABLE ORE WON'T BE REFINED
IF IT'S NOT WITH THE FIERY FLAMES.

BRILLIANCE OF PRECIOUS STONES WON'T SPARK
WITHOUT SEVERE POLISHING.

EXOTIC FRAGILE VASES WON'T LUSTER
WITHOUT THE PAINFUL PROCESS OF MOLDING.

HIDEOUS CATERPILLAR TURNED TO BE LOVELY
MIRTHFUL WINGED-CREATURE

DUE TO METAMORPHOSIS...

—*LAILANIE FRONDA*





A TRAGIC LOVE STORY

BY JOANNA MARIE CRUZ

A KNIGHT'S LOVE

MORNING COMES, ANOTHER DAY RISES
PEOPLE SAY IT'S JUST ANOTHER GOOD DAY
BUT FOR ME, IT'S ANOTHER BATTLE—
A BATTLE WITHOUT ARMORS
AND WEAPONS THAT CAN HURT NOR KILL AN ENEMY
IT'S A BATTLE FOR THE HEART—
A BATTLE FOR THY HAND...
AND EVEN IF THE ENEMIES ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN I
I, AS A KNIGHT OF LOVE,
WILL PROVE MY LOVE'S WORTH TO YOU
I AM AS GALLANT AS MY FOES COMBINED.
THUS, TO PROVE MY LOVE TO YOU IS TRUE
I WILL ENDURE; I WILL CROSS ANY PATH, ANY OBSTACLE
JUST TO BE WITH YOU, MY QUEEN.

ODE TO A KNIGHT

O, MY BRAVE KNIGHT OF NO ARMOR
BUT THE LOVE YOU SO BELIEVED IN
NEED NOT PROVE A THING OR TWO
'CAUSE THE LOVE OF THEE SURPASSED
MORE THAN ANY OF THEM COMBINED
MY LIPS ARE MADE ONLY FOR YOUR TENDER KISS
MY HEART BEATS FOR NO ONE BUT THEE ALONE
I CHOOSE YOU AMONG THEM ALL
MYSELF I GIVE ENTIRELY TO YOUR CARE
LET NO ONE TAKE ME
FROM YOUR WARMTH AND GENTLENESS
THIS YOU MUST SWEAR IN THE NAME OF LOVE
TAKE ME AND MAKE ME YOUR QUEEN
MY GALLANT KNIGHT 'TIL THE END OF TIME

FINALE

THUS, THE WEAKENED KNIGHT FOUGHT
WITH ALL HIS MIGHT FOR HER QUEEN—
HE FELL WITH EVERY PLUMMETING BLOW AND STOOD
TIME AND AGAIN
ONTO HIS KNEES
BEFORE HIS ENEMIES—
BUT LOVE, HOPE, AND FAITH KEPT
HIS HEART WARM AND FIGHTING...
WITH HIS REMAINING STRENGTH
HE STOOD WITH ALL THE MIGHT HE COULD MUSTER—
MUST FIGHT FOR THE QUEEN...MUST FIGHT FOR MY QUEEN...
WITH HIS LAST BREATH VALIANT BREATH HE UTTERED.

DESIDERATA OF THESIS WRITING (PARODY)

BY ELMIE LYNN LAGAJINO

GO PLACIDLY AMID THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND STATISTICS SUBJECTS AND REMEMBER WHAT CORRELATION THERE MAY BE IN THESIS WRITING.

AS FAR AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT BIAS, BE ON EQUAL TERMS AND ETHICAL WITH YOUR RESPONDENTS.

CONSTRUCT YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE OBJECTIVELY AND CLEARLY, AND LISTEN TO CRITIQUES, EVEN THE CYNICAL AND SARCASTIC, THEY TOO HAVE THEIR INPUT.

AVOID EXTRANEOUS AND INTERVENING VARIABLES; THEY ARE THREATS TO INTERNAL VALIDITY.

IF YOU COMPARE YOUR PROBLEMS AND NULL HYPOTHESIS WITH OTHERS, YOU MAY BECOME VAIN AND BITTER, FOR ALWAYS THERE WILL BE HISTORICAL, DESCRIPTIVE, EXPERIMENTAL, COMPARATIVE, AND CAUSAL COMPARATIVE RESEARCHES MORE OR LESS COMPREHENSIVE THAN YOURS.

ENJOY YOUR REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RELATED STUDIES, AS WELL AS YOUR INSTRUMENTATION.

KEEP INTERESTED IN YOUR REPORT HOWEVER TIME CONSUMING; IT IS AN AUTHENTIC CREDENTIAL OF ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS OF ACADEMIC LIFE.

EXERCISE RANDOMIZATION IN YOUR SAMPLING PROCEDURES, FOR A VERY LARGE OR TOO SMALL A POPULATION MAY RESULT TO MORE PROBABILITY OF ERRORS.

BUT LET THESE NOT LIMIT YOU TO WHAT STATISTICAL MEASURES YOU MAY EMPLOY; YOU MAY FIND THE FOLLOWING RELIABLE: FACTOR ANALYSIS, ANOVA, CHI SQUARE, CORRELATION-COEFFICIENT, RHO, RANKING, CENTRAL TENDENCIES, STANDARD DEVIATION, FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION, ETC. (YOU MAY OPT FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTEAD).

BE SELECTIVE YOURSELF.

ESPECIALLY DO NOT FEIGN COMPUTER DATA ANALYSIS, NEITHER BE IGNORANT ABOUT THE COMPUTER, OR THE INTERNET FOR IN THE FACE OF ALL MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND MULTI-MEDIA ADVANCEMENT THEY ARE INDISPENSABLE AS ELECTRICITY.

TAKE KINDLY THE COUNSEL OF THE EXPERTS AND ADVIS-

ERS, GRACEFULLY SURRENDERING THE DELIMITATIONS OF THE AMATEUR.

NURTURE STRENGTH OF DOCUMENTATION TO DEFEND YOU FROM SUDDEN INTERROGATION BUT DO NOT DISTRESS YOUR SELF WITH STATISTICAL TREATMENT MANY STATISTICIANS ARE READY TO HELP YOU IN YOUR CONFUSION AND WEARINESS (THROUGH SPSS).

BEYOND A WHOLESOME RESEARCH DESIGN; BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.

YOU ARE A STUDENT OF AUP, NO LESS THAN THE POINTS IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF A NORMAL CURVE AND THE SCATTER PLOTS IN A LINEAR REGRESSION. YOU HAVE THE DEGREES OF FREEDOM TO BE INDEPENDENT AND DETERMINED.

AND WHETHER OR NOT IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO YOU, NO DOUBT YOUR PROPOSAL HAS BEEN APPROVED AS IT SHOULD.

THEREFORE, BE SERIOUS WITH YOUR THESIS; WHATEVER YOU CONCEPTUALIZE IT TO BE...AND WHATEVER YOUR LABORS IN DATA GATHERING FROM SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, OFFICES, AND THE STREETS IN THE MIDPOINT OF THE NOISE AND POLLUTION OF THE CITY, KEEP PACE WITH YOUR STUDY...

WITH ALL ITS REVISIONS, TIME CONSTRAINTS, AND EXORBITANT EXPENDITURES, IT IS A FRUITFUL WORK.

(THANK GOD!) BE GRATEFUL.
STRIVE TO BE HEALTHY.

DRAINED!

BY LAILANIE FRONDA

THOUSAND TEARS TRICKLED LIKE RAGING WATERFALLS—

LET MY HEARTACHES OVERFLOW,

TO WASH MY BLINDED EYES WITH THE REALITY

I USED TO IGNORE AND LET GO.

MAD! I'D BEEN TOO UNFOCUSED

WITH MY FIRST LOVE,

WITH WHOM I COVENANTED—

THE FIRST AND LAST IN MY LIFE.

O BALM OF GILEAD LET THY HEALING

AND LIVING HAND TOUCH MY WOUNDED HEART,

FORGETFUL AND EASY TO COMPROMISE

NEVER LET YOUR HOLY SPIRIT DEPART.

MY PRINCE OF PEACE

DON'T LET ME DENY THEE,

YOU'RE MY WORLD

AND MORE THAN LIFE TO ME!

UPLIFT AND STRENGTHEN!

YOUR BOUNTIFUL GRACE ABOUND!

MY LIFE I SURRENDER TO YOU

TILL I'M HOMEWARD BOUND!

HE

BY JOYCE EMMANUEL

HE IS A MAN OF NOWHERE

HE PASSES

HE LIVES

HE KNOWS THINGS

HE CONQUERS

HE SURRENDERS

HE MAKES LIFE A LIVING

OUT OF NOWHERE

OUT OF SOMEWHERE

HE REPLENISHES FOR MORE

TO VIBRANT

TO GLOOM

HE SHOULDERS THE PAIN

HE BEARS THE ACHE

HE CONTINUES TO BLEED

HE CONTINUES TO DIE

HE IS MORE...

HE IS LIFE.

IN MY MEMORY

BY YONG ANGELES

SEASONS BENT A WORLD
IN MY MEMORY.

STARING BLANKLY—STEADY;
SMOOTHLY MOVED...

NOISELESS MELODY
WAS CONSTANTLY PLAYING
IN MY PSYCHE
THAT DRAGGED ME, HOOKED
ME ON A SCENE
OF A DAZZLING LIFE
THAT I SOUGHT
TO SUBSIST,
AND SOUGHT
TO SURVIVE;

A MEMORY
OF THAT BURNISHED DAY

OF A LARGE LIMB AND CHEST
THAT ROUGHLY TOUCHED
MY SOLE.

A MEMORY
OF THAT BURNISHED DAY—
ADORE INGRAINED;

AKIN TO THE WORLD
WITHIN YOU.

A MEMORY
OF DIM NIGHT
WHERE WHINE,
WHERE WHIMPER
WAS IN PERFECT BLEND;
WOUND AND PAIN
IN MIXED EMBRACE.

A MEMORY
OF THE TIMES.
OF YORE
THAT BENT A WORLD
IN MY MEMORY

LIVE

BY MARX LENN MENDOZA

A MILLION STARS' SPARKLE
HOVERED OVER ME 'TIL MORN

LEGENDS CAME IN
CALLED ME TO THEIR LIFE

I DIDN'T HAVE HESITATIONS

BUT THE DIRT CALLED DUST
TURNED INTO A LIFE FORM

I LOWERED MY ENCUMBRANCE...

BEYOND THE SKIES I SAW
ABOVE AND ACROSS
WATERS DEEP SO BLUE

DESTINY CONQUERED ME—
FREED FROM ALL HUNGER

BROUGHT ME INTO THIS HEIGHT

I DON'T KNOW—
WAS IT I THAT SOARED?

CLING TO UPSET THE PLANS!

TELL ME THE TRUTH—

DO YOU KNOW ME?

TELL ME THE TRUTH—

DO YOU KNOW WHY

I LIVE?

LOVE SONG FOR NOBODY (SOMETHING IN YOU)

BY VIELIN_60044243

WHEN I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES
I FEEL MY HEART LEAP THROUGH THE SKIES

EACH TIME I HEAR YOUR VOICE
MY MIND HUMS SWEETLY IN CHORUS

YOUR SMILE MAKES ME FLUTTER
LIKE A SPARROW IN THE SKY

BUT HOW WILL I LET YOU UNDERSTAND
THE LOVE I FEEL FOR YOU

HOW WILL I LET YOU KNOW...



MI VIDA ES UNA MENTIRA

(MY LIFE'S A LIE)

BY JOTI OBSEQUIO

COWERED IN DARKNESS—
MESSED, WOUNDED, CRYING ALONE IN A CORNER
HER SOBBING ECHOED IN MY MIND AS I APPROACHED
HER
NEARLY AWARE THAT I WAS BESIDE HER

“WHAT’S WRONG?” I MURMURED IN AN AWKWARD TONE
BUT SHE KEPT ON CRYING...
I GAZED AT HER WAITING FOR A REPLY
BUT GRIT DEFEATED HER SOBBING

CONCEIVED IN TREPIDATION A QUESTION AROSE—
WHO’S THIS GIRL?
SHE SEEMED TO BE ANGUISHED
FULL OF ANGST AND ACHE
AGONY THAT LITTLE BY LITTLE KILLS HER

MY SOUL THROBBED WITH EMPATHY, BUT WHY?
IT SEEMED THAT I KNEW THIS GIRL WELL
WHERE HAVE I SEEN HER BEFORE?
THAT GLOOMY, PALE AND FAMILIAR FACE

THEN, AS SHE SLOWLY LIFTED HER HEAD
A RAY OF LIGHT SHONE UPON HER
SHE FLIPPED HER HAIR GENTLY
AND WIPED THE TEARS UPON HER CHEEK

SHE STARED AT ME...
I LOOKED STRAIGHT AT HER
BUT TO MY SURPRISE
I NEARLY FAINTED TO WHAT I SAW

BEFORE ME IS A CREATURE
A CREATURE I KNEW TOO WELL
SOMEONE WHO LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE ME
SHE SAD SOMETHING, SOMETHING THAT STUNNED ME...

MEMENTO MORI!

ONE PERFECT MORNING

BY THE OTHER JUDY ABBOTT

ONE PERFECT MORNING
AS I STARED AT MY WINDOW
I SAW A GIRL HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS
SHE WAS FAMILIAR, YET A STRANGER TOO.
ALL ALONE IN THE MIDST OF VOID, I FELT PAIN
THEN IT BEGAN TO RAIN.

ONE PERFECT MORNING
AS I STARED AT MY WINDOW
I SAW HER AGAIN, MORE OBVIOUS THAN BEFORE
SHE WAS SOMEONE I KNEW BUT I WASN'T SURE.
AS I VIEWED HER, THE PAIN INSIDE ME HEIGHTENED
THE RAIN CONTINUED ITS ORCHESTRA.

ONE PERFECT MORNING
AS I STARED AT MY WINDOW
I WAS SURPRISED WHEN I SAW HER FACE
SHE STARED BACK, TORN, HER EYES POOLED IN TEARS—DROWNING.
FULL OF UNKNOWN SUFFERINGS, REGRETS AND UNTOLD LIES
RAIN POURED DOWN IN ICY TORRENTS.

ONE PERFECT MORNING
AS I STARED AT MY WINDOW
I SEARCHED FOR THE GIRL AND THOUGHT SHE WAS NOWHERE
BUT THEN SHE APPEARED—IN HER HANDS, A BUTTERFLY WAS TRAPPED.
SHE GENTLY CRUSHED IT BETWEEN HER PALMS AND BLOOD STREAMED DOWN.
THE RAIN BARELY WHISPERED.

ONE PERFECT MORNING
AS I STARED AT MY WINDOW
I SAW NONE, NOT EVEN A SHADOW.
THEN I REMEMBERED, SHE DIED—I BURIED HER.
IT WAS THE PERFECT MORNING...
THE RAIN CEASED.

I AM NOW MYSELF.

SHADOWS OF PAST

BY SIGFRED

TEARS APPEAR GENTLY IN THE COLD WEARY NIGHT,
FEELING LONELY WHILE STANDING
BEFORE A FRIEND—
PLAYING SOFT TOUCHING MUSIC WITH AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR,
WHISPERING THE LYRICS TOGETHER WITH THE TONE,
MAKE HER MORE EMOTIONAL.

SHE CLOSES HER EYES OPENS HER HEART AND MIND,
TEARS STREAM DOWN STRAPPINGLY AND FAST
SHE LOOKS AT THE DARK SKY HOPING FOR A SHOOTING STAR,
TO PLEAD, WISH, AND BID GOODBYE...

SHE TURNS HER FACE TOWARDS THE SWEET-CHILLING BREEZE,
FACING THE DELUGE DARKNESS—
BREATHES DEEPLY INTO THE SHADOWS OF PAST,
LEAVE IT LIKE A FLECK OF DUST—
THEN
SHE TOSSES HER TEARS AGAINST HER DREAM.

"I FEEL THE MELODY, STILL CAPTURING MY SOUL,
MAKING LITTLE GLIMPSE OF MY TREASURED THOUGHTS."



SHUNT

BY JEREMIAH DIGO

LIFE GOES ON LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE RIVER,
RIVER THAT GIVES ME JOY AND REFUGE,
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT THE WATER THAT FLOWS THROUGH MY ROOTS,
WILL RUN DRY LIKE A DESERT OF CLOUDS.

CLOUDY LIFE FLASH BEFORE MY EYES,
BUT NOT A DROP OF RAIN,
ROAD OF UNTOLD AGONY THRUST MY HEAD FACE DOWN TO THE GROUND,
CRAVINGS OF MY BLOOD, SHOUTS IN MY EYES.

ALONG THE DESERT, SCORCHING SUN SEETHES MY SOUL,
NO WATER, NO FOOD, NOR SHELTER TO COPE WITH,
ONLY A HANDFUL OF SAND DRIFTS MY CONSCIOUSNESS,
SAND THAT COVERS MY BODY AND BLOWN AWAY.

MY LIFE IS ON THORNS OF FIRE,
WISHES AND DREAMS CANNOT BE WORN,
DROPS OF BLOOD SWELL MY BODY,
UNTIL I WHIMPER MY LAST GOOD BYE—

LIFE IS IN GOD'S HANDS.

SWEETENED SWEET

BY HAREM

SO MUCH IN MY BODY WANDERS

ALL AROUND...

DISPOSSESS MY HOURS

GENTLE TRUST ENTER THE REASONS BEHIND ME—

ENTERTAIN ME COMPLETELY...

NOTHING CLOSE

NOTHING SUDDEN

ONLY CERTAIN TO SEE

SADLY FALLS UNTO YOU

WICKED!

ENCLOSED ME WITH HANDS—

TEACH ME TO LIVE!

THE CRAVEN

BY SIGFRED

BREAKING UP THE PASSION WEAKENS THE SENSES

PRYING IN MY MIND FOR PROVING I WAS WRONG

DYING IS AN OPTION THAT I'VE MADE

MY OWN FATE

YET ONE QUESTION STILL REIGNS IN ME—

AM I ALWAYS WRONG?

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE...

UNDERFED MIND...

SCRAWNY SENSES...

FAILURE TO RESPOND—DEVASTATED ME—DISHONESTY!

|

THE TONGUE

BY KEILAH BOUGH

THE TONGUE REVEALS THE HEART.
THE TONGUE IS YOU.

A LIVING EMBLEM OF THE SOUL—
THE TONGUE IS YOU.

THE TONGUE IS A CONCEALED GRACIOUS WEAPON.
THE TONGUE IS YOU.

A DEVOURING FIRE THAT RAVAGES LIFE—
THE TONGUE IS YOU.

THE TONGUE IS A HELM THAT STEER YOUR DESTINY IN LIFE.
THE TONGUE IS YOU.

IT UTTERS SHEER PRAISES TO OUR GOD—AND CURSES THE IMAGE OF HIM.
THE TONGUE IS YOU.



UNTITLED

BY JOANNA MARIE CRUZ

I LIE STILL BESIDE THE STREET
NO COMPANION BUT MYSELF
LENDING AN EAR TO MY BREATH
STRUGGLING FOR WORDS TO UTTER
I CLOSE MY EYES
BUT STILL NO DIFFERENCE
DARK AS BEFORE, DARK AS EVER
SEARCHING FOR MY PEERS
NO ONE I FIND
WITH THIS PAIN I ANGUISH
ASKING MYSELF, "WHEN WILL IT END?"
I LAUGH AND CRY THROUGH THE YEARS
UNTIL I BECOME NUMB OF EVERYTHING
EVEN OF MY OWN—
I DON'T CARE
BLACKNESS ENFOLD ME, KEEPING ME WARM
GIVING ME MY MOST WANTED PEACE
ALAS! I FIND PEACE AND COMPANIONSHIP IN DARKNESS—
GOODNIGHT!

WHAT TOOK YOU SO
LONG?

BY LAILANIE FRONDA

I'M SCARED TO CLOSE MY EYES EVEN A BLINK
LEST THE MEMORIES OF YOUR ANGELIC FACE
HAPPY WITH GRACE AND PENSIVENESS
WOULD FADE...

WON'T DARE TO COVER MY EARS IN SLUMBER
LEST YOUR SWEET VOICE GENTLY FLOWING
LIKE A HUMMING RIVER LILT THE MEADOWS
WON'T BE HEARD...

RAINBOW-HUED DAWN FINALLY CAME
MY GLOOMY DAY—
SHADOWS OF THE RAINY PAST
THAT HAUNTED ME—ILLUMINATED!

IS THIS LOVE
THAT TURNED EVERYTHING THRILLING?
THE CONCEALED SENSATION
THAT LIT THE DAY?

THIS LIFE'S GREAT MIRACLE
THAT MADE TWO UNLIKE-HEARTED MERGE
THOUGH BARRED BY LEVIATHANS
WILL TRIUMPH OVER INEATUATION'S BATTLE!

WITHOUT A NAME, WITHOUT A LIFE

BY THE OTHER JUDY ABBOTT

HE IS NAMELESS
AND HE LOOKED AT ME WITH HIS SHARP EYES, ALMOST ON THE VERGE OF TEARS
IT SLICED THROUGH ME BUT I IGNORED HIM
WALKING HASTILY.

HE FOLLOWED WITH RELUCTANT STEPS
LEAVING BEHIND PRINTS OF UNCERTAINTY AND SPOILED NONSENSE.
WE REACHED THE BRIDGE.
HE STOOD THERE, SILENT...UNMOVING.

I STOPPED.
STARED AT HIM WITH MY COLD COALS OF FORCED SYMPATHY
"NAÏVE", I HEARD MYSELF BREATHE.
"IT'S A MIRROR IN FRONT OF YOU."
MY EYELIDS ENVELOPED ME IN DARKNESS.

I HEARD A CRASH AGAINST THE SKULL.
HE DROPPED UNCONSCIOUS, BLOOD CRACKED OUT IN STREAMS.
I STEPPED BACK, NOT WANTING TO TOUCH,
NOT WANTING PAIN, NOT WANTING REALITY
HANDS TOOK HIM AWAY...

"HE WAS STOLEN"
SHE ACCUSED ME. "I CAME TO CLAIM AND NEVER WILL HE RETURN TO YOU."
HER LIPS PRESSED TO HIS.
"I DON'T KNOW HIM", RAINED THE ECHOLESS DENIAL.
HE IS NAMELESS.

IT WAS TOO LATE.

YES

BY YONG ANGELES

I SAW
IN THAT IDIOT BOX
A PREDICAMENT!
IT WAS LOUD
AND GRUESOME.
THE EXCELLENT ARROGANCE
OF A STATUE'S HUE
ASSURED COLLAPSED.

YES, OF PRINCIPLE
AND MORALE;
THE SPLENDID TENSION
ELUDED BY THE PRINTED TONGUE;

OF TITTLE-TATTLE,
SPELLED
THE SUPPOSED
STRONG MORALITY;
AND FOR JUST A COIN
OF TWENTY SEARING SHEET!

LEAF;
DISPERSED OF COLD BURNT,
PASSION AND SENTIMENT
OF FURY AND ANGUISH:
BROADCASTED THE DIMNESS
OF HUMANE,
WOULD SPUR
AND URGE
THE NATURE OF SWINE INSIDE;
STILL,
I'LL BE FAMILIAR WITH THE INNOCENT STORY
OF A COVETOUS CLAW
THAT SUCCUMBED THE ESSENCE OF EXISTENCE.

YES,
I SAW IT!
I HEARD IT—
IN A BOX!

YOUR LIFE'S EASY

BY CHROME

ON THE AVERAGE, LIFE'S JUST A BUNCH OF CABBAGE
WAITING TO BE TRAMPLED ON BY MINDLESS RAVAGE
YOU TRY TO BUILD IT, BUT FIENDS COME IN TO RIP IT
'TIL YOUR LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM MAKES YOU FEEL
LIKE A MIDGET

IT'S JUST DISCREET SITUATIONS; LET'S LOOK AT THE
REAL SIDE
TARNISHED CAN ON A KID'S HAND WHILE HE'S
CRAMPED ON THE STREET SIDE
HIS EXISTENCE HAD BEEN LIKE A DICE
FORCED TO SURVIVE ALONE SINCE HE WAS FIVE

YOU PASS BY HIM WITH EYES ON HIGH—YOU SEEM
BLIND?
YOU'RE WORSE THAN PERVERTS SPEAKING GREEN
LINES
FROM GREEN MINDS...AND IT'S NOT JUST THE CHILD
IT'S THE WOMAN WHO BROUGHT HIM TO EXISTENCE

CAN'T BLAME HER, SHE DIDN'T REALLY KNEW BETTER
HER MAN LEFT HER FASTER THAN A TWISTER
AFTER KNOWING A BABY IS ON THE WAY...
SHE WENT WAITING EVERYDAY

FOR HEAVEN'S MERCIFUL DOORS
THIS BABY MATURED INTO MANHOOD FIGHTING WARS
HE BECAME FIEND, DRUG DEALER, AND COP KILLER
LOOTING FOR WANT—LOOTING FOR LOVE.

HE DIDN'T KNEW ANY BETTER,
HIS MOTHER AND FATHER—HIS MOLDER AND
TEACHER—THEY NEVER CARED
AND THE LIFESTYLE OF THE STREETS IS A FORK ON
THE ROAD
DEATH OR INCARCERATION... THERE IS NO MORE ON
THE CODE
CASKET OR THE PEN...EITHER WAY IT'S A LIFE
BETTER LIFE FOR A BETTER LIE
WHEN COPS CAN'T UNDERSTAND AND CASH RULE
THE WORK
CAN'T BUY JUSTICE—SO HE'S LIVING DEATH JUST TO
PAY DUES

AND WE TELL HIM THE KEY OUT IS PROPER EDUCA-

TION
BUT THE TAKES MONEY TOO—NOTHING'S FOR FREE
AND THE MONEY HE'S LOOTING IS MONEY FOR WEED
NO FRIENDS...ALL HE HAVE IS MONEY AND BRUTALITY

CAN'T WE SEE THIS? YES, WE ACTUALLY CAN
BUT WE'RE TOO TIMID TO EXTEND A HAND
WE WHO HAVE THE MEANS, WE KNOW BETTER LIFE
BUT WE ONLY CONCENTRATE ON OUR OWN PETTY
STRIFE

SO WHAT IF YOU CAN'T BUY LOAD? THEY CAN'T EVEN
BUY SHELTER
OR NICE PLACES TO REST LIKE YOURS WITH FEATHERED
PILLOWS
YOU EAT THREE TIMES A DAY BUT THEM? THrice A
WEEK
FAMILY YOU LIVE WITH...FOR THEM ARE DECEASED

OR GONE OR IN JAIL...YOU AND YOUR LIFE
GOT A LOT ESPECIALLY YOUR LOOT AND YOUR PRIDE
STOP TALKING TO ME ABOUT HOW LIFE HAS BEEN
UNFAIR TO YOU
PEOPLE LIVE DEATH IN EVERYDAY WHEN THEY'RE
COMPARED TO YOU



Ampiyas ng
MALIKHAIN

SA BAWAT PAGHAMPAS NG NANGANGALIT,
RUMARAGASANG MGA ALON;
DULOT AY PIGHATI, PASAKIT
PAGTULO NG MGA LUHA,
TILA ULAN MULA SA MATANG NAPIRINGAN.

ALIMPUYO NG HANGIN
PILIT NAGLALAYO...

—LAILANIE FRONDA



HAGGANG SA MULI

NI HARRIS MEDRANO

SA MULING PAGSAPIT NG GABI..
MAHINAHON SUBALIT WALANG PASINTABI
WALANG PAG-AALINLANGAN NI PAGTANGGI
SA PILING KO'Y IKAW ANG KATABI.

SA MULING PAGSAPIT NG ULAN...
KAILANMA'Y HINDI NANG-IWAN
SA KABILA NG KULOG AT KIDLAT AY NANAHAN
INIT ANG HATID DAMPI MO SA AKING KATAWAN

SA MULING PAGBUBUKANG LIWAYWAY...
IKAW PA RIN ANG KAAGAPAY
BULONG SA TENGA ANG NAGIGING GABAY
UPANG BUMANGON AT HARAPIN ANG BUHAY

SUBALIT...

SA BAWAT PAG-INOG NG MUNDO...
HINDI KO NINAIS ANG TULAD MO
ITANATAKWIL KITA! WALANG PAKUNSWELO
AYAW KITANG KA-PUSO!

SA BAWAT PAGSAPIT NG MGA ARAW...
NAKATUTULIG NA BULONG, MALA-BALARAW!
HALIK MO'Y SIYANG PAMAWI NG SARILING UHAW
PAKI-USAP... HINDI AKO MALIGAYA, TALAGANG
SA IYO'Y AYAW!

AT...

SA MULING PAGLAKAD NG MGA ORAS...
ANG TINIG MO'Y HINDI TALAGA MATATAS
LUMAYO KA NA! AKING INIAATAS
SA INIIMBING GALIT, IKAW AY INUTAS

LINTIK NA DUGYOT!
WAG KANG MAGKUBLI SA MADIDILIM NA SULOK!
KATAPAT MO'Y MGA PALAD KONG PINAGDAG-OP
PATAY KA NA! HAYOP NA LAMOK!

LOVE IS...

NI KALBOLICIOUS

LOVE IS...
HOW STUPID TO DISCUSS IT NA NAMAN DI BA?
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS WE PIPOL TRIED TO DEFINE
LOVE...
PERO HERE ME NA NAMAN DEFINING IT AGAIN...

LOVE IS A DELECTABLE AWKWARDNESS—
ALAM MO BA UNG MGA PANAHON NA MAY KA SHAKE
HANDS YUNG GIRL MO NA CHOLOLO AT PINAGUUSAPAN
NILA UNG KANILANG SMALL GROUP BLA BLA BLA... WALA
KANG MAGAWA KUNDI TUMINGIN NA LANG SA IO YEARS
NILANG SHAKE HANDS SESSION.

LOVE IS A DELIGHTFUL SORE—
KAPAG ALAM MO NA MALI TALAGA SYA PERO KELANGAN
MO TALAGANG ILAGLAG ANG LAHAT NG IYONG PAGKALAI-
AKE AT MAGLAKAD NA NAKAYUKONG ULO AT MAY MALA-
LEO ECHAGARAY NA MUKHA AT SABIHING “SORRY.”

LOVE IS THE EXTREME DENIAL OF THE SELF—
MAY BABAYARAN KANG 300 PESOS NA PROJECT BUKAS.
WALA KA NG PERA. DUMATING YUNG GIRL MO, SINABI
NYA, “B, LABAS TAU BUKAS, TOXIC NA ME D2 SA AUP EH.”
SABI MO, “OOOOOBA!”—PAALAM PROJECT.

LOVE IS A SMILEY BLADE—
GIRL MO MAY KASAMANG BOY—KLASMEYT DAW NYA. IKAW
MUKHANG BOY—SA ISANG TABI. SABI NI HEART, “FLIRTING
NA TO, MEN!” PERO SABI NI BRAIN, “HINDI AH! AKO LANG
ANG MAHAL NUN!” DUMUDUGO NA ANG ILONG MO, TOL!
PERO AT LEAST YOU KNOW YOU CAN SEE HER PRECIOUS
SMILE—AY BOPLOGS TALAGA!

LOVE IS AN ETHEREAL OROCAN—
MAINIT ANG ULO NYA. KULAY RED MENS ANG MUKHA
NYA. GALING SYA NG STORE, MAY DALANG NAPKIN. ALAM
MONG MAGIGING MASAMA ANG KALALABASAN NG ARAW

MO NA ITO. ALAM MONG MAGIGING MASUNGIT SYA SAU.
PERO KELANGAN MO NANG MAGLEVEL-UP. PLASTIKAN NA
TO! TOLNESS, WHAT’S WRONG WITH YA!

LOVE IS A PRICELESS PRICK—
“HMMM...ANG CUTE CUTE MO TALAGA PARANG BEAR!
KURUT. KURUT. KURUT. KURUT. KURUT AT KURUT PA... AT
KURUT PA. @\$*! WAG MO NGA AKONG KURUTIN! PERO U
KNOW AT LEAST SHE IS HAPPY. MARTYR-NESS TO THE MAX!

LOVE IS AN ENJOYABLE TORTURE—
PUMASA KA NG 3RD YEAR HIGH SCHOOL SA MATHEMATICS
KASI NAKIUSAP SI MOMMY KAY TEACHER. DUMATING GIRL
MO SABI, “B, PAGAWA NAMAN NG ASSIGNMENT KO.” SABI
MO, “OOOOOBA!” PAG TINGIN MO SA PAPEL—DIFFEREN-
TIAL CALCULUS—WHAT-D-NESS? MATEMATEKS!

LOVE IS A DELICATELY REFINED EXPLOTTATION—
“B, PALABA NAMAN NG UNIFORM KO, KELANGAN KO LANG
TALAGA TOMORROW 4 AM.”
“B, PA DOWNLOAD NAMAN NG RESEARCH KO SA EMAIL NI
ANNA. TAPOS PA-EDIT NA DIN HA. LUV YAHH!” KUHA N
LNG KYA XA NG KA2LONG.

IN SHORT, LOVE IS A SLOW AND PAINFUL DEATH!
WHATDANESS!... DATI LOVE IS BLIND LANG.

MUNTING BERDENG PARUPARO

NI HANNA YVETTE PEJA

SA BAWAT PAGMAMASID
NAKAW NA SULYAP SA AKIN AY HATID

TILA MAY IBIG IPAHIWATIG
SA MGA MATA MO'Y MABABATID

TILA NABIBIGHANI
MGA MATA MO'Y SA'KIN NAGAWI

BAKIT AKO ANG IYONG NAPILI?
ISANG HAMAK NA MUMUNTI

KULAY KO'Y IYONG NAPANSIN
AKO'Y DI KARANIWAN KUNG IYONG TUTUUSIN

DI KA BA NAGTATAKA SA AKIN
SA KALITANG AKING ANGIN?

SA AKING BERDENG ANYO
LARAWAN NG ISANG NAGSUSUMAMO
AKO SANA AY IYONG DINGGIN
SA PAGKAKABILANGGO AKO'Y IYONG PALAYAIN

SANA'Y MAGING MALAYA
SA MUNDONG SA AKI'Y ISINADYA
MALAYANG NAKALILIPAD
SAAN MAN AKO MAPADPAD

SA REHAS NG KALUNGKUTAN
AKO'Y IYONG PAKAWALAN
PALAYAIN SA PAGKAKAKULONG
SA ISANG MASAMANG KAHAPON


MANALIG
NI GENE VICTOR DEL CASTILLO

KUNG IKAW AY NALILITO
AT NAWAWALA SA LANDAS,
'WAG PABAYAANG MAGPATALO
IYONG HIRAP AY MAY WAKAS.

KAHIT MARAMING PROBLEMA
ANG PALAGING DUMADAAN.
SARILING PAGTITIWALA
AY 'WAG SANANG MAWAWALAN.

ITULOY ANG PAGDARASAL
AT PAGHINGI NG GABAY,
SA PANGINOONG MAYKAPAL
BUONG PUSO'Y IALAY.

PAGBUKLOD NG PAG-ASA

NI CRISELYN ABRIS

BUHAY AY MAHIRAP SA MUNDONG IBABAW.
BAGAY SA'TING MUNDO PANANDALIAN LANG
MGA YAMANG LIKAS, PATI KASIYAHAN
MADALING MAGBAGO, MADALING PALITAN.

“IBIGIN ANG KAPWA GAYA NG SA AKIN”
KAUTUSANG DAPAT NATING SUNDIN.
ANG NGITI AT SAYANG WALANG MALIW
ITO'Y KAMTANG LUBOS—HUWAG MANINIMDIM.

KUNG ANG HANAP NINYO'Y PERMANENTENG BAGAY
KASIYAHANG WALANG KATAPUSAN
ANG LAHAT NG ITO'Y IISA ANG PINANAGMULAN—
TANGING DIOS LAMANG.

MAHAHALAGANG UTOS NG DIOS
IBINIGAY SA'TING BUONG-BUO
IBIGIN S'YA NG 'TING BUONG PUSO
HUWAG MATATAKOT AT HUWAG SUSUKO.

GINAGAWANG MAY HIRAP AT PAGOD—
SUNDIN WALANG PAGKAPUOT
IBIGIN ANG KAPWA
LALO NA ANG DIOS.

MAGDASAL, TUMULONG SA KAPWA
PAGDATING NIYA'Y NALALAPIT NA
DAPAT MAGING HANDA
MASAMA'Y ALISIN—GUMAWA NG TAMA.

SONGS NG BUHAY KO

NI M.A. COSME

HOW DID YOU KNOW NA MAHAL KO SIYA?
PWEDE BANG WAG MONG SABIHIN SA KANYA
BAKA KASI MAGALIT SIYA
LALO LANG AKONG MAWAWALAN NG PAG-ASA

ALAM KO MORE THAN WORDS AY DI SAPAT
PARA MAHALIN DIN NIYA AKO NG TAPAT
BAKIT BA KASI GANITO ANG BUHAY
PAG-IBIG TALAGANG NAKAKA-HIGH.

KAHIT SANDALI, SABI NI JENNYLYN MERCADO
GUSTO KO LANG NAMAN KAMI'Y MAGKASUNDO
KAYA LANG SIYA'Y DEDMA LANG
PERO MAHAL KO SIYA, PAKISABI NA LANG

AKALA KO'Y I FINALLY FOUND SOMEONE
NA AKING MAMAHALIN AT MAGUGUSTUHAN
HAAAY...ANG PAG-IBIG KONG ITO...
AKO NGAYON AY LITONG-LITO

KAHIT GAWIN NIYA AKONG ALIPIN
ITO'Y OKEI LANG SA AKIN
BASTAT AKO'Y KANYANG MAMAHALIN
AT DI LOLOKOHIN

SA GAME OF LOVE AKO'Y LAGIN TALUNAN...
BIGO AT UMUUWING LUHAAN
AKO BA'Y MAY FOOLISH HEART PARA SAKTAN?
O ANG MAGMAHAL AY KASALANAN?

PARANG GUSTO KO NANG MAHIMATAY
DAHIL WALA SIYA SA AKING BUHAY
PERO PANGAKO, ITO NA ANG AKING ONE LAST CRY
AKO NA LAMANG AY MAGHIHINTAY

PERO KAHIT GANITO ANG NANGYARI
BUHAY KO'Y TULOY PA Rin
KAHIT AKO'Y TORETE SA KANYA
LOVE KO'Y TALAGANG SA KANYA.

TRANSISYON

NI ALVINIL REY

BAGONG PANAHOON
ANG KAHARAP NGAYON
NALLITONG DIWA,
IBA'T-IBANG BERSYON.
GUNAW DAW ANG KASUNOD.
DELUBYO.
BAHA.
PAGYANIG.
APOY.
LINLANGIN ANG PANGAMBA,
BASAGIN ANG TAKOT.
SA PAGPASOK NG ORAS
TAYO AY PIPIGLAS.
MAG-AAKLAS
PARA ITINDIG
ANG BAGONG BUKAS
NA TAYO ANG LULUTAS.
TAGLAY ANG LIWANAG NA
TITINGALAIN NG MADLA.
NAGMULA, NAGTAPOS
ANG LAHAT SA TUWA.
GUHIT NG PALAD
KASUNOD AY USAD.
MULING SASALUBONG
SA NGITI NG PAG-ASA.
LALAMPAS SA KARIMLAN
NA PARANG ISINILANG
SA IKALAWANG MULI.



Drizzles of
REFLECTION

THROUGH THE TEST OF TIME, ROCKS, STONES, PEBBLES AND SHELLS
TURN TO BE UNNUMBERED SAND DUE TO THE IMPETUS TORRENT OF CRUEL
WAVES.

PIVOTAL VICISSITUDES
ENCAPSULATED—UNFOLDED.

THE VIRGA FADE
AN AFTERMATH OF BLIZZARD.

LIFE'S LUMINOUS RAINBOW WOULDN'T APPEAR
IF IT'S NOT WITH THE TURBULENT STORM.

—LAILANIE FRONDA





3 AND FREE

BY JACKSON DAGUIO

HE WAS A MAN OF TRADE, A MAN OF TALENT AND SKILL.

HE WAS A FARMER, FISHERMAN, CARPENTER, CRAFTSMAN, MUSICIAN, AND A SILENT WORKER WHOSE DILIGENCE I COULD NEVER SURPASS. I SOMETIMES WONDER AND TELL MYSELF, "IF ONLY HE HAD HAD THE CHANCE TO FINISH A FORMAL EDUCATION, HE COULD HAVE BEEN A GENIUS!" I HAVE SEEN HIM FIX AND WEAVE THOSE FOXY NETS, WEAVE FANCY NATIVE HATS, BUILD HOUSES, AND MAKE FARMING TOOLS LIKE THE PLOW—WITH EXCELLENCE AND FINESSE. AS A MUSICIAN, HE PLAYS THE LOCAL GUITAR OR UKULELE WITH DEXTERITY AND MASTERY. THAT IS WHY HE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE "RONDALIA" THAT PLAYED MUSIC DURING SPECIAL GATHERINGS AND FESTIVITIES.

WHENEVER MY FATHER WAS DOING HIS WORK AT OUR HOUSE, I WAS ALWAYS RIGHT BESIDE HIM. I WAS HIS ANNOYING KID-APPRENTICE—CURIOUS IN HIS WORK AND INTERROGATING WHATEVER HE WAS DOING. NEVERTHELESS, THE MASTER NEVER GOT TIRED OF THE PESKY INTERN MAKING MESS WITH HIS ART. INSTEAD, WITH THE PATIENCE OF A MONK, HE SHOWED ME HOW TO DO THINGS. HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO FIX THE NET WITH MY TENDER, WONDERING HANDS. HE SHOWED ME HOW TO PLOW THE FIELD; HOW TO RAISE AND LOWER THE BUTT OF THE PLOW SO THAT THE PROPER DEPTH OF THE SOIL WILL BE TILLED. "WATCH WHERE THE CARABAO GOES!" THE CAPTAIN WOULD YELL. "OR ELSE YOU WILL MAKE A CROOKED FURROW." THUS, FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT I OWNED MY FATHER'S TRADE; I LEARNED HIS TRADE, BUT NOT AS GOOD AS HE DOES.

I USED TO GO FISHING WITH HIM ALONG THE SEASHORE. WE WOULD WALK 3-4 KILOMETERS SWELTERING UNDER THE SUN; BUT THAT DIDN'T BOTHER US, WE ENJOYED THE LONG WALK TOGETHER—FATHER AND SON. THE VAST BLUE SEA AND THE ALMOST UNENDING HORIZON NEVER FAILED TO AMAZE YOUNG QUERING MINDS. THE OCEAN BREEZE WOULD WAFT ITS WAY THROUGH MY BREATHING, RELIEVING MY NUMB MORTAL SOUL—I FELT EXHILARATED. THE RUSHING PEBBLES DRAGGED BY THE WAVES MADE A CHORAL SOUND WITH THE ANTIPHONIES OF THE MIGHTY WALLS OF WATER PLUMMETING TO THE SHORE.

I WOULD WAIT AT THE SHORELINE TO INTENTLY WITNESS THE PROWLER AS HE PREPARED HIS NET AND THEN APPROACHED THE WAVES. HE WOULD BATTLE THE RAGE OF NA-

TURE—WAVES, COMING ONE AFTER ANOTHER, WOULD PUSH HIM OFFSHORE, AS IF FORBIDDING HIM TO CAST HIS NET. I REMEMBER SEEING HIM HOLD HIS GROUND PATIENTLY TILL THE WAVES CALMED DOWN. WHEN THE WAVES EBBED, THEN MY FATHER, WITH GRACE AND IMPECCABLE TIMING, WOULD THROW IN THE NET. THE NET WOULD MAKE A HISSING SOUND, AS IF REJOICING FOR BEING FREE, FORMING A CIRCLE AS IT PLUNGED INTO THE WATERS. THEN, AS HE DRAGGED THE NET SLOWLY OFFSHORE I WAITED EXPECTANTLY HOPING TO SEE A LOT OF CATCH.

THERE WERE ALSO TIMES WHEN I WENT WITH HIM HERDING OUR CATTLE AND WATER BUFFALO. WE RODE AT THE BACK OF OUR MIGHTY COACH GOING OUT AND COMING HOME. I ENJOYED THE SLOW GAIT AND CRADLE-LIKE MOTION OF OUR LOVED BEAST THAT OFTEN TIMES, I WOULD DOZE OFF AND MY FATHER WITH THOSE WORN STURDY ARMS WOULD CUDDLE ME—MAKING SURE I WON'T FALL OFF. OH! HOW I LOVE THOSE DAYS. I ALWAYS IMAGINE MYSELF BACK INTO THOSE ARMS.

SOMETIMES, WE ONLY APPRECIATE THE VALUE OF A PERSON WHEN THEY'RE ALREADY GONE. WE CAN ONLY START TO VALUE THEM WHEN THEY ARE NO LONGER AROUND. AND SOMETIMES THOSE NEAR US ARE THE ONES THAT ARE MOST NEGLECTED AND LEAST APPRECIATED. IT'S QUEER THAT ONLY WHEN THEIR MEMORIES START TO HAUNT US THAT IT IS THE ONLY TIME WE REALIZE THAT THEY WERE THE MOST PRECIOUS PART OF OUR LIVES. LITTLE WORDS THAT WE FAIL TO SAY; LITTLE THINGS THAT WE FORGOT TO DO; COULD HAVE BROUGHT THEM JOY—LASTING EVEN TO THEIR LAST BREATH, I COULD HAVE NOT FAILED. I FAILED TO SAY "THANK YOU" TO MY FATHER; I FAILED TO SAY THAT I LOVE HIM. I FAILED TO APPRECIATE THE THINGS HE HAS DONE.

BUT NOW, MORE THAN BEFORE, I LOVE MY FATHER.

DANCES, DUNES, AND A FULL MOON

BY JACKSON DAGUIO

THAT SPHERE THAT GLOWS IN THE NIGHT SKY RISES IN FULL GRAN-

DEUR AND MAJESTY. THE SHADOWS THAT DARKEN THE LAND FLED TO THE WEST WHILE THE EDGE OF THE KAMATSILI'S SHADOWY FORM SPARKLE AS LIGHT STRUCK ITS CALM LEAVES, FOLDED AND BOWED TO REST. THE LAND GLITTERS WITH MOIST. WHILE AT A DISTANCE, SOME BROKEN LINE OF MADRE DE CACAO TREES FORM WALLS OF SHADOW.

THE SAND ON THE GROUND ABSORBS SOME OF THE ATMOSPHERE'S DAMPNESS MAKING ITS SURFACE A LITTLE BIT COLD. THE FINE SANDS LUSTER WITH THE MOON'S LIGHT. THE LAND SEEMS LIKE WAVES OF THE SEA BUT NEVER RECEDES TO THE SHORE. AT THE MIDDLE OF IT IS A MOUND WHERE WE PLAY UNDER THE MOONLIGHT; CHILDREN, JOVIAL AND CAREFREE, HAVING THE BEST TIME OF OUR LIVES.

EVERY FULL MOON WE GO OUT TO PLAY ESPECIALLY DURING THE COLD MONTHS OF DECEMBER. I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD, WHILE MY SISTER AMY WAS 12. WE WOULD RUSH TO FINISH OUR AFTER-SUPPER HOUSEHOLD CHORES, SO THAT WE COULD GO OUT AND PLAY "PATINTERO" WITH OUR FRIENDS. THEIR DISTANT ROUSING WE HEAR; TELLING US TO HURRY—THE FUN IS STARTING!

"HURRY UP! I CAN HEAR THEM SHOUTING ALREADY!" SAYS ATE AMY.

"I AM. BUT HELP ME FIRST WITH THESE PLATES; THEY'RE TOO HEAVY FOR ME" I RETORTED.

AFTER FINISHING THE CHORES, WE RAN AS FAST AS WE COULD TO CATCH-UP WITH OUR FRIENDS.

"NANA, WE'RE GOING-OUT TO PLAY AT THE 'PARATONG' WITH OUR FRIENDS!" WE TOLD OUR MOTHER ALMOST IN UNISON AS WE SPED OUT OF THE HOUSE.

ON THE FIELD IS A PLACE—A DUNE—AS LARGE AS THAT OF A BASKETBALL COURT. ITS EDGES SLOWLY RISE FROM EACH SIDE, GIVING US A SEMI-BARRICADE FROM THE COLD WIND AND ENOUGH TO MAKE US FEEL SURROUNDED WITH WALLS. HERE WE GATHER TO PLAY OUR FAVORITE NIGHT GAME—"PATINTERO." THIS PLAYGROUND IS OUR OWN WORLD, WHERE WE MAKE RULES AND RULE WITH IT; WHERE WE MAKE BOUNDARIES AND LIMITS, YET, WE ARE FREE.

PREPARING THE PLAYGROUND BY MAKING LINES UPON THE SAND IS THE PRELUDE FOR THE FUN ITSELF. DIGGING MY RIGHT TOE THEN DRAGGING IT TO MAKE A LONG LINE CONNECTING FROM THE OTHER BEING MADE IS EXCITING. THE TINY GRAINS OF SAND FEEL WARM UNDER THE SOLE OF MY PUNY RIGHT

FOOT. THIS ELICITS A GREAT SENSATION WHICH CHILDREN OF MY AGE CAN NEVER EXPLAIN YET WOULD LOVE TO EXPERIENCE IT AGAIN AND AGAIN.

THE GROUND IS READY, IT'S NOW TIME TO DIVIDE THE CROWD INTO TWO AND DECIDE WHO WILL BE THE "IT." WE BICKER WITH ONE ANOTHER. ALL WANTED TO BE WITH THE BEST PLAYER AND THE BETTER TEAM. BUT THAT IS HOW WE GROUP OURSELVES—WITH PETULANCE. WE COMPLAIN UNTIL WE ALL FIND WHERE WE WANT TO BE.

WE WOULD PLAY TILL THE LINE THAT BOUNDS US BECOMES LIKE A DITCH. THE FINE GRAINS OF SAND LEVELED BY THE CAUTIOUS WIND TURNED INTO A BATTLEGROUND AS IF A BATTLE OF MIGHTY FLEET OF FIERCE FOOTED SOLDIERS FOUGHT AND FLED THERE.

WE DODGED, WE SLID, WE DOVE, AND WE ROLLED UPON THE SAND—WE WERE CRAZY. WE SHOUTED WITH JOY AND SOMETIMES WE YELLED AT EACH OTHER FOR CLAIMS OF HIS, OR HER, OR MY RIGHTS FOR A PLAY OR AN UNFAIR PLAY.

"YOU CHEATED!"

"NO, I DID NOT!"

"YES, YOU DID!"

"I DID NOT" ARE SOME REPEATED COMPLAINS AND YELLS.

WHILE "HOME!"

"SAFE!"

"ONE ZERO!" ARE SOME VICTORY CRIES THAT YOU WOULD HEAR ECHOING UPON THE SLUMBER OF THE NIGHT—BUT THE LAND SEEMED TO BE DEAF AT THAT MOMENT; SIMPLY ENJOYING THE SOUNDS OF STAMPEDE MADE BY CHILDREN.

WE PLAY 'TILL WE ARE EXHAUSTED OR UNTIL SOMEONE OR SOMEBODY'S MOTHER COMES CALLING FOR HER SONS OR DAUGHTERS TO COME HOME FOR THE NIGHT IS ALREADY LATE.

ONLY THEN WILL WE BE SATISFIED AND HEAD HOME...

I PREFER WALKING HOME ON MY BARE FEET WITH MY SLIPPERS ON EACH HAND. I LOVE TO FEEL THE DAMP SOD UNDER MY SOLES AFTER THOSE LONG EXHILARATING HOURS OF PLAY; IT SOMEHOW RELIEVES MY TIRED NERVES. WHILE GAZING UPON THE FULL MOON, I SOMEHOW FANCY THAT IT IS SMILING, HAPPY TO SEE LITTLE CHILDREN LIKE US HAVING THE FREEDOM TO HAVE FUN UNDER ITS LIGHT—HAVING THE TIME, FREE FROM FEAR AND THREAT TO DANCE AND BE MERRY EVEN FOR A NIGHT.

I LOOK FORWARD TO ANOTHER FULL MOON WHERE WE COME TOGETHER AND DANCE ONCE MORE. I NEVER FELT FREEDOM LIKE THAT BEFORE...

DASA REI

BY THE OTHER JUDY ABBOTT

AUTUMN LEAVES WERE GENTLY FALLING AS I SAT ON THE SWING THAT ORDINARY FRIDAY

AFTERNOON. MY FAITHFUL COMPANION, MY LAVENDER-COVERED NOTEBOOK WAS WITH ME; THE ONE I ALWAYS CARRY WHEREVER I GO. IT IS WHERE I WRITE MY SENTIMENTS AND MY HYPOTHETICAL IDEAS AS A WRITER—MY CONFIDANT. I WRITE TO CHALLENGE MYSELF IN EXPRESSING WHAT I FEEL. AND AT THAT MOMENT, AS I OPENED THE PAGE WHERE I LEFT OFF, AN OLD PICTURE FELL. RESTING ON THE GRASS BESIDE MY RIGHT FOOT, I PICKED IT UP.

SUDDENLY, I WAS LOOKING AT A FAMILIAR FACE OF A GIRL. SHE WORE A DAZZLING EXPRESSION AND EYES THAT ALMOST PIERCED THROUGH MY VERY SOUL. BESIDE HER WAS SOMEONE WHO LOOKED LIKE ME, OR MOST PROBABLY, IT WAS ME. THE PICTURE WAS TAKEN WHEN WE WERE SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL. WE WERE IN UNIFORMS. THOSE OLD WORN-OUT UNIFORMS...

I FOUND MYSELF REMINISCING MEMORIES. IT WAS FUNNY. THOSE TIMES WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER NEVER FAILS TO BRING ME SMILE.

WAY BACK IN THIRD YEAR, I NEVER REALLY LIKED HER. MY BLOOD ALWAYS FUMED WHENEVER I SAW HER IN HER PUNK-SKATEBOARDER-LOOKS. I HATED EVERYTHING ABOUT HER WITH NO REAL REASON. I WAS HER OSAMA BIN LADEN. BUT FATE HAS A FUNNY WAY OF TURNING THINGS AROUND.

PROFOUNDLY, MY PERCEPTION ABOUT HER CHANGED. SHE WASN'T REALLY STUBBORN, NARROW MINDED OR A GREAT JERK! SHE JUST WANTED TO BE HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD. SHE'S A GOOD LISTENER AND AN OPEN-MINDED PERSON. SHE WASN'T REALLY SNOBBISH. SHE'S A GREAT PERSON, THAT ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW HER, YOU'LL REALLY LIKE HER TO THE BONES!—A REAL SWEET PERSON.

THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I FELT MISERABLE, SHE'LL APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE AND WOULD CHEER ME UP. WE DID THINGS TOGETHER; WE ATE TOGETHER, CRIED TOGETHER, AND LAUGHED TOGETHER WITH OUR TRIUMPHS AND MISTAKES. I CONFIDED MY PROBLEMS WITH HER AND SHE WAS ALWAYS THERE READY TO LISTEN NO MATTER WHAT. IN THE PROCESS, WE LEARNED FROM EACH OTHER.

BUT AS WE KNOW IT, LIFE IS NOT ALL SMILES AND LAUGHTER. SOMETIMES, WE CAN ONLY DISTINGUISH FANTASY FROM REALITY THE MOMENT PAIN COMES KNOCKING IN AND ENTERS INTO OUR WORLD.

OUR CLOSENESS DEVELOPED A CERTAIN FEELING, AN UNWANTED AFFECTION THAT LATER SHATTERED THE FAIRY-TALE STORY

OF A FRIENDSHIP DELICATELY WOVEN. WE MADE A PROMISE AND BROKE IT. I WAS NEVER THE SAME AGAIN. I WAS DEVASTATED.

I REMEMBER THE ESSAY ENTITLED "SONIA" BY FRANCISCO B. ICASIANO. IT MOVED ME TO A POINT OF REALIZATION ON HOW TO COPE WITH PAIN. HE SAID, "PAIN, I HAVE REALIZED IS BEAUTIFUL ONLY WHEN ONE CAN RISE FROM ITS DEPRESSING POWER."

IT MEANT A LOT TO ME ESPECIALLY AFTER THE SAD EXPERIENCE I HAD GONE THROUGH. IT WAS AN EMOTIONAL TORTURE THAT TORMENTED ME AND MADE ME A PULP OF HOPELESSNESS AND MISERY. AT FIRST IT WAS REALLY HARD TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH AND TO MOVE ON. AND TO START AGAIN WAS TO ME, AN IMPOSSIBLE OPTION—TO BE WHOLE AGAIN IS A BIG QUESTION TO PONDER UPON. BUT THE SOUL CAN ONLY RECOGNIZE THE BEAUTY OF PAIN IF WE, IN OURSELVES WILL BECOME STRONG AFTER IT HAD TOUCHED US.

AS I LOOK BACK AT THAT PAGE OF MY LIFE, I HAD MADE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ABOUT THE THINGS AROUND ME. GOD SOMETIMES ALLOWS US TO EXPERIENCE PAIN TO LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES. THE HARDEST PART FOR ME WAS TO LET GO AND ACCEPT THE TRUTH. BUT GRADUALLY, IT MADE ME A BETTER NOT A BITTER PERSON. AS MR. VICTOR PARACHIN WROTE, "CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS SHOULD MAKE US BETTER NOT BITTER PEOPLE." THE PAINS WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED MUST MOTIVATE US TO MAKE OUR LIFE A BIT MORE MEANINGFUL AND TO USE OUR PAINS TO BLESS OTHERS BY BRINGING THEM INSPIRATION AND HOPE.

IF WE ARE INFLECTED WITH PAIN, IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT OUR LIFE WILL BE MISERABLE AND HOPELESS FOREVER. HOPE ONLY VANISHES WHEN WE STOP BELIEVING THAT IT EXISTS. LIFE HAS ITS OWN SURPRISES AND UNCERTAINTIES. BUT THESE SHOULDN'T DISCOURAGE US.

SUDDENLY, A DROP OF LIQUID SPLATTERED MY FACE ON THE PICTURE. I THOUGHT IT WAS ME CRYING. BUT THEN, MORE DROPLETS CAME POURING DOWN. IT WAS RAINING. I HID THE PICTURE UNDER ONE OF THE PAGES OF MY NOTEBOOK. I WASN'T AFRAID OF THE THREATENING CLOUDS. I WASN'T AFRAID OF THE COLD WIND; NOR THE SHARP RAINDROPS THAT PIERCED MY SKIN. THEY TOO SHALL END. THEY WILL EVENTUALLY END. THE RAIN IS NOT FOREVER.

WHEREVER SHE IS RIGHT NOW, I HOPE SHE'S DOING FINE. I WILL NEVER FORGET THE UPS AND THE DOWNS THAT WE FACED TOGETHER. ALL THE PAIN, THE SORROW AND THE TEARS PROVED THAT WE ARE REALLY HUMANS LIVING IN A REAL WORLD.

I THINK NO ONE CAN BLAME US FOR THAT. WE ARE ALL ENTITLED TO IT.

A NEW HEARTFELT THANKS!

BY RICK

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS IS A LETTER WRITTEN BY A FATHER WHOSE SON, A HEART TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT, LIVED. THIS "THANK YOU LETTER" WAS WRITTEN TO THE FAMILY OF THE DONOR, A BOY WHO DIED OF SICKNESS AT THE AGE OF NINE. WE DECIDED TO KEEP IT UNEDITED TO KEEP THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE LETTER.

DEAR DONOR FAMILY,

HOW CAN WE ADEQUATELY SAY THANK YOU FOR A NEW LIFE? FORGIVE US FOR TAKING SO LONG TO WRITE, BUT THE TASK HAS BEEN EMOTIONAL AND INTIMIDATING. MANY NIGHTS WE HAVE PRAYED FOR YOU, FOR GOD'S PRESENCE TO COMFORT YOU AND TO FILL THE EMPTEENESS THAT MUST BE OVERWHELMING AT THE LOSS OF YOUR CHILD. HOW WE LONG FOR YOU TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE THAT YOU'VE MADE THROUGH YOUR GIVING AND UNSELFISH SPIRIT, IN THE TIME OF YOUR GREATEST PAIN AND TRAGEDY, HAS MADE IN OUR LIFE. WE WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT OUR SON, NATHAN, AND THE ROAD WE HAVE TRAVELED. GOD, WHO WORKS IN WAYS FAR BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING, HAS ALLOWED OUR LIVES TO INTERSECT IN THIS WAY, AND WE PRAY THAT YOU MIGHT SHARE SOME OF OUR JOY IN THIS GIFT YOU HAVE ALLOWED.

WE LEARNED ABOUT NATHAN'S HEART CONDITION, HYPOPLASTIC LEFT HEART SYNDROME (MISSING THE MAIN PUMPING CHAMBER OF THE HEART), WHEN KATE WAS 20 WEEKS PREGNANT. WE HAD AN ULTRASOUND JUST TO PEEK AND SEE IF THE BABY WOULD BE A BOY OR A GIRL. I IMAGINE THAT OUR SHOCK ABOUT FINDING OUT THAT HE HAD A POTENTIALLY FATAL HEART DEFECT WAS SOMEHOW SIMILAR TO YOU FINDING OUT THAT YOUR CHILD HAD CANCER. LUCKILY, WE HAD TIME TO ADJUST AND PREPARE. WE HAD TWO OPTIONS—A HEART TRANSPLANT SOON AFTER BIRTH (IF A HEART BECAME AVAILABLE) OR A SERIES OF 3 RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERIES TO RECONFIGURE THE BLOOD VESSELS TO MAKE USE OF HIS RIGHT VENTRICLE TO PUMP BLOOD TO HIS BODY.

NATHAN WAS BORN ON MAY 14, 2001, AND HAD HIS FIRST OPEN HEART SURGERY WHEN HE WAS FIVE DAYS OLD. IT WAS HARD TO SEE HIM THERE, SO SMALL; WITH SO MANY IV'S AND TUBES. THANKFULLY, AFTER THREE WEEKS WE WERE ABLE TO BRING HIM HOME (ON OXYGEN AND MONITORS). TWO MONTHS LATER, WE MADE AN EMERGENCY TRIP BACK FOR THE SECOND SURGERY AFTER NATE GOT SICKER JUST FROM THE STRESS OF THE FIRST SET OF BABY SHOTS. HE MADE IT THROUGH AND WAS HOME AFTER ANOTHER 2 WEEKS, ALTHOUGH NOW TRAILING IV ANTIBIOTICS FOR 3 MORE WEEKS DUE TO A WOUND INFECTION. HE HAD 2 MORE OPEN HEART SURGERIES BEFORE HIS FIRST BIRTHDAY, FOR A NARROWING OF HIS AORTA, AND THEN FOR A PACEMAKER DUE TO COMPLICATIONS FROM THE THIRD SURGERY. BUT THROUGH IT ALL, NATHAN PROVED TO BE STRONG AND HAPPY, AND WELL LOVED.

AN UNEXPECTED TURN IN OUR JOURNEY STARTED IN NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR, WHEN NATHAN WAS 18 MONTHS OLD. HE CAUGHT A COLD AND GOT MUCH FUSSIER THAN USUAL. WE WERE SURPRISED TO FIND HIS OXYGEN LEVEL DANGEROUSLY LOW AND PUT HIM BACK ON OXYGEN; WITHIN A FEW DAYS, HE WAS BACK IN THE HOSPITAL. ALTHOUGH WE FIRST THOUGHT THE VIRUS HAD ATTACKED HIS HEART AND MADE IT WEAK, IT BECAME APPARENT AFTER A FEW WEEKS THAT HIS HEART WAS JUST WEARING OUT AND STARTING TO FAIL. THE RIGHT VENTRICLE HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO PUMP BLOOD UNDER LOW PRESSURE TO THE LUNGS; THE SURGERIES HAD HOOKED IT UP TO PUMP UNDER HIGH PRESSURE TO THE BODY—USUALLY THIS WORKS OUT, BUT IN NATE'S CASE HIS COLD JUST MADE IT APPARENT THAT HIS HEART WAS SLOWLY FAILING. HE WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO HAVE THE FINAL RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY; WITHOUT A NEW HEART, WE KNEW HE WOULD NOT LIVE LONG.

AFTER A SECOND HOSPITAL STAY IN FEBRUARY, NATHAN WAS PUT ON THE TRANSPLANT LIST. THE PROSPECT WAS SCARY ENOUGH, BUT NOW THERE WAS MORE BAD NEWS—DUE TO HIS PAST SURGERIES AND TRANSFUSIONS, HE HAD A HIGH LEVEL OF ANTIBODIES AGAINST FOREIGN TISSUES AND WOULD REJECT 90% OF HEARTS, EVEN IF THE BLOOD TYPE WAS RIGHT. HE WAS GIVEN STRONG IMMUNE SUPPRESSING DRUGS, BUT THEY DID NOT SEEM TO CHANGE THE TEST RESULTS. IT LOOKED LIKE THE WAIT

WOULD BE VERY LONG, AND WE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW LONG NATE'S HEART WOULD HOLD OUT. HE WAS ON OXYGEN AGAIN AND AN IV WITH MEDICINE TO MAKE HIS HEART BEAT HARDER.

DURING THIS TIME, WE HELD ONTO SOME VERSES FROM THE BIBLE: "I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART AND PUT A NEW SPIRIT IN YOU; I WILL REMOVE FROM YOU YOUR HEART OF STONE AND GIVE YOU A HEART OF FLESH" (EZEKIEL 36:26); AND "I AM STILL CONFIDENT OF THIS: I WILL SEE THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING. WAIT FOR THE LORD; BE STRONG AND TAKE HEART AND WAIT FOR THE LORD." (PSALM 27:13-14). MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE WERE PRAYING FOR NATE AND FOR US AND FOR YOU. WE KNEW THAT THE ONLY WAY THAT NATHAN WOULD GET NEW HEART WOULD BE IF ANOTHER CHILD DIED. OUR HOPE WOULD BE TIED TO YOUR PAIN AND TRAGEDY. WE PRAYED THAT SOMEHOW, SOME OF THE STING OF YOUR PRECIOUS CHILD'S DEATH WOULD BE LESSENER, KNOWING THAT ANOTHER CHILD WOULD NOW HAVE A CHANCE TO LIVE.

WE GOT THE CALL ON AUGUST 18TH AT 9:15 P.M. THAT THERE COULD BE A MATCH FOR NATE, BUT THE FIRST BLOOD TEST SHOWED SOME INCOMPATIBILITY. WE RUSHED TO HOSPITAL TO GIVE ANOTHER BLOOD SAMPLE AND THEN BACK HOME FOR A RESTLESS NIGHT. THANKFULLY, ANOTHER ROUND OF IMMUNE SUPPRESSING MEDICINE JUST A WEEK BEFORE HAD ELIMINATED THE INTERACTION—YOUR CHILD'S HEART WOULD BE A PERFECT MATCH. AFTER A LONG DAY OF WAITING FOR SURGEONS TO PREPARE NATHAN, AND TO BRING YOUR CHILD'S HEART, NATE MADE IT THROUGH THE SURGERY AFTER 8 HOURS. WE PRAYED FOR YOUR FAMILY AS WE SAT IN THE WAITING ROOM, AND TRIED TO IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE FOR YOU. THEY DID TELL US THAT THERE WAS A BRAIN TUMOR, SO WE KNOW YOU MUST HAVE SPENT A TON OF TIME AT THE HOSPITAL, FIGHTING FOR YOUR CHILD'S LIFE, LIKE WE HAVE. TO EVERYONE'S AMAZEMENT, NATHAN WAS OFF THE BREATHING MACHINE WITHIN 12 HOURS, AND CAME HOME AFTER 8 DAYS. THE FIRST MONTH HAD US IN AND OUT OF THE HOSPITAL WITH A FEW COMPLICATIONS, BUT IT WAS AMAZING THE DIFFERENCE THAT YOUR CHILD'S STRONG HEART MADE IN NATHAN.

IT IS A GOOD HEART. WE ARE AMAZED EVERY TIME WE SEE IT ON THE ECHOCARDIOGRAM—ALL 4 CHAMBERS WITH ALL THE VALVES FLAPPING AWAY—SOMETHING WE DIDN'T SEE BEFORE. AFTER 6 MONTHS OF BEING UNABLE TO GAIN WEIGHT DESPITE A VORACIOUS APPETITE, HE HAS GAINED 4 POUNDS AND 2 INCHES. HE HAS STARTED TO WALK (AT THE AGE OF 2 1/2 YEARS) AND IS MORE TALKATIVE AND ENERGETIC (AND ABLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST THE LOVING HELP OF HIS OLDER SISTERS, AGES 6 AND 8). AND BEST OF ALL FOR MOM AND DAD, NOW HE LOVES TO CUDDLE (BEFORE THE TRANSPLANT, HE DIDN'T LIKE TO LIE ON HIS CHEST OR BE CUDDLED—WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED A LEFT VENTRICLE FOR THAT). BE ASSURED THAT SOMETHING BIG LIES AHEAD FOR THIS KID—HE ACTS AS THOUGH THE WHOLE WORLD LOVES HIM, AND HE LOVES EVERYONE—HE CONSTANTLY SAYS "HI" TO PERFECT STRANGERS AND IS ABLE TO GET THEM TO SAY "HI" BACK. REMEMBER THIS, SOMEDAY IF YOU EVER HEAR THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD A HEART TRANSPLANT WHEN HE WAS TWO!

THIS THANKSGIVING, OUR BLESSINGS OVERFLOW. AS WE CELEBRATE NATHAN'S NEW CHANCE OF LIFE, WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE ACHIEVE FOR YOUR LOSS. WHAT YOU DID WAS A COURAGEOUS, SELFLESS ACT OF LOVE. WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR YOU FOR THOSE DAYS WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOU JUST CAN'T GO ON. MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WITH HIS PEACE, COMFORT, AND HEALING.

WITH THANKS BEYOND WHAT WORDS CAN HOLD,
RICK, KATE, ELISSA, KRISTEN AND NATHAN

EDUCATE ME!

BY BEARCHARMZ

AUP'S SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE RESTORATION OF THE LOST IMAGE OF OUR MAKER ON ITS STUDENTS. WHY? BECAUSE IMMORALITY, CRIME, DEATH, AND VIOLENCE PERVADES THE LAND—THE WORKS OF EVIL WHEN SIN ENTERED INTO OUR WORLD; AND PERFECTION, THE ESSENCE OF OUR MAKER, HAS BEEN OBLITERATED BECAUSE OF THE DISOBEDIENCE OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.

WE WERE CREATED PERFECT AND HOLY. BUT OBVIOUSLY THAT STATE OF BEING PERFECT WAS LOST AND NOW NEEDS RESTORED. THIS IS ONE REASON WHY AUP HAS A VEGETARIAN CAFETERIA, BECAUSE AUP BELIEVES THAT IF THE STUDENTS ARE SERVED WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, NUTS AND GRAINS, THEY WILL BE TEN TIMES WISER LIKE DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS. AT LEAST EVEN IF OUR PHYSICAL BODY IS NOT PERFECT, WE MAINTAIN ITS OPTIMUM HEALTH BY HAVING A BALANCE AND HEALTHY DIET. YES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE PHYSICALLY HEALTHY BECAUSE OUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WE WERE CREATED TO BE A MORAL BEING. THIS SEPARATED US FROM THE CREATED ANIMALS. BUT OUR MORAL, MENTAL, AND SOCIAL ASPECTS HAVE BECOME DEGRADED THROUGH THE PASSING OF TIME. STUDENTS NOWADAYS ARE GETTING NOWHERE WHEN IT COMES TO DISTINGUISHING WHAT IS MORALLY RIGHT AND WHAT IS MORALLY WRONG—THE ABILITY TO THINK CRITICALLY AND MORALLY IS LOST FROM THE YOUTH OF TODAY. STUDENTS ARE BENT TO DISHONESTY, DISRESPECT FOR THEIR PARENTS AND EVEN WITH THEIR TEACHERS THEIR SENSIBILITIES PERVADE. THE SPIRIT OF BEING HUMAN IS ALMOST LOST.

WE WERE CREATED AS SOCIAL BEINGS. SOCIALIZATION GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW AND ENJOY FELLOWSHIP WITH OUR FELLOWMEN. AUP ALSO PROVIDES SOCIAL EVENTS. STUDENTS CAN ENJOY SUNRISE, AND SUNDOWN WORSHIP OF ANY RELIGIOUS SMALL GROUP. DEPARTMENTS OF DIFFERENT COURSES ALSO SPONSOR SOCIAL NIGHTS OF GATHERING FOR BETTER RELATIONSHIPS; THUS, PROMOTING THE STUDENTS SOCIAL ASPECT.

EARLY IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES WE WERE TAUGHT TO REVERE GOD AND EVERYTHING REFERRING TO HIM IS HOLY. CHURCH SERVICE IS HOLY. ATTENDING IT MAKES US HOLY. SAD TO SAY, THAT FEW STUDENTS TODAY ARE GOING TO CHURCH SINCERELY AND VERY RARELY THAT YOU CAN SEE THEM BRINGING THE HOLY BIBLE. BUT THANK GOD, AUP IS FINDING WAYS AND MEANS TO COUNTERACT THE DILEMMA.

SEEING THESE PROBLEMS, AUP IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT THE VISION OF THE SCHOOL OF BECOMING A WORLD CLASS CENTER OF CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE LIKE HAVING AN OUTREACH PROGRAM. THIS IS TO ENHANCE THE ABILITY OF EVERY STUDENT TO SERVE HIS FELLOW MEN. SMALL GROUPS, IN-REACH, MID-WEEK, COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND CHAPEL PERIODS ARE SOME OF THE PROGRAMS WHICH A STUDENT CAN CHOOSE TO JOIN AND ATTEND. THE VOICE OF YOUTH AND WEEK OF PRAYER ARE ACTIVITIES THAT STUDENTS CAN ALSO PARTICIPATE IN ESPECIALLY IN MOTIVATING THEMSELVES ON HOW TO DEEPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

ALL OF THESE ARE VERY IMPORTANT PROGRAMS TO HELP IN THE RESTORATION OF EVERY STUDENT THROUGH HOLISTIC EDUCATION.

IN ITS GOAL TO ATTAIN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, THE ADMINISTRATION IS ARDENT TO MEET THEIR OBJECTIVE THAT COVERS THE FOUR ASPECTS OF MAN—THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, SOCIAL, AND SPIRITUAL.

THE STUDENTS ARE TRAINED TO SERVE AND SERVE TO TRAIN. I PRAY THAT OUR STUDENTS WILL BE AWARE AND PREPARED FOR THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS.

GOD'S BLESSING THAT MADE ME STRONGER

BY JOANNA MARIE N. CRUZ

“IF IT CAN'T KILL YOU, IT'LL MAKE YOU STRONGER.”

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOURSELF? IT'S A COMMON QUESTION, BUT NOT AN EASY ONE. SOME PEOPLE MAY SAY “YES, I KNOW MYSELF!” AND STILL, THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY TRULY WANT IN LIFE. IT SEEMS SIMPLE
BUT NOT QUITE.

I'M NOT THAT OLD. I'M JUST TURNING 20 YEARS OLD THIS MONTH. BUT INSTEAD OF BEING A SENIOR IN COLLEGE, I'M STILL A SOPHOMORE. I HAVE ALREADY TAKEN TWO COURSES PREVIOUSLY. FIRST, I TOOK UP COMMERCE, MAJOR IN ACCOUNTANCY, AT UST; AND SECOND, I SHIFTED TO NURSING AT OUR LADY OF FATIMA UNIVERSITY (OLFU).

ALL WAS GOING WELL... ALL WAS HAPPENING AS I EXPECTED THEM TO; BUT NOT UNTIL I GOT ATTRACTED TO THE FLAME. I FELL IN LOVE AT A YOUNG AGE AND WAS SO WEAK TO RESIST TEMPTATION. MY WEAKNESS BORE ME A BABY BOY. NOW, HE'S FIVE MONTHS OLD.

AT FIRST I FELT SO DOWNCAST. EVERYTHING HAPPENED SO FAST. I WAS A TEENAGER ENJOYING LIFE AS IT WAS; BUT THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN I GOT CAUGHT IN A WEB SO HARD TO UNTANGLE. I ALMOST LOST HOPE IF IT WEREN'T NOT FOR MY BABY. BUT I REALIZED THAT MY BABY HAS NOBODY BUT ME. IN HIM MY HOPE WAS REDEEMED.

YOU MAY ASK IF I FELT ASHAMED OF HIM. OF COURSE NOT! I DON'T LOOK AT HIM LIKE A CURSE; A CURSE THAT WOULD HAUNT ME FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE. NO. I SEE HIM AS A BLESSING FROM GOD.

WHEN I WAS STILL PREGNANT WITH HIM, I REMEMBER LOSING MY WILL TO STUDY. I DECIDED TO STAY AT HOME AND BE A FULL TIME MOM. BUT WHEN I HELD HIM IN MY ARMS FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME, MY HEART WAS STIRRED AND MY HARSH DECISIONS VANISHED. I CANNOT LET MY SON SUFFER FOR MY MISTAKES.

MY SON BECAME MY REASON AND MY INSPIRATION TO FINISH MY STUDIES.

OF COURSE, THERE ARE REGRETS. BUT IN LIFE, THERE'S NO ROOM FOR PERMANENT REGRETS. WE SHOULD LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES THEN LET GO; BECAUSE CHALLENGES WILL ALWAYS COME OUR WAY. THEY ARE INEVITABLE, INESCAPABLE. WHAT WE SHOULD DO IS ACCEPT THESE CHALLENGES AND WIN OVER THEM. WE SHOULD USE THEM AS STEPPING STONES IN REACHING FOR OUR DREAMS. AND WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET TO ASK GOD FOR GUIDANCE FOR GOD IS LOVE AND WITH HIM, EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

GROWING-UP THE BARRIOTIC WAY

BY KEILAH BOUGH

15 YEARS OF MY LIFE WAS SPENT IN A BARRIOTIC ENVIRONMENT. A PLACE WHERE THE PEOPLE RISE EARLY MORNING TO RACE THE SCORCHING SUN; WHERE FISHERMEN GET UP FROM THEIR SLEEPY BEDS BEFORE THE CLOCK STRIKES THREE IN THE MORNING TO PREPARE THEIR PUMP BOATS AND FISHING NETS LINED UP AND DRIED UNDER THE WAKEFUL EYES OF THE NIGHT; AND WHERE FARMERS WAKE UP LATER AROUND FIVE A.M. WITH THEIR LOADS OF FARMING TOOLS AND NECESSITIES TO CARRY WITH THEM GOING TO THEIR DESIGNATED TOIL.

GREENERY ABOUNDS. FRUIT TREES LIKE MANGOES, *CAIMITOES*, AND GUAVAS PROVIDE ME WITH NEVER ENDING FUN CLIMBING THEM FOR ITS FRUITS WHILE PLAYING. I SIMPLY LOVED TO HANG-OUT UNDER THE SHADES OF OLD MIGHTY ACACIA TREES WHILE TRYING TO HUNT FOR *GAGAMBA* UNDER ITS LEAVES. LIFE WAS SIMPLE; MY PLEASURES INGENUOUS. BUT WHAT CAPTIVATED ME MOST ARE THE PEOPLE THAT I GREW-UP WITH IN OUR *PUROK*.

MY *PUROK* CATERED TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF PERSONALITIES. THERE WAS THE RARE HONEST-TO-GOODNESS FAMILY MAN. THERE WERE THE OLD AND ODD DRUNKARDS WHO OFTENTIMES LOOKED LIKE ZOMBIES FRESH FROM THEIR CATACOMBS READY TO DEVOUR AND SUCK BLOOD FROM LIVING MEN. THESE WERE THE MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE MORNING GLORY IS TO HAVE THEIR EARLY DOZE OF GIN-TONIC FOR A LISTERINE. MIDDLE-AGED GAMBLING LORD WANNABES WERE ALSO PRESENT. THEY OFTEN MET IN SECRET PLACES—EITHER UNDER THE BAMBOO SHADES OR IN SOME ABANDONED HOUSES FOR FEAR OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES. AND FROM THE PSEUDO TO THE NOT-SO-RELIGIOUS FAMILY WHO WENT TO CHURCH ONLY WHEN THUNDER AND LIGHTNING HIT THEM HARD THAT THEY GET JOLTED FROM THEIR *SALUMPWETS*; AND EVERYONE IN-BETWEEN; ALL IN MY BELOVED *PUROK*. THEY ALL DISPLAYED THEIR INNUENDOS IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

ONE FATHER I KNOW, A *SABONGERO*, GAMBLER THE WHOLE DAY—IN EXPENSE OF HIS FAMILY—WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN FAMISHED. HIS VICE TOOK HIM TO UNCHARTED EXTREMES THAT ONLY AN INSANE FATHER WOULD DARE DO. HE'D RATHER BUY HIS FIGHTING COCK'S PELLETS (FOODS) THAN BUY A KILO OF RICE AND A BOTTLE OF MILK FOR HIS BABY. ONE DAY, OUT OF SEVERE HUNGER, HER DAUGHTER WENT TO THE DEARLY LOVED PET AND ATE THE PELLETS BEING FED TO THE COCK. THE FATHER, KNOWING BY HEART HOW EXPENSIVE THOSE PELLETS WERE, SHIFTED TO BERSERK MODE AND WHIPPED HIS FRAGILE DAUGHTER; ALL BECAUSE THE POOR STARVING CHILD ATE THE VALUED BIRD'S STAPLE. WHEW...WHATTA' FATHER!

YES, MY SMALL COMMUNITY IS ONE OF A KIND—A GAMBLER'S DEN. IT WAS LIKE HAVING A LITTLE TASTE OF A CASINO FILIPINO OF OUR OWN—WITHOUT THE GLITZ AND GLAMOUR, OF COURSE. FROM THE MOTHER WITH HER LITTLE CHILD CUDDLED WHILE GAZING ON EVERY CARD, HYPNOTIZED BY THE BLACK AND RED DECKS, KNEW HOW TO SHUFFLE CARDS AND PUT A *PISO* FOR A BET. I WOULDN'T WONDER IF ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL SEE THOSE CHILDREN FERVENTLY KEEPING OUR *PUROK*'S TRADITION—SITTING BEFORE A SQUARE TABLE WITH FOUR WHITE MONOBLOC CHAIRS AND FOUR COMPATRIOTS PENSIVELY AND THOUGHTFULLY, WITH ALL THEIR PERVERTED LOGICAL REASONING CAN MUSTER, CONTEMPLATING FOR THEIR NEXT CARD TO DROP.

PERSONALLY, I NEVER REALLY LIKED IT. I THOUGHT THAT IT WAS SUCH A WASTE OF TIME. SPENDING THE WHOLE DAY BEWITCHED BY THE THOUGHT THAT YOU WILL WIN. I WAS BEWILDERED. THEY WERE A BUNCH OF HARD WORKING MEN. WILLING TO BE BURNED AND TANNED UNDER THE SUN. SWELTERING WITH SWEAT TO EARN 120 PESOS—JUST ENOUGH FOR A DAY TO GET BY—AND JUST WASTE IT FOR A CAPRICIOUS VICE! I WAS PUZZLED. AH! I WAS TOO BUSY DREAMING OF BECOMING AN AERONAUTICAL TECHNICIAN. IT WAS A VERY HIGH AND NOBLE CHILDHOOD DREAM OF MINE. BUT POVERTY SHACKLED ME.

ONE THING IS COMMON IN OUR COMMUNITY THOUGH. ALMOST ALL OF THE PEOPLE THERE KNOW HOW TO WORK THEIR FINGERS TO THE BONE. THEY KNOW THE VALUE OF HARD LABOR; YOU CAN EASILY NOTICE THE DIGNITY OF A NOBLE FARMER IN THEM. BECAUSE MOST OF THE PEOPLE NEVER HAD THE CHANCE OF GOING TO COLLEGE, MOST OF THEM WERE EITHER HIGH SCHOOL OR ELEMENTARY DROP-OUTS, THERE WAS NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO PUT THEIR HANDS TO THE COMMON TRADE—FARMING. COLLEGE EDUCATION IS AN ELUSIVE DREAM.

IT'S FUNNY HOW A TINY COMMUNITY IMPRESSES. I AM AN IMPRINT OF ITS EXISTENCE. WHAT IT WROUGHT IN ME TOOK A LOT OF PAIN TO INSTILL IN MY PUNY MIND THE VALUES THAT I HAVE. I WAS ELEGANTLY INFLUENCED BY THE COMMUNITY THAT SERVED AS THE MOLD.

Hi LORD!

BY DEOMIE LYNN RIVAMONTE

777 SOMEWHERE UP THERE
ABOVE THE TREES AND ALL THE SKIES
BEYOND THE STARS I SEE,
HEAVEN CITY.

Hi LORD!

HOW ARE YOU? I DON'T KNOW HOW BUSY YOU ARE RIGHT NOW. PASTORS SAY YOU ARE WEARING A ROBE AND SOMETHING; HEARING PEOPLES FROM ALL PLACES, COMING UP WITH THEIR NEEDS. I GUESS YOU MUST BE STRESSED OR SOMETHING. BUT I DO THINK YOU HAVE TIME TO READ MY LETTER FOR YOU, WOULDN'T YOU? (I THINK THAT'S THE PART I KNOW, HEHEHE).

ACTUALLY, I'VE BEEN WONDERING SO MANY TIMES HOW YOU LOOKED LIKE. IT GIVES ME A SORT OF MYSTERY TO IMAGINE YOU. DO YOU HAVE A MUSTACHE OR SOMETHING? I MEAN, GREAT LEADERS, I NOTICED THEY HAVE SUCH. OR, ARE YOU *GUMAWO*? WELL, I GUESS YOU'RE MORE THAN *GUMAWO* BECAUSE YOU'RE PERFECT. HEY, THAT'S NOT TRYING TO MAKE "*PASIPSIP*" TO YOU, EH? HONESTLY, I FEEL SO LIGHT WHEN WE TALK. AS IF I WERE ON A WHOLE DAY RETREAT WITH A CHILDHOOD FRIEND. BUT, I LIKED THE IDEA THAT YOU WERE SUPERBLY KIND AND GENTLE THAT EVEN THE MOST HORRIBLE PSYCHO WOULD CHANGE WITH JUST A WHISPER OF YOUR LOVE. I FEEL GUILTY, ACTUALLY. MANY TIMES I'VE ALWAYS TAKEN YOU FOR GRANTED. I AM REALLY DEMANDING, AND I MUST BE REMINDED OF IT. I ASK TOO MANY THINGS AND OFTEN TIMES JUST SIMPLY TO PLEASE MYSELF. THAT'S RUDE. BUT YOU NEVER GAVE UP ON ME. EVEN IF I WERE STUBBORN, EVEN TO THE POINT THAT IT IRRITATES OTHERS, YOU STILL TOOK TIME TO MOULD ME.

I REMEMBER ONE TIME, LORD, THAT WASN'T TOO LONG AGO. I PRAYED FOR CHOCOLATES. I THOUGHT IT WAS SWEET TO TASTE. YOU GAVE ME, BUT I WASN'T SATISFIED. I ASKED FOR MORE, AND FOUND AN ACCESS TO THE BIG BOX OF IT. IT WAS PLEASING REALLY; I LIKED EVERY SINGLE PIECE OF IT. I FINISHED THE WHOLE BOX. AND THOUGH I KNEW IT'D CAUSE ME TONSILLITIS, I THOUGHT, "IT'S NICE, WHY WAIT TO FINISH IT SLOWLY?" BUT SOON I FELT THERE WAS A THICKENING MUSCLE IN MY THROAT AND IT WAS HARD TO SWALLOW. I TRIED TO EASE THE PAIN, BUT THE MORE I TRIED, THE MORE AWFUL IT FELT. I CALLED ON YOU. I THOUGHT YOU'RE GOING TO SCOLD ME, LIKE THE REST OF THE OLD MEN DO. "WHY DID YOU DO IT?" THEY SAY; BUT I NEVER HEARD THAT FROM YOU. INSTEAD YOU TOOK ME AND SAID, "HEY! WHY DON'T WE TAKE A WALK?" I WAS A BIT SCARED AT THE START, I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO PUSH ME WITH WORDS ON YOUR LETTER BUT, AMAZINGLY, YOU NEVER DID MENTION A SINGLE WORD THAT PERTAINS TO IT.

THE MORE I READ YOUR LETTER, THE BETTER I'VE FELT. IT WAS AMAZING ACTUALLY. I NOTICED THAT, I NO LONGER FELT BAD IN THE THROAT. I NO LONGER FELT SIGNS OF THE TONSILLITIS I HAD. THERE WAS SOMETHING IN YOUR WORDS THAT MADE ME FEEL BETTER, AND MADE ME TRY TO AVOID THINGS THAT WOULD HARM ME.

EVEN IF I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU UNTIL NOW, I FEEL THAT YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND ME. YOU KNOW HOW VULNERABLE I AM TO THINGS THAT LOOK PRETTY AND TEMPTING. YOU KNOW VERY WELL HOW WEAK I AM. INSTEAD OF PUSHING ME AWAY BECAUSE I SELDOM LISTEN, YOU GAVE ME A CHANCE. WITH THE WORDS IN YOUR LETTER AND FOR THE COMPASSION I FEEL FROM YOU, I FEEL HEALED. I KNOW IN MIND AND HEART THAT YOU ARE THERE FOR ME. YOU ARE GOING TO DO EVERYTHING TO MAKE ME FEEL SAFE AND WARM.

ALL I WANT TO SAY IS, THANK YOU! THE WAY YOU'VE PROVEN TO ME THAT IF I ONLY RESPOND TO YOUR LETTER, READ AND OBEY THEM, I'D BE OK. THAT FELT GOOD. NOW I REALLY FEEL GOOD. NO LONGER DO I FEEL AWKWARD. I KNOW THAT WITH YOU, I'M ALL SAFE AND SOUND. THANK YOU, LORD. THAT REALLY FEELS GOOD. REALLY! I HOPE I COULD SEE YOU ONE DAY. AND WHEN I DO, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU THE BIGGEST BEAR HUG I COULD! SAYING "THANK YOU, LORD, I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR MORE."

FROM, THE CHILDISH GROWN UP WHO LOVES YOU A LOT,

LEN



Pagtining ng
PANAHO*n*

SA ABOT KAMAY NA MGA PANGARAP;
TILA PARUSANG WALANG HANGGAN
DALA'Y AGAM-AGAM, PAGKALITO AT KABIGUAN.

MADALAS INIIWASAN, NGUNIT HINDI MATATAKASAN,
MGA PAGSUBOK, TILA DAGOK;
NGUNIT TAGLAY ANG PANANAGUMPAY,
PAGBABAGONG NAHIHIMLAY
SA BANAYAD NA LAOT NG KARAGATAN NG BUHAY.

—*LAILANIE FRONDA*



ANG PAG-IBIG

NI GENE VICTOR DEL CASTILLO

LAHAT NG IYONG MABABASA DITO AY NAKABATAY SA AKING PAGKAINTINDI AT PAGKAUNAWA SA MGA IDEYA NA AKING NABASA AT MGA NATAMO SA AKING MGA KARANASAN SA BUHAY.

ANG PAG-ANINAW SA PAG-IBIG AY SUMASAKLAW SA MARAMING BAHAGI NG BUHAY. KAHIIT NA PANGKATAWAN O LIKHA NG DAMDAMIN NA KATUTUBONG KAUGALIAN MAN, KAYANG MASUPIL NG PAG-IBIG ANG ANUMANG HANGGANAN AT MAARING IPARAMDAM SA IYO ANG IBA'T-IBANG URI NG BAGAY NA HINDI MO AKALAING KAYA MONG MARAMDAMAN. NGUNIT BUMALIK MUNA TAYO SA PINAGBABATAYAN, ANO BA TALAGA ANG PAG-IBIG? SA MADALING SALITA, ANG PAG-IBIG AY MAY MARAMING KAHULUGAN. PAYAGAN MO AKONG BUMANGGIT NG KAUNTING PAGLALARAWAN UPANG MAPALAWAK ANG IYONG ISIPAN.

ANG PAG-IBIG AY ISANG DAMDAMING SINISIYASAT SA FILOSOPHIYA, RELIHIYON, AT LITERATURA, MALIMIT BILANG ROMANTIKONG PAG-IBIG, PANGKAPATID NA PAG-IBIG SA IBA, O PAG-IBIG SA DIOS. ISA PANG PAHIWATIG NG PAG-IBIG AY MAKARAMDAM NG MAGILIW NA PAGESINTA PARA SA ISANG TAO, TULAD NG ISANG KALAPIT NA KAMAG-ANAK O KAIBIGAN, O KATULAD NG ISANG LUGAR, ISANG HUWARAN, O HAYOP. ITO AY ISANG PAGDARAMA NG ROMANTIKO AT/O SEKSWAL NA PAGNANASA AT PANANABIK SA ISANG TAO. ITO RIN AY PAGPAPAKITA NG KABAITAN AT KAWANGAWA SA KANINO MAN. GAYA NG AKING NASABI, ANG PAG-IBIG AY MAYROONG MALAKING IMPLUWENSYA SA ASAL NG ISANG TAO.

SAPAGKAT AKO RIN AY UMIIBIG AT UMIIBIG, MAAARI KONG SABIHIN NA KAYA NITONG MAGING DAAN SA MGA PAG-PASYA, MGA OPINYON, MGA LUGAR, AT KAISIPAN NA DI KAKILA-KILALA. MAARING MAPUPUSPOS SA MGA POSIBILIDAD NA HINDI INAASAHANG MANGYARI SA ISANG KALAGAYANG KAGAYA NITO. MAASAHAN MONG MAYROONG IBA PANG MGA DAMDAMIN NA SASALI KAPAG IKAW AY UMIIBIG, KATULAD NG PAGKALITO AT GALIT. MARAMING DAHILAN ANG BINIBIGYANG PANSIN KAPAG IKA'Y NAGMAMAHAL, KATULAD NG MGA PANGUNAHING KAALAMAN TUNGKOL SA PINAG-UUSAPAN, MGA IMPLUWENSYA, MGA MALIWANAG NA PAGKAUNAWA, AT PERSONAL NA PAGKAKAGUSTO.

ANG PAG-IISIP NG ISANG TAONG UMIIBIG AY PANGKARANIWAN. KAHIIT NA IKAW AY NAKADARAMA NG PALAGIANG PAKIRAMDAM NG KALIGAYAHAN AT TUWA SA IYONG PUSO, MAYROON DING POSIBILIDAD NA MAGING IGNORANTE KA SA IBA PANG MGA BAHAGI NG IYONG BUHAY. KAGAYA NG SINASABI NG NAKAKARAMI, "ANG PAG-IBIG AY BULAG." ANG ISANG TAO AY DI KAYANG MAKAKITA LAMPAS SA MGA PAGPILI NA KANYANG NAGAGAWA. MARAMING NAGSASABI NA KAPAG IKAW AY UMIIBIG, IKAW AY NAGIGING TANGA AT WALANG-INGAT; NA ANG IYONG MGA PAGPILI NG GINAGAWA AY PABIGLA-BIGLA AT HINDI PINAG-IISIPAN. KAHIIT NA ITO MAN AY DI NAAANGKOP SA LAHAT, KARAMIHAN AY GANITO RIN ANG KINALALABASAN.

ANG PAG-IBIG AY ISANG PINAGMUMULAN NG INSPIRASYON. TINUTULUNGAN KA NITONG MAGSUMIKAP PARA SA ISANG TAO O BAGAY. INILALABAS NITO ANG PINAKAMAHUSAY NA PAGKATAO SA IYONG SARILI. ITO MAN AY MAHIRAP PANGASTIWAAN SA MGA ORAS-ORAS NGUNIT KUNG IKAW AY MAINGAT, MAUNAWAIN, MATIISIN, AT MARUNONG MAKINIG, ANG PAG-IBIG AY MAARING MAGING PINAKAMASAYANG PAKIRAMDAM NA IYONG MARARANASAN.

ANG PANANAMPALATYA

NI ALVINIL REY

MARAMING TAO NGAYON SA ATING KAPANAHUNAN NA NAGHANGAD NG KALIGTASAN. Kaligtasan sa fisik, emosyonal, mental, sosyal, at lalung-lalo na sa espirituwal. Kaya nga may iba't-bang turo o aral din ang lumalabas hinggil sa kaligtasan. Ngunit ang malaking katanungan ay papaano nga ba ang isang tao ay maliligtas? Posible bang ang isang kriminal o makasalanan ay makatanggap nito? Ano ang hakbang na kanyang gagawin?

Sa pamamagitan ng pananampalataya. Ang pananampalataya ay pakikipagrelasyon ng tao sa Dios. Ito ay siyang kapanatagan sa mga bagay na hinihintay. Ang katunayan sa bagay na di nakikita.

Mayroong nagtanong sa akin. “Nakita mo na ba ang Dios? Kung tunay ngang mayroong Dios, nasaan siya?” Ako’y napattig sa kanyang mga mata, at nagtanong rin sa kanya.

“Mayroon ka bang isip o utak?”

Ang tugon naman niya ay “Oo!”

At tinanong ko uli siya, “Nakita mo na ba ang iyong utak?”

“Hindi pa,” sagot niya.

At dali-dali kong sinabi, “Bakit naniniwala ka na may utak ka samantalang di mo pa ito nakikita?”

At ang lalaking ito ay tumalikod at umalis sa aking harapan.

Ang pananampalataya ay katunayan sa bagay na di nakikita. Gaya ng hangin, bagamat hindi ito nakikita, ito naman ay ating nararamdaman. Bagamat siya ay hindi natin nakikita, nararamdaman natin na gumagawa siya sa ating mga buhay.

Sa pamamagitan ng pananampalataya ay makakatamo tayo ng kaligtasan—kay Jesus na ating tagapagligtas, na umbig at nagligtas sa atin. Pinili Nya na magkatawang tao upang abutin ang lahat ng makasalan hanggang sa pagsasakrifisyo ng Kanyang buhay sa krus. Ginawa Nya ang sakrifisyong ito upang ang bawat isa ay di mapahamak at magkaroon ng buhay na walang hanggan.

Ngunit ang pananampalataya na ating pinanghahawakan ay dapat ding makita sa ating buhay. Ang pananampalatayang walang gawa ay patay. Matapos tayong iligtas ni Jesus sa ating mga kasalanan at pagkalooban ng buhay na walang hanggan ay dapat suklian natin ito ng pag-ibig sa Kanya. Sa pamamagitan ng pagsunod ay naipapahayag natin ang ating pag-ibig sa Kanya. Ngunit ang pagsunod sa kautusan ay hindi daan sa kaligtasan o ang paggawa ng mamabuting bagay.

Malinaw ang sinabi ng ating Panginoong Jesus na “Kung ako’y inyong iniibig, ay susundin ninyo ang aking mga utos.”

Ang susi para masunod natin ang kautusan ng Dios ay pag-ibig. Kung wala tayong pag-ibig sa Dios ay masasabi nating mahirap sundin ang kanyang mga kautusan. Ngunit, kung mayroon tayong pag-ibig kay Jesus ay posible na masunod natin ito. Bagamat ito ay mahirap, ito ay magagawa natin sapagkat ang pag-ibig ang kaganapan ng kautusan.

Kaya nga ang paniniwala, pagtitiwala, pag-sunod, pag-ibig, kapayapaan, kapaingahan, at paglilingkod sa ating Panginoon ay sangkap ng ating pananampalataya sa Dios. At ang bunga ng pananampalataya ay kaligtasan.

KAPALALUAN; KAAKIBAT NA PANGANIB NG KASAGANAAN

NI RODEL OCAMPO

ANG KAPALALUAN AY ISANG TUGONG PAG-UUGALI NA NAMUMUO AT NAGPAPATIBAY SA ISIPAN NA MAY LAYUNING MAITAAS ANG SARILI NANG HIGIT SA TUNAY NA KALAGAYAN NITO KAYSA NARARAPAT. ANG KAPALALUAN AY GAYA NG ISANG SALBABIDANG NAKALUTANG. ANG DAHLAN NG PAGLUTANG NITO AY SAPAGKAT MAYROONG HANGING PUMU-PUNO RITO.

ANG KASAGANAAN SA ISANG BANDA AY TUMUTUKOY DI LAMANG SA MATERYAL NA PAG-AARI. SARLAW RIN NITO ANG POSISYON SA LIPUNAN, ANG TAGLAY NA KAPANGYARIHAN AT YAONG NAISAKATUPARANG MGA PANGARAP.

KARANIWAN, ANG KATUWIRAN AT PANANAW NG ISANG TAO'Y MAY KASIMPLIHAN, DI AROGANTE, MAPAGPAKUMBABA, BUKAS SA MGA SUHESTYON, MAY PAGGALANG SA PANANAW AT KATUWIRAN NG IBA, MAUNAWAIN AT BUKAS ANG KALOOBAN SA PAGLAGO. SUBALI'T ANG ISANG TAO NA LANGO SA DIWA NG KAPALALUAN AY KARANIWAN NANG NAGPAPAMALAS NG MGA KATANGIANG TALIWAS SA MGA NABANGGIT.

MULA SA SIMPLENG PAGKAKILALA, HABANG INAABOT ANG MGA PANGARAP SA BUHAY, ANG POSISYON SA SOSYODAD AT ANG KAPANGYARIHANG INAASAHAN, HANGGANG SA KATUPARAN NG MGA HANGARING YAON, LAKIP NITO'Y ANG UNTI-UNTING PAGBABAGO NG KAISIPAN AT ANG PAGGAMIT NITO. ANG PROSESONG ITO'Y DAHAN-DAHAN AT HALOS DI NAPAPANSIN NGUNITI TYAK.

SA GANITONG SITWASYON, ANG GAWI NG PAMUMUHAY AY NAGBABAGO RIN. BAGO ANG TAGUMPAY AT KASAGANAAN, ANG SIMPLE AT PAYAPANG BUHAY AY AYOS NA. WALANG PAGMAMALAKI AT MAYAMAN SA SIMPATYA NG SOSYODAD—HIGIT SA LAHAT, KONTENTO SA BUHAY. DATAPUWA'T SA PANAHONG NASA KASAGANAAN, AY MAS NAGIGING MAHIRAP ANG PASANIN SA BUHAY AT MAS MAHIRAP LUMINGON SA PINAGMULAN. ANG PANG-UNAWA'T PAGKILALA SA MGA TAONG NASA DATING KALAGAYAN AY KUMIKITID.

ANG WIKA NI E.G. WHITE, “SA KALAGITNAAN NG KASAGANAAN AY MAY NAKAAMBANG PANGANIB AT SA KASAYSAYAN NG PANAHON, ANG KAYAMANAN AT KALUWALHATIAN AY LAGING MAY KALAKIP NA PELIGRO SA KAPAKUMBABAAN AT ESPIRITUALIDAD. DI ANG TANGANG WALANG LAMAN ANG MAHIRAP NA DALHIN, KUNDI YAONG PUNO HANGGANG LABI ANG NANGANGAILANGAN NG MAINGAT NA PAGBALANSE.”

ANO NGA BA ANG KAUGNAYAN NG KAPALALUAN SA KASAGANAAN? BAKIT NGA BA ITO NAGING PANGANIB? ANO BA ANG IMPLIKASYON NITO SA SARILI?

SA UNANG YUGTO NG PAGHAHARI NI HARING SOLOMON AY KINIKILALA NIYA NANG HIGIT SA LAHAT ANG KANYANG KALAGAYAN BILANG BAGONG HARI. SA KANYANG PANALANGIN AY SINAYSAY NIYA SA DIOS ANG KANYANG KALAGAYAN, “SIYA'Y

MUNTING BATA AT WALANG KARUNUNGAN.” AT ANG KASAGANAAN NG BIYAYA NG DIOS, YAMAN AT KATANYAGAN AY IDINAGDAG SA KANIYA. DATAPUWA'T SA KALAGITNAAN NG KANYANG PAGHAHARI'Y NAKITA NYA ANG KANYANG KARUNUNGAN AT ANG KAPANGYARIHAN NG KANYANG IMPLUWENSYA NA ANUPA'T INISIP NYANG GAWIN ANG GAWAN NG PANGINOON SA KANYANG SARILING KAPARAANAN. ANG KANYANG HAKBANGING ITO'Y HUMANTONG SA PAGKAPANSIN NYA SA KUNG ANONG ASSET MAYROON SYA AT KUNG PAANO NYA MAHIHIGITAN ANG IBANG MGA KAHAIRAN SA KALUWALHATIAN.

ANG SAMA-SAMANG KARANASANG ITO'Y NAGHATID SA PAGKALULA NYA SA KATAASAN NG KANYANG POSISYON AT KALUWALHATIAN.

UNANG NAAAEKTUHAN NITO'Y ANG RELASYON NA SYANG SENTRO NG SOSYAL NA BAGHI NG BUHAY. ANG PAKIKIPAGKAPWA AY NAPAPASAPANGANIB DAHIL POSIBLENG MAGKAROON NG MARAMING KAAWAY DAHIL SA MARAMING PAGTATAKWIL AT PAGPULA SA KARAPATAN NG IBA. IKALAWA'Y ANG EFEKTO SA MORALIDAD, ANG PAGKILALA AT PAGGALANG SA IBA'Y BINABALEWALA AT LAKIP NITO, ANG DIGNIDAD AY NAWAWALA RIN.

BAGAMAN ANG KASAGANAAN AY MAY KAAKIBAT NA PANGANIB, MAYRON NAMANG DEPENDENSANG PWEDENG GAMITIN UPANG ITO'Y MAIWASAN.

UNA SA LAHAT AY ANG PAGTANAW NG UTANG NA LOOB. WIKA NGA NG ISANG SALAWIKAIN, “AND HINDI LUMINGON SA PINANGGALINGAN AY DI MAKAKARATING SA PARORUNON.” ITO'Y NAGBABADYA NG KAHALAGAHAN NG PAGBABALIK-TANAW O PAGPANSIN SA PINAGMULAN UPANG WALANG PUWANG PARA MADAMA ANG KAPALALUAN.

IKALAWA, ANG FOKUS NG ISIPAN AY NAKAKAHALAGA SAPAGKAT DITO NAKASALALAY ANG BAWAT AKSYON AT PAGTANAW SA KUNG ANO ANG MAKABUBUTI SA KAPWA SA GAYO'Y MAIWASAN ANG PAGFOKUS SA SARILI, NA SIYANG UGAT NG KAPALALUAN. SA HALIP, ANG MAGING FOKUS NATIN AY SI CRISTO NA SIYANG HALIMBAWA NANG TUNAY NA KAPAKUMBABAAN. SA BIBLIA AY SINABI NA BAGAMAN SI JESUS AY NASA ANYONG DIOS “BAGKUS HINUBAD NIYA ITO AT NAG-ANYONG ALIPIN.” ITO ANG TUNAY NA KAPAKUMBABAAN.

ANG PANGHULI AY ANG MAGING REYALISTIK. ANG PAGLALAGAK NG ISIP SA REYALIDAD NA ANG BUHAY NG TAO'Y MAY HANGGANAN. SIYA'Y ALABOK LAMANG AT HIGIT SA LAHAT, GAYA NG SINABI NI JOB, “HUBAD AKONG LUMABAS SA SINAPUPUNAN NG AKING INA, HUBAD AKONG BABALIK.” ITO'Y NAGTUTURO NA SA LUPANG ITO'Y WALANG IPAGMAMAPURI ANG TAO SA KANYANG SARILI.

SA PAG-ISIP NAGMULA ANG KAPALALUAN, DITO RIN MAGMUMULA UPANG MANAULI ANG KAPAKUMBABAAN. AT SA PAMAMAGTAN NG WALANG-AMPAT NA PAGTITIG KAY CRISTO, ANG TAO'Y NABABAGO, AYON SA KANYANG WANGIS—MAPAGPAKUMBABA.

MAY KONTROL NG BUHAY KO; SINO NGA BA?

NI RODEL OCAMPO

KUNG DI LAMANG MAHIRAP ANG AMING BUHAY, SANAY NAKATAPOS DIN AKO NG PAG-

AARAL. KUNG MAYROON LAMANG AKONG PAGKAKAT-AON NA MAKASUMPONG NG TRABAHO, SANAY MAAYOS ANG AMING PAMUMUHAY, KAYA LANG WALANG MAGTIWALA SA 'KIN. KUNG DI LAMANG NIYA GINAWA ANG MGA BAGAY NA 'YON SANAY KAMI PA RIN, AT KAPWA KAMI MASAYA, MATAGUMPAY AT MAY KUMPLETONG BUHAY. ANG MGA KATAGANG ITO'Y TULAD LAMANG NG NAKAPARAMING SISI AT PANINISI NG TAO NA KUNG KANYA LAMANG LUBOS NA SISIYASATIN AY MASUSUMPUNGAN NYANG ANG KANYANG MGA KAMAY AY NAGAGAPOS NG MAPANIL NA TANIKALA NG MGA NAKAPANGINGLABOT NA KARANASAN.

SA ISANG BANDA'Y NATURUAN TAYO, AT SA 'TING PAGKATUTO AY WALANG SAKIT TAYONG NA NARAMDAMAN, AT PAGKATAPOS NITO'Y NANIWALA TAYO, AT SA PANINIWALA NATI'Y NAPAPAN-SIN NATING NASASAKTAN TAYO. OO, INIISIP NATING TAYO'Y GANITO NGAYON DAHIL SA MGA PANLABAS NA SANHI; SOSYODAD, MAGULANG, RELIHYON, MGA GURO, MGA KARANASAN NG PAGTATAGUMPAY AT KABIGUAN, FISIKAL NA KAANYUAN AT MARAMI PANG IBA. MARAMING NAWAWALAN NG KONTROL SA KANILANG BUHAY, AT SA KANILANG SARILI DAHIL SA PANINIWALANG ANG NANGYAYARI SA KASALUKUYAN AY BUNGA NG KANILANG KAHAPON. MAYROONG ILANG PANGYAYARI NA ANG PISIKAL NA KAANYUAN AY NAGING BUNTUNAN NG SISI KUNG BAKIT SILA'Y MAY MABABANG KUMPIYANSA SA SARILI, NA DAHILAN NG PAGKADAMA NILA NG INFERYORIDAD. ATING MAKIKITA NA MALIMIT NILANG MAGING KASABIHANG, "KUNG AKO LAMANG AY NAGKARON NG MAGANDANG KAANYUAN, DISIN SANAY KASIYA-SIYA ANG BUHAY." SUBALIT SA PAGPILI NILA NG GANOONG ISIPAN AY INILULUBOG NILA ANG TAKBO NG KANILANG BUHAY—NA MINSAN LAMANG NILANG IPAMUMUHAY—SA DIREKSYON NG KASALATAN AT KABIGUAN NA WALANG KAKAYANANG BUMANGON.

ANG TAWAG SA MGA TAONG MAY GANITONG BEHEYYVOR AY "BLAME RECEIVERS." MAYROONG APAT NA URI ANG BLAME RECEIVERS: UNA AY SILANG NAGPAPALIWANAG NG KANILANG DAMDAMIN, ISIPAN, AT AKSYON SA PAMAMAGITAN NG PAGPAPATUNGKOL NG SISI SA ISANG KALPUNAN, NA KUNG SAAN DI NILA MAHIHWALAY ANG KANILANG SARILI (GROUP BLAME). ITO, KADALASAN AY MAKIKITA AT MARIRING SA MARAMING PILIPINONG SUMISISI SA GOBYERNO SA MAGULONG LIPUNANG DAHILAN NG KANILANG KAHIRAPAN. ANG IKALAWA AY ANG URI NG MGA TAONG HUMAHANAP NG DAHILAN NG KANILANG NADARAMA, NAIISIP, IKINKILOS AT IPINAG-UUGALI SA PAMAMAGITAN NG PAGPAPATUNGKOL NG SISI SA IBANG TAO (OTHER-PERSON BLAME). ANG IKATLO NAMAN AY 'YONG MGA TAONG ANG SINISISI AY AND KONDISYON NG LUGAR, PANAHON, MGA ALITUNTUNIN, AT MGA BAGAY NA WALANG BUHAY, BILANG RESPONSABLE SA KANILANG KASALUKUYANG KONDISYON (THING BLAME). HALIMBAWA NITO AY ANG PAGKABUGNOT NA ANILA'Y DAHIL SA MABAGAL NA USAD NG TRAPIKO. ANG IKAAPAT NA

URI AY ANG MGA TAONG UMAAKO AT PUMAPASAN NG LAHAT NA RESPONSIBILIDAD AT PAGSISI (SELF-BLAME)—ITO 'YONG KADALASAN AY NAGBUBUNGA NG "SELF-PITY" O PAGKAAWA SA SARILI.

ANG SISI O ANG PAGPAPATUNGKOL NITO AY ISANG MORAL NA PAGHATOL NA HUMAHANTONG SA NEGATIBONG PAG-EVALWEYNT NG SARILI, NA KASABAY NITO'Y ANG DI PAGKILOS, O ANG KAWALAN NG PANIMULANG HAKBANG TUNGO SA PAGBABAGO. KAY DAMING TAO ANG NAG-AAKALANG SILA ANG MAY KONTROL NG KANILANG BUHAY, INIISIP NILANG SILA ANG MASUSUNOD SA BAWAT NAISIN NILA. MARAMI ANG NAGSASABING SILA ANG "BOSS" NG KANILANG SARILI SAPAGKA'T HAWAK NILA ANG TIMON NG KANILANG BUHAY AT WALANG IBANG PWEDENG MAKABAWI SA KANILA NG KONTROL. SUBALIT SA PANGUNGUSAP NA NABANGGIT AY KALAHATING BAHAGI LAMANG ANG TOTOO. SAPAGKA'T MALIBAN NA KUNG KILALA NIYA AT NAGIGING REYALISTIK SIYA SA TUNAY NIYANG KALAGAYAN, AY DI NIYA MAKUKUHA ANG KONTROL SA SARILI.

SA TUNAY NA KONSEPTO NG BUHAY AY NALALAMAN NATIN NA ANG PAGKILALA AT PAGTANGAP SA RESPONSIBILIDAD AY SIYANG MAS PRODUKTIBONG HAKBANG KAYSA PANINISI SA KAPWA, SA SITWASYON, BAGAY, AT KAPWA TAO. KAPAG ANG ISANG TAO AY RESPONSABLE, SIYA AY GUMAGAWANG MAY TAPANG AT PAG-ASA, NA HINDI NATITIGILAN SA PANANAKOT NG MGA PANGYAYARI. SA KABILANG IBAYO NAMAN, SILANG ANG BUHAY AY PUNO NG PANINISI AT PAG-AKO SA MGA SISI AY NAKADARAMA NG PAGGiging MAY-SALA, PAG-AALALA, PAG-KAHIYA, AT PAG-AALINLANGAN. SA GANITONG KALAGAYAN AY GINAGAMIT NILA ANG KANILANG BUONG LAKAS AT ENERHIYA SA PAGTUTUON LAMANG NG SISI SA KANILANG SARILI AT SA IBA SA HALIP NA GAMITIN ITO SA PAGLAYA NILA MULA SA BITAG NG WALANG KWENTANG PANINISI. ATING UNA NANG NABANGGIT NA ANG PAGTUTUON NG SISI SA SARILI AY NAGRERESULTA SA SELF-PITI, ANG PAGKILALA NAMAN SA RESPONSIBILIDAD AY NAGRERESULTA SA PAG-GAWA AT PAGBABAGO.

PANGHULI, ISANG BAGAY LAMANG ANG DAPAT TANDAAN, ANG PAGPAPAHINTULOT SA MGA KARANASAN NA PUMIGIL SA ATIN UPANG KALALANIN ANG RESPONSIBILIDAD AT TUNGUHIN ANG PAGLAGO SA PAMAMAGITAN NG PAGKAABALA SA PANINISI—SA SARILI MAN O HINDI—AY MALINAW NA PALATANDAAN NG PAGSURO NG KONTROL SA SARILI. DATAPUWA'T MAY DALAWANG DIREKSYON TAYONG MAPAGPIPIILAN, ITO'Y ANG MAGING PRODAKTIV O ANG MAGING INTAK! ITO'Y SAPAGKA'T SINUMAN, AT ANUMAN ANG PINATU-TUNGKULAN NATIN NG SISI AY 'YON ANG BINIBIGYAN NATIN NG KAPANGYARIHANG MAG-KONTROL SA BUHAY NATIN.

IKAW, SINO ANG MAY KONTROL NG BUHAY MO?

MINSAN, ISANG HAPON

NI RJA

KLASE KO SA HUMAN BEHAVIOR, GUSTONG-GUSTO KO!

GUSTONG-GUSTO KONG MAKINIG SA TEACHER KO KASI INTERESANTE AT ANG GALING NIYANG MAG-EXPLAIN. KAYA LANG, IT'S HUMAN NATURE I GUESS, NA HABANG NAKIKINIG, MAYROONG MGA BAGAY-BAGAY NA NAGLALAYO SA AKING ATTENTION.

SA DISCUSSION NI MA'AM, TALAGANG NAKATUTOK ANG MGA MATA AT TAINGA KO SA KANYA. BAKIT HINDI? EH, BUKOD SA MAGANDA ANG BODY NIYA, ENGLISHERA PA ANG "LOLA"! ANG TARAY NOH? ENGLISH SIYA NG ENGLISH DOON SA HARAPAN. KAHIT SOBRANG INIT NG PANAHON—SUMMER CLASS KASI—BIRA PA RIN NG BIRA! HINDI MAN LANG INIINDA 'YONG NAMA-MASA-MASA NIYANG FACE DAHIL SA PAWIS.

NAKIKINIG AKO NOON NANG BIGLANG DUMAMPI ANG MALANDING SIMOY NG HANGIN SA KALULUWA KONG MAPUSOK. GALING SA LABAS, MULA SA MGA PUNO NG AKASYA, PAPSOK SA BINTANANG NASA TAPAT KO—SA PAVORITO KONG PWESTO, AKO AY KINATAGPO—AT TILA BUMUBULONG SA 'KIN NG AWITIN...LULLABY.

NARAMDAMAN KO NA NAMAN ANG LAGI KONG NARARAMDAMAN. WALA AKONG NAGAWA. KUNG PWEDE LANG SUMIGAW SA GITNA NG KLASE PARA MAWALA ITO, GAGAWIN KO. I HATE THIS FEELING! NAKIPAGLABAN SIYA SA AKIN. AT DAHIL TAO LANG AKO AT DI KO NA MAKAYANAN, SINO BA AKO PARA HINDI SUMUKO.

BUMIGAT ANG MGA TALUKAP NG AKING MGA MATA, PARANG PAGOD NA PAGOD AKO AT NA-HYPNOTIZE SA NANGYARI. HINDI KO NA NAIINTINDIHAN ANG MGA SINASABI NI MA'AM. PAHINA NA NANG PAHINA ANG BOSES NIYA. NAGFE-FADE-OUT PARANG OUTRO SA ISANG MELODRAMANG KANTA. PALABO NANG PALABO ANG TINGIN KO SA KANYA. PARA NA AKONG NAKATINIGIN SA AQUARIUM NA MAY TUBIG NA DI NAPALITAN SA LOOB NG ISANG TAON. PARANG NAWAWALA NA AKO SA SARILI KO, HINDI KO NA MAKONTROL.

PARA LABANAN ANG NARARAMDAMAN, KUMUHA AKO SA BAG KO NG PAPEL AT BALLPEN AT SINUBUKAN KONG KONTROLIN ANG UTAK KO AT KAMAY. DI KO AKALAIN NA ITO'Y MAGIGING ISANG MALAKING PAGKAKAMALI. TUMITIG AKO SA PAPEL NANG BIGLANG TULUYANG NAGDILIM ANG PANINGIN KO.

NARIRINIG KO PA RIN ANG BOSES NI MA'AM PERO HINDI KO NA TALAGA MAINTINDIHAN. KUNG ANU-ANO NA 'YONG NAKIKITA KO, HALU-HALO, PARA AKONG NANONOOD NG TV NA PALIPAT-LIPAT ANG CHANNEL. MATAGAL NA GANON ANG PANGYAYARI. HANGGANG SA BUMIGAY DIN SI INDAY...NABITWAN KO ANG BALLPEN NA AKING HAWAK. ANG PAGBAGSAK NITO'Y TILA UGONG NG ISANG ATOMIC BOMB SA HIROSHIMA SA AKING PANDINIG. NAYANIG ANG AKING MGA SYNAPSES. AT DAHIL DON, BUMALIK AKO SA AKING KAMALAYAN.

NAIINTINDIHAN KO NA ULIT SI MA'AM. PARA AKONG MAY BAGONG BUHAY AT BAGONG PAGKAUNAWA SA MGA BAGAY-BAGAY SA AKING KAPALIGIRAN. TUMINGIN AKO SA PAPEL NA DAPAT SANA'Y SUSULATAN KO. AKING NAPANSIN NA PARANG MAY MGA TAGAKTAK NG LIKIDO SA MUKHA NG AKING MALINIS NA PUTING PAPEL. INISIP KO KUNG SAAN NANGGALING ANG BASA ROON. DAHIL BA SA PAWIS? MAINIT SA ROOM, BAKA AKO'Y PINAWISAN AT TUMULO... O BAKA, MAY UMIHI NA BUTIKING ITIM SA KISAME AT NAPAG-TRIPANG ITAPAT SA PAPEL KO ANG KANYANG LIKIDONG BASURA. AKIN KASING NALAMAN, AYON SA AKING PANANALIKSIK SA BAWAT CLASSROOM NA AKING NAPASUKAN, NA ANG MGA BLACK NA BUTIKI AY MAY KAKAYANANG UMIHI SA TAPAT NG MGA ESTUDYANTENG NATUTULOG SA LOOB NG KANILANG KLASE. EITHER WAYS, HINDI KO NA PINAG-ABALAHANG ALAMIN ANG DAHILAN. DAHIL SA KAKAISIP KO, BIGLANG NAGRING ANG BELL. TIME'S UP NA PALA. NA DISMISS ANG AMING KLASE AT DALI-DALI AKONG TUMAKBO PALABAS PAPUNTA SA SUNOD KONG KLASE. MALAYU-LAYO KASI ANG LALAKARIN—FROM COB-18 TO EDUC-1 WITH MY FAVORITE TEACHER ATTY. SAN JOAQUIN.

NASA LABAS NA AKO NG KLASE NANG MAYROONG GRUPO NG MGA BABAE NA NAGKUKUWENTUHAN HABANG NAGLALAKAD. NASA LIKOD NILA AKO AT DINIG NA DINIG KO ANG HAGALPAK NG TAWANAN NILA DAHIL DAW SA ISANG KAKLASE NILANG NAKATULOG SA LOOB NG KLASE. AT HABANG NATUTULOG, AY TUMUTULO ANG LAWAY AT NAGISING LANG DAHIL NAGULAT SA PAGKABAGSAK NG BALLPEN NA HAWAK NITO. ANG TAWANAN NILA'Y LAGPAS NG CORRIDORS NG BUILDING. NABIGLA AKO SA AKING MGA NARINIG KAYA WALA AKONG NAGAWA KUNDI MAPATIGIL AT MAPAISIP...\$%&! BASA ANG LABI KO...

SORI, NAPADAAN LANG!

NI THE OTHER JUDY ABBOTT

KANINA, UMIYAK AKO.

HINDI KO TALAGA NAPIGILAN. MAHIRAP KASI. MASAKIT SA LALAMUNAN AT MASIKIP SA PUSO. PARANG BOMBANG SASABOG NA HINDI. MINSAN, INIISIP KO, SADYA BANG MAY MGA TAONG KAHIIT WALANG BALAT SA PUWET AY BINABATBAT NG KAMALASAN?

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS. GRABE. FIRST CLASS KO, 7:30. NAGISING AKO, 15 MINUTES BEFORE 8:00 AM. SA SOBRANG PAGKATARANTA KO, NAKALIMUTAN KO NGA PALANG NASA ITAAS YUNG BED KO AT EKSAKTONG PAGBABA KO, MALING PAA PA YUNG NAITAPAK KO. ARUY!!! PERO, HINDI AKO NA-DISCOURAGE. NAISIP KO, PAG-SUBOK LANG YUN. DAPAT MAG-ISIP NG POSITIVE. PAGPASOK KO SA COMFORT ROOM, ANAK NG NUTRI BUN! AND GRIP0'Y NANUNUYO NA SA KATIGANGAN NG MABIYAYANG LAMIG NG TUBIG. AT HINDI PA YUN ANG MATINDI. KAHIIT ANG TIMBA, NI ISANG PATAK, IPINAGKAIT PA SA MALANGIS KONG MUKHA NA NAGHIHINTAY SA HILAMOS. NO CHOICE 'TOL. PAANO NA ITO?

SINUYOD NG AKING MINUMUTANG MGA MATA ANG PALIGID. NATANAW NG KALIWA KONG MATA ANG ISANG KUMIKINANG NA SAGOT SA AKING KUNSUMISYON—ISANG BOTE NG AUP SILVER SPRING MINERAL WATER! HINATI KO ANG LAMAN NG BOTE SA TATLO: PANGHILAMOS NG MUKHA, PANGMUMOG AT PANGBASA NG BUHOK. PRESTO! READY FOR SCHOOL NA AKO!

HIMALA NGA EH. PAGDATING KO SA SCI-ANNEX, Rm 203, WALA AKONG NAKITA NI ISANG BUHAY NA NILALANG. PERO, PAGKATAPOS NG MGA ILANG MINUTONG PAGHIHINTAY NG MGA SUSUNOD NA KAGANAPAN, MAY SUMITSIT SA AKING BANDANG LIKURAN. UNTI-UNTI KONG BINALING ANG AKING PANINGIN SA PINANGGALINGAN NG SUTSOT. SA LIKURAN KO'Y NAKATAYO ANG ISANG NILALANG. BAKAS SA KANYANG PAGMUMUKA ANG KABALISAAN AT ANG LOOKS NG ISANG TUTANG NALILIGAW. SI BOY SUTSOT, ISA SA MGA KLASMEYTS KONG PROFESSIONAL LATECOMER DIN, TULAD KO. HE TOLD ME NA MAAGA RAW KAMING NA-DISMISS. BUT I DOUBT. SIGURO, HINDI RIN NIYA NAABUTAN YUNG KLASSE NAMIN. HE! HE! HE! PINUNA PA AKO NG MORONG. ANIYA, “KAW KASI, TATLONG ORAS KA YATA MALIGO KAYA LAGI KANG LATE.” NAISIP KO NA LANG, “KUNG ALAM LANG NG BOPLOGS NA 'TO NA PROPS LANG YUNG NASA BUHOK KO; ONE-THIRD NG TUBIG MULA SA BOTE NG AUP SILVER SPRING MINERAL WATER.” IBA NA TALAGA KAPAG NATURAL ANG KAGANDAHAN, NAPAGKAKAMALANG NALIGO KAHIIT HINDI. EWWW!

THE DAY MOVED ON NA PARANG AS USUAL. PUMASOK AKO SA SUNOD NA KLASSE UPANG MATULOG FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES AT GUMISING NANG MALAPIT NANG MAG-BELL AT DALI-DALING PINUNASAN ANG NALAWAYANG DESK. PAGKATAPOS, LUNCH; PUMUNTA MULI SA CAFETERIA UPANG MAKIPAG-MEET SA MGA VERY FRIENDLY WORKERS AND STUDENTS DUN. BUT BEFORE YOU CAN SEE THEM FACE-TO-FACE, BINUNO KO MUNA ANG HALOS WALANG PATID NA PILA FOR 30 MINUTES. MATAPOS MAKAPAMILI NG MAKAKAIN, SUNOD NA BINIGYAN NG PANSIN ANG WALANG KAMATAYANG TOKWA, GLUTEN AT VEGEMEAT. LUMABAS AKO NG CAFETERIA NA NANGANGALAY ANG PANGA SA KANGUNGUYA NG TSINELAS AT GOMA; AT HUWAG KALILIMUTAN ANG LIBRENG PERFUME, “EU DE CAFAMOY HUBAHIHI.” DAHIL SA MEDYO NAKAKAHILONG AMOY SA CAF, UMUWI AKO SA DORM AT NATULOG PERO GINISING LANG NG KONSENSYA PARA PUMASOK KAHIIT LATE...SO GOES THE HAPPY CYCLE OF MY STUDENT LIFE...

LINYA NG ESTUDYANTENG TULAD KO: “BUHAY PA RIN”. ITO ANG KWENTO NG MGA BIKTIMA NG COINCIDENCE AT NG DESTINY (ABA, MAKATA). ITO ANG DINOKUMENTONG KASAYSAYAN NG MGA ESTUDYANTENG TINAGURI-ANG...AUPPIANS.

KANINA, UMIYAK AKO. HINDI KO TALAGA NAPIGILAN. MAHIRAP KASI. MASAKIT SA LALAMUNAN AT MASIKIP SA PUSO. BAKIT NGA BA AKO UMIYAK? HMMM...NAKALIMUTAN KO NA. SA SUSUNOD NA LANG KAPAG NAALALA KO. NAPADAAN LANG KASI AKO.

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TAPOS
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