



the **Review**
magazine

DECEMBER 2006

Message from the President



In a similar page of this publication last year, I deliberately spoke about the commercialization and loss of the true meaning of Christmas. I risk being clichéd when I choose to discuss the true meaning and purpose of Christmas in a student publication. But my mind and heart say I have to because this is the topic most students and readers of the publication need to read.

We have indeed lost touch of the true essence and purpose of Christmas. Most of us have forgotten the very reason why there is such a celebration at the end of the year. When we go to the shopping malls, when we see movies and when we try to roam around the city at night time, we often find the superficiality of Christmas as depicted by the colored lights, glittering decorations, new shoes and clothes, and not to forget, the luscious *Noche Buena* and Christmas lunch.

The true meaning of Christmas is not about man loving man – or, if you were confused, human loving human. The true meaning of Christmas is about God loving man. It is a time when God manifested His righteousness to mankind through His son Jesus Christ. Christmas is the season of the year most of us look forward to. It is during this time that we celebrate the greatest gift that has been given to us.

Christmas has its own meaning to different people, though. For many of us, it is a time to reflect on whatever their Christian faith means and for others, it is simply a good opportunity to relax with friends and family. For everyone though, it is a time to reflect on the past, and to look to the future with confidence. Whatever it is, we still have to look back to the core of the celebration – the Messiah and this is more important than anything else.

Northwestern has indeed been so blessed this year amidst the never-ending crisis of the country. We have prevailed and it is something that we have to be thankful and joyful this year. We look forward to a more prosperous and bountiful year ahead. It is with great hope that we will be able to overcome this new set of challenges and opportunities so that we could move on and be more successful.

The season requires us all to say a sincere prayer that God will continue to shower us His blessings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben A. Nicolas". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ben A. Nicolas



the **Review**

OFFICIAL STUDENT PUBLICATION
OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

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A word from the Editor

For decades, there is no doubt that Christmas is still the greatest celebration in the Christian world—but it is all because of obedience and sacrifice.

Consider the sacrifice and obedience of Joseph and Mary. They already had plans of getting married until one day an angel of the Lord appeared to Mary bringing her 'good news' that she will bear a child, and will give birth to a son and she will call Him "Jesus".

The 'good news' troubled Mary. Why not? She is a virgin and she will bear a child out of wedlock. Mary must have thought of the possibilities to happen. First, Joseph will break up with her. Second, she will lose her integrity as a woman. And third, she will face the punishment practiced by the Jews—she will be 'stoned to death', a punishment for a woman caught in the act of adultery. Despite the dilemma, Mary did not refuse, rather she disregarded her personal ambition when she said, "Be it unto me according to your word."

Joseph, on his part, did not turn his back on Mary. He even made way for their escape. He took the responsibility of protecting Mary from the hands of the people. He stood beside her until she delivered the baby in a manger.

In life, there are things that we need to sacrifice for the good of other people. Sometimes, we need to let go of our personal ambitions for others.

The essence of Christmas is not on gifts wrapped with expensive and colorful papers, Christmas trees with extravagant decorations and multi-colored lights, mouth-watering dishes, and melodious Christmas songs. Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of the one and only Savior Jesus Christ.

His birth was his entry into this mortal world. Without his birth, there

will be no salvation and redemption of sins in this world. Without Joseph and Mary who did a great sacrifice, then prophecy would still remain a prophecy!

If not for sacrificing His own will when he said "not my will but yours be done" there would be no taste of mercy and grace.

Shedding off our personal vested interest is perhaps the best thing we could ever do this Christmas. Each day, we must put God first, others second and ourselves last.

Joseph and Mary made a sacrifice for the good of the man, something that we should thank God. They set aside their personal goals and looked beyond the circumstances they were to face.

We cannot do more what Jesus did. Since He is the reason why we celebrate Christmas, pause and think of what sacrifice you could do, not for yourself, not for the few but for the many.

More than our sacrifice is our obedience to do the will of the Father. Nothing is more significant than to kneel at His footstool and seek direction and guidance from Him.

When the Magis visited Jesus in Bethlehem, they brought with them precious gifts – gold, incense and myrrh. Expensive gifts! Simply because Jesus deserves the best.

Let us come before Him, just as we are this Christmas. Let us take off our masks and be ourselves and experience His warm embrace. Despite of who we are, there is someone who is willing to give us a hug this Christmas. There is someone who understands every detail of our life. Even in our lowest moments, we have reasons to celebrate Christmas because the joy of celebration is not motivated by material things but all because of the greatest love of God.



Fernando Agudo

Carpe Diem

Spice up your life Enyong!

“Life isn’t something we have forever; every passing moment is an opportunity to make the most out of it.”

It flatters me that every time the university conducts an outreach program, I am always chosen along with other students from the different colleges to join the activity. To be with students of other colleges, as well as teachers and faculty, is very inspiring. Somehow it is an avenue for students to have informal discussion with their teachers. It also serves as invisible bridge between students of different colleges.

Riding on the NWU jeep bound for San Juan, Ilocos Sur, I had the chance to be with three students of the College of Business Education – Vermalyn Marucot, Kristian Pascual, and Bheverly Garo. It was the first time that I met them and I guess it was their first time to be exposed with such activity. The shyness was there when they stood in front of the high school students we first visited to “sell the school.” They later overcome their shyness. Armed with their guitar, they inspired students of other schools with their talents. We actually have lots of talents in the school yet undiscovered. My point is, students from different colleges can blend well given the opportunity. We also had fun with the instructors who came with us. You cannot feel the ‘superior’ factor. In fact they encouraged us to be more courageous.

Our conversation would lead to sharing our sentiments like the increase

of school fees. But at the end of the discussion, we would still agree that our love for Northwestern University is the reason why we make ourselves available for the outreach program.

I am not complaining for being one of the students tapped for the outreach program. I just wonder where the ‘image models’ have gone. And next time, not the NWU jeep please! Thank you!

~o~

While browsing all the stories filed by the staff and other contributors for this Christmas magazine issue of the paper, I was bewildered to discover the different themes. I almost fell on my chair, weird. The stories filed tackled death, *embalmer’s* and *sepulturero’s* life. Others have submitted stories about love (the undying plot of a story), family relationship and “stolen” childhood. Someone also filed a story about living with rats. One story also tackled a pair of shoe. It was really, really weird and it was a torture.

I had to rationalize and understand every piece. Could it be the recent tuition fee increase, as well as the internet fee and other fee increases? Perhaps not. Maybe they were so attached with the Filipino and Korean *telenovelas* they watch. Or it has something to do with their hectic school schedule, so a “*que sera sera*, what ever will, will be” story will do. Not even. Some of the stories were actually personal experiences. I realized that people have diverse experiences on this face of the earth. And these experiences may either be a make or break for one’s self.

Could it be that Christmas is already a cliché? That’s something that scares me much – to forget the essence of Christmas!

~o~

I never had the chance to explain why I used the words *Carpe Diem* in my column.

Carpe Diem is a phrase from a Latin poem by Horace (Odes 1.11); its translation is ‘seize the day’. It has been used throughout the history of literature,

from Socrates and Plato to the current English classroom.

Life isn’t something we have forever; every passing moment is an opportunity to make the most out of it.

I was told of a story about a man who was offered the privilege to study abroad. A marvelous offer for it will enhance his skills and ability in his field of expertise. Added to that is the X-factor that will be included in his personal experiences. I have learned that this man went to his superior asking about his work and salary status should he consider the offer. Lately, the offer went to someone else. He missed the opportunity of expanding his horizon.

For the followers of the Korean *telenovela A Rosy Life*, part of the story is about “*kabit*.” The philandering husband finally realized that he needs his wife when his “live-in partner” abandoned him. He went back to his legal wife but she was already on the brink of death. He regrets that he maltreated her when they were still together. It’s the usual “repentance always comes last” stuff. They could have lived a happy life had he followed the right thing and made the right decision.

Even we, students, miss many opportunities because we commit unwise decisions. Instead of making our studies our priority, we nurture our vices, *barkada* first. In return, we fail in our subjects.

Let us seize every opportunity. We always face the dilemma of decision making and when we are not careful with our decisions, we fail to understand that opportunity comes only once. Now, no one can tell if the opportunity comes back! If that will come, it’s bonus!

Life on earth can be fruitful and rewarding if we know how to treat life with each passing day. Despite difficulties, we can still have a colorful life. Touching other people’s life without expecting something in return is the most rewarding act we could ever do.

I have only good words to say this Christmas, *Carpe Diem* Northwesternians!

University researcher in Korea

A DREAM Come True

His ambition is to be an airline pilot. As a kid, he dreamed of exploring the world.

He applied as a researcher in June 2004 at Northwestern University's Research Center without any idea that one day he would go abroad to widen his horizon. But this guy admits that studying abroad is one of his goals since 2002. And now his dream has been realized.

As an exchange student of Sangmyung University in South Korea, Joseph Allan S. Gamiao recognizes this opportunity as a blessing. He enrolled in Ceramics Design at the Graduate School of Arts and Design in SMU for he believes that it will benefit him since the ceramic field is his turf.

He shares his experiences in an *e-mail* interview with the *Review*.

He only has kind words about the people of Korea--polite, friendly, and helpful.

"A staff fetched me at Incheon Airport and we went directly to a fully furnished apartment with brand new appliances and furniture," Allan shares. "After leaving my luggage, I was welcomed with a dinner at a Korean Restaurant by the staff of the International Relations Office of SMU," he adds.

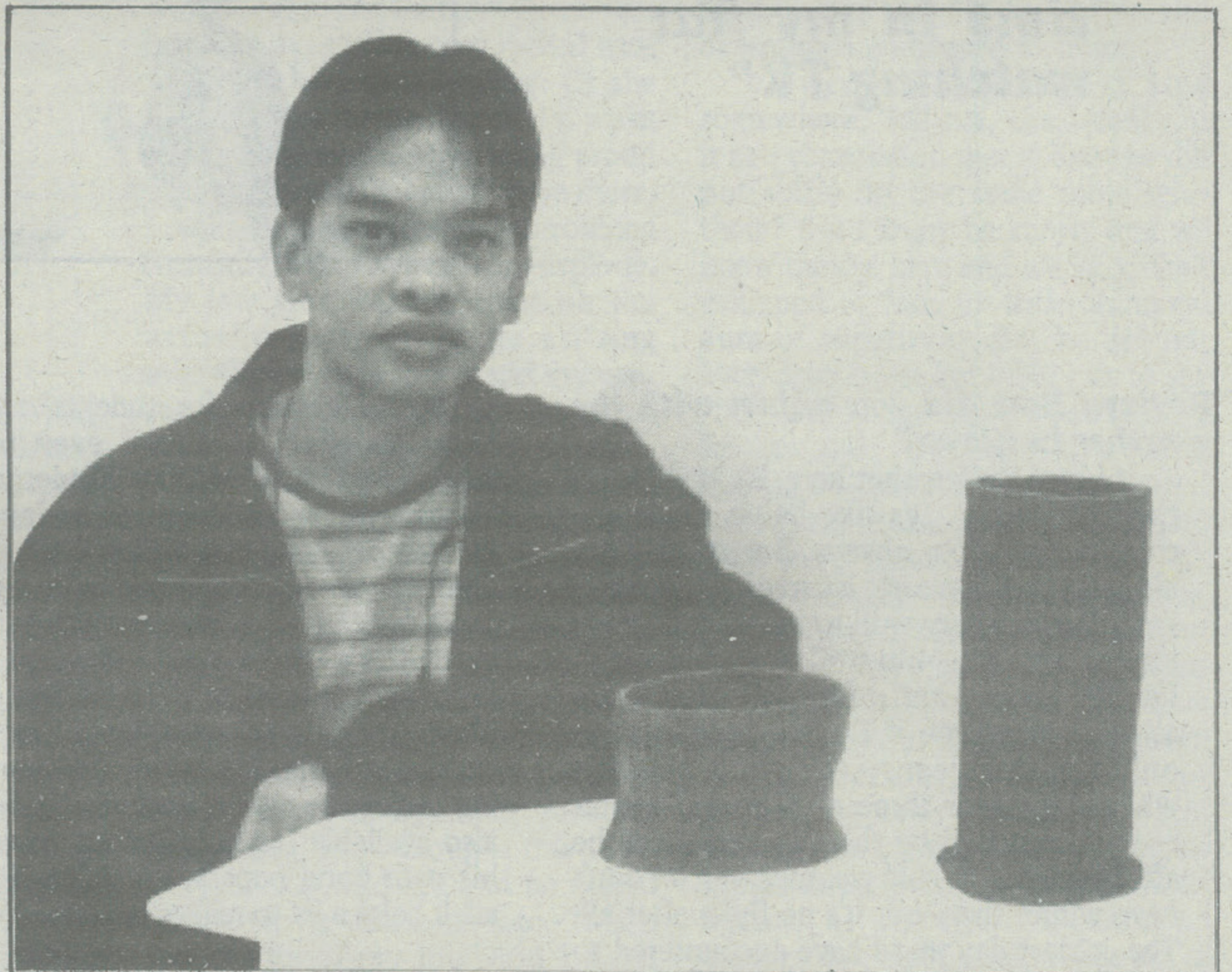
He recalls that on his first day in school, his classmates welcomed him with lunch, again at a Korean restaurant, and his professor paid his share.

Annyeong-Haseyo is the first Korean word he has learned. It is a greeting like "Hello" but can be "Good Morning", "Good Afternoon", "Good evening", etc. It's like the "Aloha" of Hawaii. In fact, he has known these words when he took Korean Language lessons here in the Philippines, and that's on top of watching Korean *telenovelas* to get acquainted with their culture.

"They take their culture seriously like bowing. I don't want to offend anybody by not respecting their culture, one gains respect if it is practiced," Allan explained.

Part of his fruitful experiences is watching student exhibits every week.

"I was stunned with their projects ranging from electronic gadgets in cooperation with tech giant Samsung



Gamiao in his flat with samples of ceramics designs.

(these gadgets will definitely hit the market the coming years) and eye popping modern furniture designs to computer hardware and software designs. Another week will be the software and ceramic design's turn," Allan said.

He missed the "tahong" in the Philippines but he is now getting to relish *pulgugi*, a *lauya*-like food sweetened with sugar and embellished with *sotanghon*.

He hopes to be home this Christmas to spend it with his wife rather than be alone in the snow-laden place.

Asked if what is expected from him after his stay in SMU, with a joyful outlook, he said "I'm expected to bring home the bacon..."

He finished his Bachelor of Science in Ceramics Engineering at the Mariano Marcos State University in 1997. He is currently taking up MS Management Engineering at NwU's School of Graduate

Studies. He finished a research study entitled "Development of Bricks Using Payas Red Clay and Suba Sand Dunes". His study on the "Development of Ceramic Water Filter by Solsona White Clay and Rice Hull Ash" is still on-going.

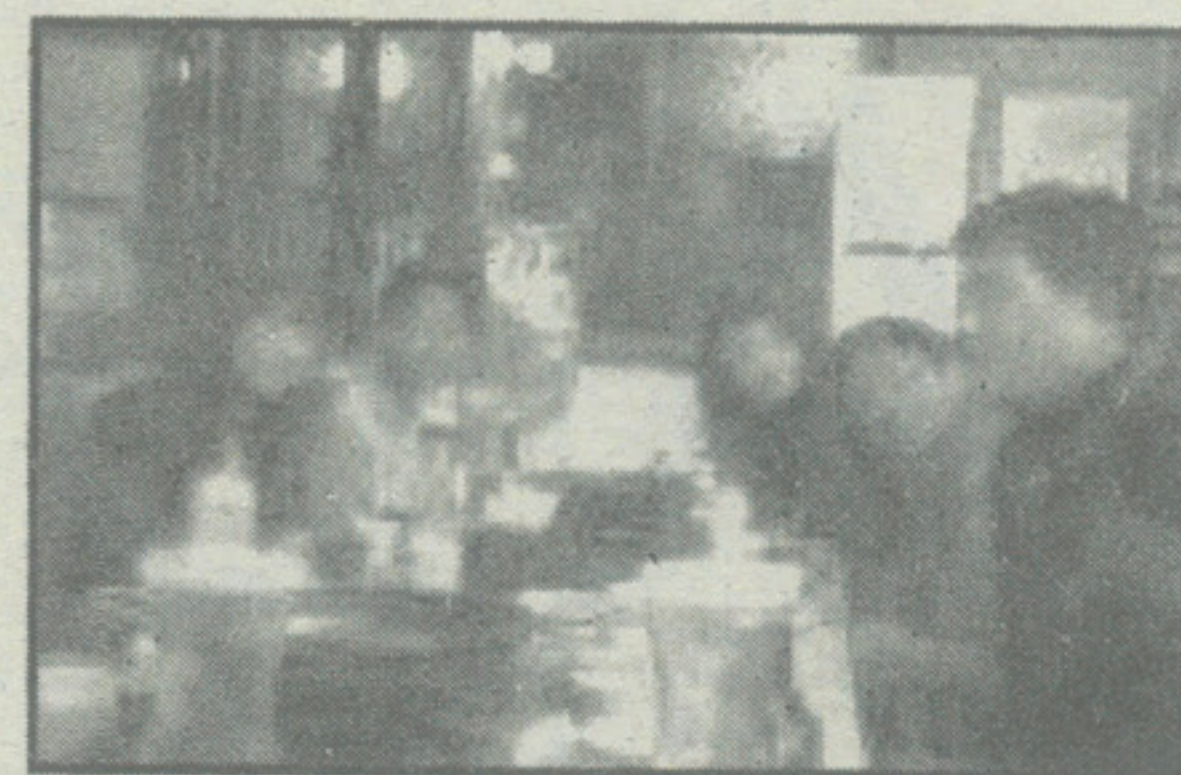
He finished his elementary education at the Gabaldon Elementary School (1988) and pursued his secondary education at the Ilocos Norte College of Arts and Trades (1992).

The following are the excerpts of an e-mail interview with him:

Review: Who inspired you to go there?

It's was Ms. Evelyn V. Baraoidan who gave the idea of coming to SMU. My superior, Mrs. Felina G. Rosales, gave also her nod to it.

“ That’s the beauty of Seoul, you don’t spend hours and money just to see a nice place. I’d rather go out than to spend my free time in my flat watching TV.”



Review: How did you adjust with the weather in Korea?

I love the weather here. It’s not like in the Philippines. It’s like being in an air-conditioned room always. But these days, it’s no aircon anymore, it’s freezer (hehehe). I’m adjusting very well to an average daily temperature of - 4 to 6 °C. No problems so far. My Korean and foreigner friends are always asking me if I’m not cold coz I’m only wearing jeans, shirt and a jacket while they wear three clothes and winter coats. I expected by the way that I will be affected with the cold weather coz we don’t have winter there but it’s no fluke after all. The coldest day that I have encountered so far was last November 6 when the temperature went down to - 4 °C and it snowed. I was coming out from laboratory work at 9pm and I thought it was raining, but it wasn’t, it was snowing. So I decided to enjoy it for a while after a fruitful laboratory work then finally took the subway and headed home.

Review: How did you find the students of SMU?

The students have awesome study habits. Group studies are very common everyday, even on Saturdays and Sundays at the student lounges usually located at the first floor of every building. The student lounges have sofas and tables. These areas are wireless zone by the way so one can surf the internet with a laptop. The library is virtually the “heart” of the school. It’s where a lot of students gather, it’s open 24 hours, 7 days a week but the lending, computer and multimedia rooms are open only from 9am

to 10pm. It’s normal for students to go home between 10pm to 11pm, even for high school students. SMU has Kindergarten to College, you know. Moreover, for leisure and recreation, you can watch DVD of your favorite movies, documentaries or watch satellite TV in the multimedia room. Each booth has a DVD and VHS player, a satellite decoder/receiver, an LCD TV and a headphone so you yank up the volume without causing trouble. The typing and laser printing of reports and projects at the library is also available for free. But one must bring his own bond papers, not a bad deal after all. It helps a lot to relieve financial pressure.

Review: Where do you spend your leisure time? Or do you still have time for leisure? Favorite past time in Korea?

Of course I do, it’s a sin not to do leisure in Seoul. I do see to it that on weekends, especially after attending a service in church, I stroll around Seoul. This city has tons to offer, every inch has a place waiting to be discovered and savored not only foreigners but Koreans as well. You don’t have to travel far to see a nice place such as parks and museums, a 15 minute walk or ride on the bus and subway will lead into something very meaningful like Mt. Namsan. It’s where the famous Seoul Tower is located and this mountain is in the middle of Seoul and near the city hall. I don’t cheat by riding on the bus or cable car going up but I hike coz you’ll be consummated by its beauty. That’s the beauty of Seoul, you don’t spend hours and money just to see a nice place. I’d rather go out than to spend my

free time in my flat watching TV. The key is to finish every school homework, and laboratory works during weekdays.

Review: Given the chance to be sent back there at SMU after your study, will you grab again the opportunity?

Why not. This city is very beautiful and generally has a clean air. I want to emphasize that because we are talking of a huge modern metropolitan city. In my own opinion, the air is cleaner than the streets of Laoag where you will choke to death with smoke from tricycles. The government has a “Green Policy”. All utility vehicles such as buses are running on CNG (compressed natural gas) as fuel. They are continuously developing parks and make sure that the river is clean by a filtering system. But I hope to bring my wife next time around.

Review: Tell me more interesting things about you while in Korea.

Well aside from the things that I have said about Seoul, I think it is fascinating to meet other foreign students and professors from Japan, Africa, China, Taiwan, India, London, Canada and the USA. It’s amazing to know these people and their culture and how we clashed and laughed at one question. One time we were talking about who will pay on the first date? The man or woman? Oh my, it was fun to listen to the answers, almost all students said it’s the guy of course but the one from India said, “Well, since I’m not sure yet that she will be my girlfriend, so it should be a split 50-50.” And everybody reacted. But in the end we laughed together and helped each other.

ANOTHER

JOURNAL FOR DAD

○ *Filamae Jayahr Caday*

December 20, 2004... It was a very momentous event and almost everyone in the bloodline and bundle of friends was present. Yes, at that time I thought it would be possible for them to be there, and I imagined the scene at the back of my head. I've been doing that countless of times already. So, I was expecting them. But as hours passed swiftly and the sky was getting dark, some started leaving while the most significant others stayed to enjoy. I heaved the thought away. They are not coming.

I went out to get some fresh air and as I stood in front of the entrance, I came face to face with disgust of my life. Disbelief surged through me. As I've said, I expected them but the sudden wave of emotions that overwhelmed me at that very moment was something that I cannot utterly fathom. I know then that if this moment comes, I would be angry and hell, I will give HER tons-full of what's in my darkened mind and heart ever since I heard her name and knew who she was in my life. And I assure you decency will be completely removed from my vocabulary. But that day was a close call. It was still a day of a sacred celebration and I didn't intend to ruin it by making a scene. At least, I was wrong about me capable of being completely indecent. So I watched her as she led her way towards the main hall together with our king and the little half-blood princes. She looked ugly as the witch

to me and thought what the heck did our king see in her? I knew my eyes were daggers and that they could tear her flesh apart once they locked with hers but she wasn't looking. Or she didn't want to. When they were finally seated, and she's acting proud as if she's actually lawful to be there, I realized my temples were throbbing hurtfully, and I wanted to explode. My jaw was hurting because I'm actually restraining it, gritting everything I have to say and my eyes stung like acid. I was fuming. I wanted to grasp those corned-colored shitty hairs of hers and scalp her bald. I wanted to make her derma-tutored cheeks even redder through my hands' coarse palms hitting her like there's no tomorrow. I wanted to strangle her because she's the snake who gave me dreadful venom that will make me suffer the rest of my life. I wanted to burn her because she's the witch who took our king away. But I thought this is no fairytale, no wild life and no stupid drama movie that I am into. This is the reality of my life. And I don't want to argue with an ugly fool just to allow her make me her beautiful fool. No, and I respect the sacredness of the present occasion anyway.

I turned my eyes and gazed on our half-blood princes. They are so handsome and so disciplined. And people who said I look like them are right. I do look like them, they actually seemed as if they are wholly my brothers. Well, except for the fact that at that time, I dressed with a hint of a rebel. I felt a huge green monster suddenly pushing the Satan away that was with me just a moment ago and taking the center stage. I imagined our king taking them in his lap, teaching them homework from school, taking them out for dinner and vacations, and bringing them delights from work. I felt jealousy stabbing me and I wanted to cry. I asked myself, do they even know me? Do they know they took away half of

my life with them? They looked so naïve and vulnerable but no one of them knows that I'm paper thin and defenseless compared to them.

I went to look for our king somewhere. Tell me, can I consider it as a consolation that at least he did not settle on the same table with them? But I know he knows that we know they're here and we know he's ashamed to face us with his usual aura of superiority. But he did not even drop by at our table just to say "hi" or anything. So I went looking for him and I saw him with a friend holding a bottle of beer and he looked so sunken, sunken as the table where they were seated. I ached. I don't want to see him that way. Ever since, I wanted to tell him everything about how I feel since he left us. I wanted to ask him why and tell him how inconsiderate of him and the queen to just decide on matters, not considering us or of what we might become of. I wanted to tell him he causes us sorrows, and he had sinned against us and that I demand an apology but most of all, I wanted to tell him that despite everything, I love him so much and that I miss him. But God knows, it will hurt him so and he knows I won't be able to take that. I'll be hurting more. I touched his hand gently and said "Hi, dad..." my voice trembled and I couldn't say another word so I just kissed him softly in the cheeks. He just nodded without looking in my eyes and fell silent. Deep inside, I cannot deny that I expected him to say something about the witch and the half-blood princes being there. I expected him to say sorry. He did not. "We're about to leave..." I said and again I kissed and embraced him. He just said "Take care..." and gulped down the remains of his beer.

As I turned my back and started walking away, I let go of the tears that were welling intolerably in my eyes. I walked away never looking back, I walked away so hurt.

CHRISTMAS

NOT BOUND BY TIME

It is a moment to thank God for the many blessings He has provided throughout the year.

○ *Wilfredo Aragones, Jr.*

Of the many festivities in the Philippines, Christmas is perhaps the longest. It is not bound by time and it works thoughtfully on the Filipino's body, soul, and spirit. Christmas spirit is very much alive.

Christmas is not only confined to December 25. It somehow begins months before Decem-ber. As lanterns lighten up the Christmas spirit, no celebration comes close to the traditional rituals of Christmas in the Philippines.

As early as September, Christmas melodies already hit the airwaves. Generally, families start to conceptualize their decorations. They want to be the first to have the embellishment of Christmas. Some start sending Christmas messages via SMS, Internet and snail mail.

Big establishments and amusement parks are festooned with huge lights, lanterns and other Christmas adornment of different sizes, shapes and colors.

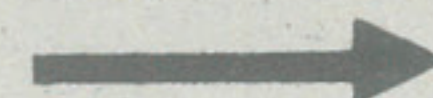
Streets are well lighted and are full of activities where children can run in and out to play and to enjoy the company of other children.

Carolers start "invading" houses and business establishments with their guitars

and tambourines with some presenting envelopes and solicitation letters. Even children will go from house to house, it doesn't matter if they mispronounce the lyrics of the Christmas song they are singing. After all, what matters to them is their 'gift'.

The cool breeze of December confirms that the Christmas season is fast approaching. Countdown is aired over the radio and television.

Kids and adults, too, start to wonder what gift they would be receiving this Christmas. Dad has to work overtime to beat deadlines before Christmas; Mom is busy preparing her menu. Working moms



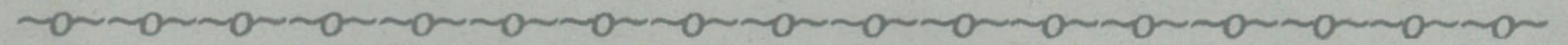
WHAT'S IN A GREETING?

HAPPY HOLIDAYS OR MERRY CHRISTMAS?

Hello Snowman,

This simple question may not interest you but just the same, I would like to know the difference between "Happy Holidays" and "Merry Christmas" when greeting someone during the Christmas season.

Shane



Hi Shane,

Wow! It is such a very nice and timely question since we are about to celebrate Christmas. I have never asked this question to myself. Is there really a difference in greeting someone "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas?"

I must admit that when people greet me "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas", it seems to me that they have the same meaning and it doesn't sound bad, after all it is being said in a nice way. I just reply them with the usual "Same to you!"

But after going over and over your question, I realized that there is indeed a big difference between "Merry Christmas!" and "Happy Holidays!" and I guess it is really a big deal!

Christmas is not just any ordinary day for it is the time when we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. We celebrate His birth to remind us that there is "... God who loves the world so much that He gave his only begotten son..." It is giving due honor to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Greeting someone "Merry Christmas!" is wishing him the blessings that Christmas brings!

If Christ had not come, then we won't be here, much more, we do not have any reason to celebrate Christmas.

Almost every Filipino celebrates Christmas even non-Christians celebrate Christmas. The deal is when we relate Christmas with other 'holidays' in the world, we lose the connection between Christ and Christmas.

In the Philippines, we have bunch of holidays - Labor Day, Independence day, All Saint's Day, Bonifacio Day, Rizal Day and the list goes on. So it is proper and fitting to use the right greetings at the right occasion.

Replacing Christmas season with the vague "Happy Holidays" is distorting the essence of the celebration. Instead, let us shout with joy and sing from our lips, join with the music and sing, "O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord!"

Merry Christmas, Shane!

Snowman

rush to the nearest department stores and malls for shopping.

The *Misa de Gallo* (midnight mass) gestures the start of the longest Christmas season in the world. It is a moment to thank God for the many blessings He has provided throughout the year.

A sleepless night celebration of Christmas starts at dawn of December 24. Families attend the last mass after which they all gather for the *Noche Buena*. This portrays a closely knit Filipino family as they partake of the midnight meal together. It is a time for bonding, an opportunity for reunion of distant and immediate family members. The *ninongs* and *ninangs* will give gifts to their *inaanak*. Dad and Mom will also give their gifts to their children. *Lolo* and *Lola* also have something.

The Filipinos — from all walks of life, even the less fortunate— prepare something on their table in time for Christmas. Not much with the *lechon*, *pansit*, ham or macaroni salad but a bowl of *Lucky Me* noodles will do. Celebrating Christmas is not bound by what food to eat but by the spirit that glows inside and out.

And even in this season, Ilocanos still show their thriftiness and find alternative and cheaper ways for paraphernalia and decorations.

Christmas extends even up to the first day of January. Why not? As the usual lines: "everyday is Christmas."

Rubaiyat

○ **Ronald Manglal-lan**

The Little Match Girl and *Little Mermaid* are fairy tales I remembered most. *Dead Poet's Society*, *Love Story* and *Kaya Kong Abutin ang Langit* are my favorite movies. *Shadows in the Dark* tops my list on poetry books. The musicals *Miss Saigon* and *Phantom of the Opera* are near to perfection for me. I like the implied loneliness in

have come to see the light. In here, I do not have to experience loneliness to appreciate and learn from it.

My favorite quatrain in the *Rubaiyat* is one written above. For me, it tells us that not all of our dreams can come true and not all of our wants and needs will be satisfied. Moreover, we all have our chance to shine, to be on top. But it is impossible to be in that position forever. Although this quatrain is not hopeful, it makes me reflect on the things I have done and I have failed to accomplish; it inspires me to pursue my dreams without expecting fame and immortality. And just be the best of what I can be.

The *Rubaiyat* has a pessimistic mood (Persian Literature is actually pessimistic in general). It is loaded with symbolism that can interpret each quatrain differently depending on the psyche of an individual. The quatrains are beautifully written. However, it should be noted that the translations of Edward Fitzgerald are not faithful renditions of the original texts. He took liberty in combining quatrains for aesthetic purposes, thus, endangering the integrity of the *Rubaiyat*. I have also read the faithful renditions of the quatrains. They do not sound as beautiful as the translations of Edward Fitzgerald. Faithful or not, *Rubaiyat* is still a work of genius – both by Omar Khayyam and Edward Fitzgerald.

Ah, make the most of what we
yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust
descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust
to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Sons, sans
Singer, and – sans End!

There was the Door which I found
no key,
There was the Veil through which
I might not see.
Some little talk a while of ME
and THEE
There was – and then more of
THEE and ME.
Rubaiyat Omar Khayyam
translated by Edward Fitzgerald

**I am not leading a life
of loneliness and solitude.
Neither am I delighted in
the sufferings of others,
fictional or not. Instead, I
have become a better
person; for my immersion
in the lonely and tragic
made me realize and enjoy
the simple joys in life.**

My love affair with poetry started when I was a 13-year old second year high school student. One of my subjects then was Asian and African Literature. Long before that, I had no regard for literature. I had never been voracious reader except for assigned reading materials for class discussion. I had only written formal themes as a class requirement. Words were entities to be memorized and had no meaning beyond their standard definitions in dictionaries way back then.

Rubaiyat changed all that. It was an awakening. The *literary enlightenment* I had experienced with it opened the wonderful world of literature. *Rubaiyat* had tremendous effect on me. It did not only make me love literature but it also started my fixation for loneliness. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Abelard and Heloise*, and *Tristan and Isode* are love stories dear to me.

the short story *Dark Star*. I soar with the haunting arias of the opera *Aida*. *Oedipus Rex*. *Calle 8*. *Maynila sa Kuko ng Liwanag*. *Moral*. My list can span a mile. The bottom line is, all of them ended tragically. Do not get me wrong. I have not become a dark and bitter soul because of the *Rubaiyat*. Indeed, I am not leading a life of loneliness and solitude. Neither am I delighted in the sufferings of others, fictional or not. Instead, I have become a better person; for my immersion in the lonely and tragic made me realize and enjoy the simple joys in life. By absorbing darkness, I

I WAS NEVER A CHILD

I can't still find the answer how I have been as a child. I keep on searching and asking until now.

○ *Randolf S. Magno, Jr.*

An angel sleeps in the dark gathering strength for the struggle of birth, left alone at the bold stream of the fresh seedtime. The angel has no proper shape.

This envelops my memories and destiny as a baby born of a woman fighting for light and holding on without knowing why.

Since the day I saw light, my eyes were cast in the castle of love of my grandparents. They have tamed me and I am glad for that. Despite the cruelty and the merciless killing in the society, I was lucky I was nurtured when I was a baby.

But when I learned to walk and recognize people, I failed to be a child many times. My grandparents died in a car accident. I could not explain my feelings or my fear then. I was devastated and wounded seeing them buried in a lot at the cemetery.

My mother told me I always cried at night although I had a

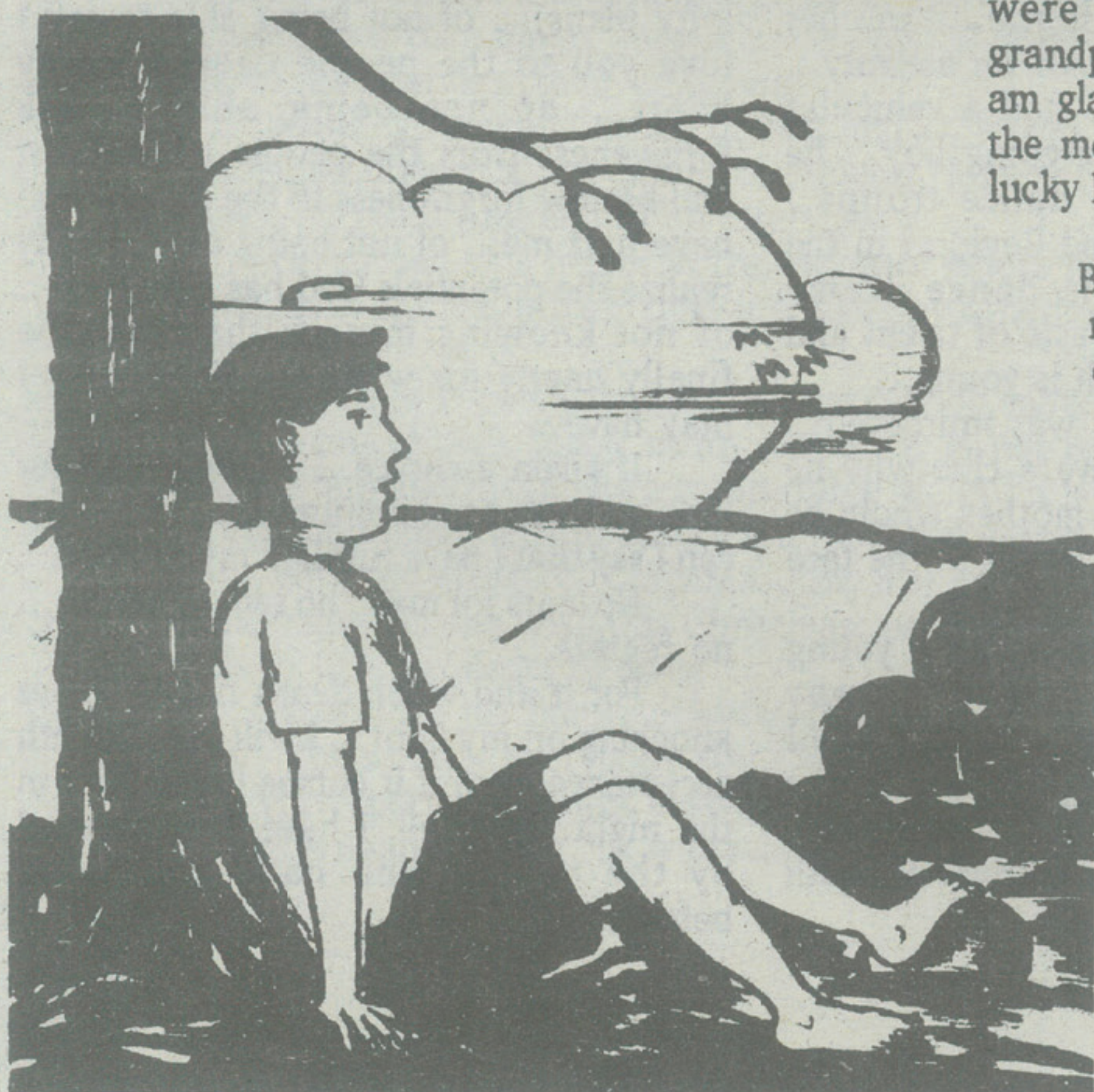
bottle of milk to drink. I only stopped crying when they showed me the wedding picture of my grandparents. I don't understand, I can't bear the bitterness of yesterday. I deeply hurt for I failed to feel the warmth of my grandparents' touch when they carried me. And since they're gone, I never enjoyed and recognized myself as a child. I then thought that I was only a statue, I cannot move by myself without my grandparents beside me.

Years had passed. I've grown up but still I cannot find myself completely happy. I tried but I failed. Somebody would always ask me, why I have not smiled at my pictures.

Now I try to make myself happy although I can't forget about the past. College life is very challenging what with my hectic schedules as an engineering student. And with my professors teaching me and making me feel a family of the Northwestern University, at least, I know that makes me feel great.

Brave. Serious. Strong. Kind.

These traits cloak me now as an ordinary person. But I can't still find the answer how I have been as a child. I keep on searching and asking until now. From this, one thing is sure to me. I was never a child. I have never been blessed by any other except God.



IF ACES

of Death

○ *Ronald Manglal-lan*

Death has many faces. I have seen some this last summer.

An acquaintance of mine had an accident... he was badly hurt... broken skull... but he was conscious... he had a chance to survive... but for whatever reason, his family opted pulling the "plug" ... I saw him gasped for his last breath... it was painfully unreal... the face of death is a choice... not of the person himself, but his family.

The mother of a friend had a stroke...she fought...she had seven heart attacks before her body finally gave up...the face of death is a well-deserved rest...she led fruitful existence...it was her time to be with her Creator for eternity...

A boy of 14 or 15 had a vehicular accident...he was an outgoing boy... he was a member of the dance troupe I coached, that represented Region I in the first national folkloric dance drama competition... what a waste of talent and hope... the face of death is young...

A talented teacher was murdered... until now, we never have a clue why he was brutally killed... his mother, whom he loves so much, is still grieving ... the face of death is grief...

A skilled dressmaker, with a young daughter, suddenly passed away (incidentally, her mother is the old lady I mentioned above, a month or less than a month separates their dates of passing)... she loves her daughter... the face of death is loss...

The husband of my best friend passed away... he died knowing in his heart that he has been forgiven... he was about to join his family in the US after seven years or so of separation... the face of death is peace...

I have witnessed these faces of death last summer...all these people had touched my life in one way or another.

Even unto their deaths, they have touched my life. They made me realize of my own mortality. Not that I am afraid to die...I know that it is my final destination... our final destination..."dust unto dust..."

My mortality fears me not... what I fear is not being able to do what I am supposed to do... of not contributing anything in this world (not that I have lofty plans)... of not being able to say I love you to the people dearest in my heart... of not being able to ask forgiveness from the people I have hurt and bestow forgiveness to the people who have hurt me... of not being able to fully realize the potentials God has gifted me... of not knowing myself, that I maybe finally happy for whatever limitations I may have...

If given a choice... I would like the face of death as contentment... only then can I say that I have fulfilled my destiny....

No tears for me... no sad memories... no regrets...

For if and when death finally comes knocking on my door... I will open it with acceptance even if it comes like a thief in the night...after all, I have been readied by the people who have gone long before....

***"If given a choice...
I would like the
face of death as
contentment..."***

***Only then can I say
that I have fulfilled
my destiny...."***

A story of the crypt caretaker

CHRISTMAS ON THE JOB

○ Charwin Belisario, Cherry Ann Reyes
with April Daffodils Senen

As a part of the *Review's* Christmas issue, we tried to look for subjects with unlikely professions to feature: one embalmer and one grave digger. We decided to talk to the caretaker of the floral gardens while trying to think where we could find our embalmer.

On the way to the floral garden, our attention was caught by the (not that I am interested with what one could see inside) building of the Marestel Funeral Homes. At first our morbid imagination ran wild. And who would not when all you could see through the glass walls are different designs of caskets displayed? But on the side, there is this Christmas tree signaling the arrival of the Christmas season.

Weird as it is, the idea that the symbols for the beginning of life and the end of it are there side by side as if saying that there is more to it than meets the eye... We entered there and asked if we could interview their embalmer.

Manong Arsenio Castillo or M'g Arsi as he was called is the embalmer/helper of the Marestel Funeral Homes. A typical guy at 43, he readily agreed to an interview.

He started as a helper at the Marestel before he became an embalmer. He had a hard time just like any other beginners, he says.

Holidays notwithstanding, his profession makes him to be always on-call. His salary as an embalmer is not really enough to give him and his family a comfortable life but it is still enough to send his three kids to school and not to skip meals.

With the arrival of Christmas, this man who wanted to be a policeman has one wish this Christmas: peace. He would like his kids to finish college, he says.

How does his family celebrate Christmas?

"The same as everybody else," he smiles. Christmas for them is a very special occasion. Relatives also visit them making the occasion even happier. His wife would prepare *tupig*, the Ilokano

delicacy for snack and some are shared to the carolers. On Christmas eve, the whole family prepares the *Noche Buena* to partake after the midnight mass.

"The preparation for the occasion is not important. As long as we are together and healthy, that is enough for me," he says.

While M'g Arsi embalms for a living, Romulo Cruz (Mang Mulo to his friends) works as gravedigger.

"I have been digging graves for 14 years now," M'g Mulo proudly tells the *Review*

"We dig graves even late at night especially when we're rushing things," Mang Mulo said.

For lack of available stable jobs compounded by the country's economic crises, Mang Mulo, an elementary graduate, had no option but to take the job endorsed by his sister, Carmen, who works at the Marcos Hall of Justice.

Money has always been a problem in their family, affecting even his education. A native of Surigao del Norte, he came all the way here to search for greener pasture.

From a *buko* farmer, he became a...gravedigger! If he and his companions are not digging graves, they can be seen cutting grass and cleaning the whole garden which is their everyday routine except on Sundays.

He says that because there is no schedule for a person's death, they usually work even during holidays, Christmas and New Year not excluded.

He and his family usually spend Christmas together with their relatives. As long as he could, he tries to make Christmas a time to get together—a reunion, where they spend, however short the time to be all there during that occasion to make up for lost times.

"My father and mother would usually prepare a *salu-salu* but my father is already dead. My mother still tries to prepare with the little money that she earns," Manong Mulo said.

There have been times that his job comes in the way that he would miss to spend the occasion with his family. Even on holidays, he would be called to dig grave.

Mang Mulo has accepted his fate. "*Baka ditoy nak to pay a maitabunen,*" he says.

In the meantime, M'g Mulo surely will try his best to be with his family this Christmas.

U.K. U.K.



○ **Fernando C. Agudo**

Shopping at ukay-ukay stores is now a craze for Filipinos regardless of age, gender, family backgrounds and financial status. Many were hooked with these UK products – from bags to shoes, clothing to accessories, all at cheap and affordable prices.

Who remembers Gwen in that famous *Tide* commercial, the lady who is worried of what to wear at a party? Her mother bought her something and said, "Anak, may isusuot ka na sa party." And when she showed what she has, her daughter was disappointed. But after some washing, the dress turned out to be an elegant white gown. At the party, one of her friends praised her gown and asked her where she got her dress, and Gwen replied – "U.K.!" but she was referring to *ukay-ukay*!

Also referred to as "wagwagan", *ukay-ukay* (which means 'digging') is a stall for second hand yet well-known brands like *Adidas*, *Louis Vuitton*, *Converse*, *Nine West* and the list goes on. Prices are extremely low. It is so cheap that even an ordinary shopper can have these signature brands.

Shopping at *ukay-ukay* stores is now a craze for Filipinos regardless of age, gender, family backgrounds and financial status. Many were hooked with these UK products – from bags to shoes, clothing to accessories, all at cheap and affordable prices.

Ukay-ukay stands have mushroomed all over the archipelago. Despite the government's move to ban the entry of imported goods, some of which come from China, Korea, Hong Kong, Europe and United States of America, still demands are great and people seem deaf with the government's warning that it might be a source of sickness and skin diseases.

Myrna, 32, a *fashionista* in her own right, doesn't mind wearing clothes from the *ukay-ukay*.

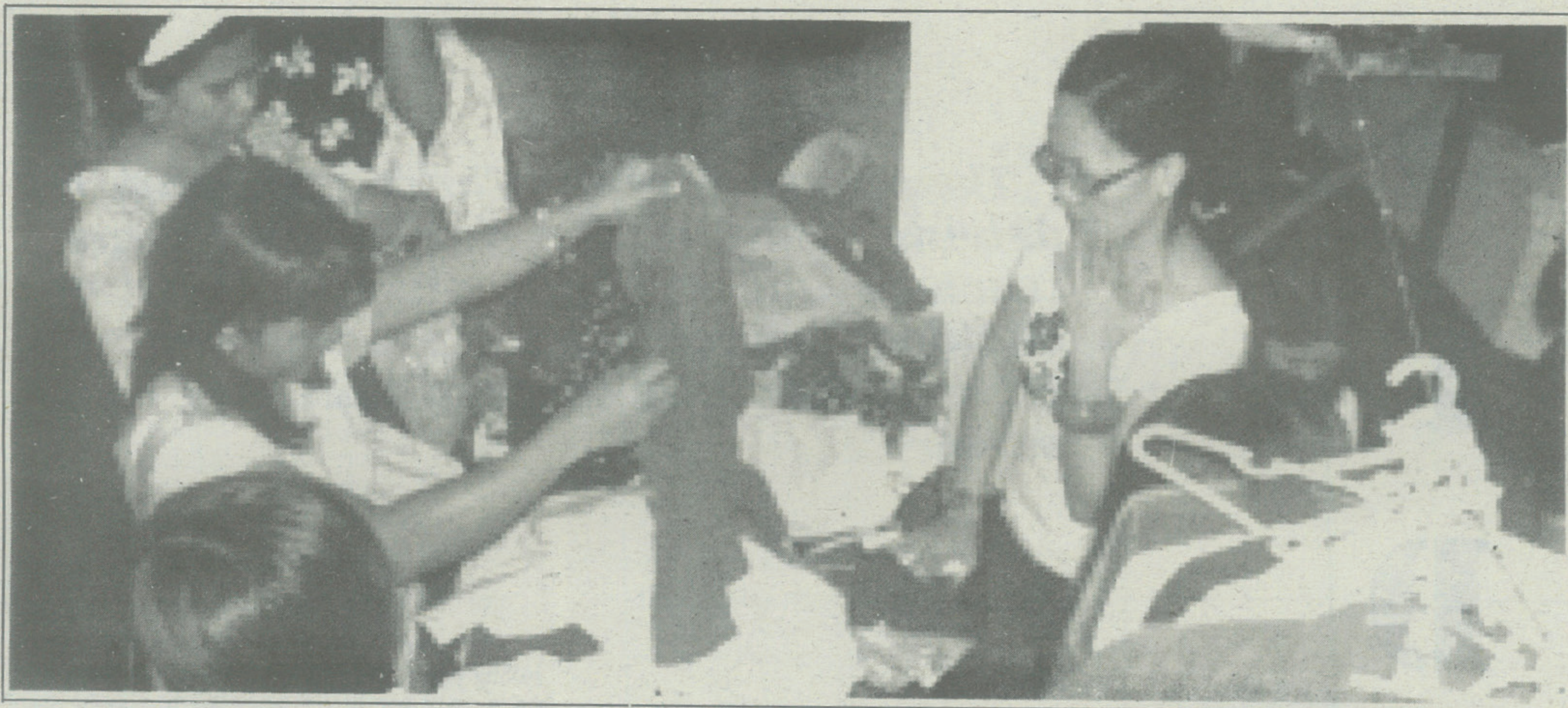
"Everything at *ukay-ukay* is cheap," says Myrna, "some *fashionistas* would think that buying at the *ukay-ukay* is a shameful thing, but for me, it doesn't matter."

"My friends envied me because of the things I wear. They didn't know that I bought them at an *ukay-ukay* until I told them about it!" Myrna relates.

She remembers when her friends discovered she's gaga over *ukay-ukay* products. They could not believe it, she says.

"I am a brand conscious person and so this shocks my friends!" Myrna said.

One doesn't need to shop for expensive things just to be fashionable or trendy. All you need is to have a good fashion perspective and you'll be shocked that second hand clothes look elegant.



"I am not into these *ukay-ukay* stuff until my friend brought me to an *ukay-ukay* stand one time when we were in Baguio City," Jenine, 29, said.

"At first, I wasn't interested because some clothes have this 'old smell,'" Jenine laughs, "until I checked on the clothes, I began to like them. I went home with a bag full of clothes from the *ukay-ukay*!"

"My friend said, *tera gusto mo rin naman pala, pa-effect ka pa!*" Jenine chuckled.

The high prices of brand new clothes push people to look for an alternative. Why not? You can have two or three good clothes for a song, the price equivalent to a brand new dress.

Mark, an *ukay-ukay* *parokyano*, wears an impressive pair of sandals. When I asked how much he paid for it, he answered, "give me your price!" I gave him a flat answer of Php450.00, and he gave me thumbs down.

"Boy, I bought this for only Php 75.00," he said.

I forgot that Mark is an *ukay-ukay* fanatic. But it is really deceiving, the sandals didn't seem to be that cheap.

No wonder more people these days are into 'dig off' or 'dust off' clothing. They are cheap, economically wise, regardless of whether the first owner has a body odor or skin disease.

"Make sure that before you wear them, *pakuluan mo naman* or *buhusan ng*

mainit na tubig para mawala ang amoy niya," says Margie, "*tapos labham mo siya ng at least three times para mawala ang germs.*"

"*Sayang naman yung damit, mahal ang signature at original,*" Margie added.

For as long as one is diligent to dig and haggle and haggle with the saleslady, you will even get the item at lower price.

Today, Baguio City is no longer the only haven for *ukay-ukay*. Stores are everywhere now – *mula Batanes hanggang Jolo!*

Customers range from the minimum wage earner trying to make both ends meet

to fashion *gurus* on the search for one-of-a-kind gorgeous outfit. From office to ordinary folks, they rub elbows to elbows while on a shopping spree, notwithstanding the heat, the odor or the smell.

Cheap and affordable. Thrifty fashion trends have taken full blast. And now no longer called *ukay-ukay*, today the proud *ukay-ukayers* simply call it "U.K."

Amigos y amigas, be part of the exhilarating planet of *ukay-ukay*, the unsurpassed bargain experience to ever hit the Philippines.



S I D E L I N E

The approach of the Christmas season is driving many of the Northwesternians, teachers and students alike to think of additional sources of income to “supplement” their already meager fund that they have saved.

○ **Cherry Anne Reyes**

Now that Christmas is fast approaching, businesses increase their goods in anticipation of shoppers who will be preparing (from foods to gift items) for the season.

Not to be outdone, Northwesternians (from students to teachers to some administrators and non-academic personnel) also stockpile for their *underground economy* ranging from fruits to cosmetics to bags to e-loads, name it, you can have it. Others who are lazy to buy goods for business lend their money, some getting a la Bombay interest while others collect interest just the “right amount” to help those in need.

Indeed, the approach of the Christmas season is driving many of the Northwesternians, teachers and students alike to think of additional sources of income to “fatten” their already meager fund that they have saved to buy gifts for their: children, wife or husband, boyfriend or girlfriend, friends, *kabits*...the list is unending really.

The ingenuity of the Northwesternians makes them unique. Teachers (sometimes even the administrators...) and students have thought of increasing their financial resources via the *underground economy*.

“Oy! Adda kabbaro nga brochure ko ti Avon. Mangala kan to wen?” Ever heard of it? Many times I guess... I know one student who not only sells Avon but also *Natasha* and *Sara Lee*. An employee also sells MSE (though the meaning of the acronym, if that is an acronym is a puzzle to me) to supplement her income.

And because people these days seem addicted to texting, the *e-load/auto load* is an “in” thing as a sideline. Each time we hear students, teachers, janitors and guards sigh that Smart or Globe (or whatever the heck) forward ring tones, picture message or graphics that automatically eat up their load, then loading station is not really a problem.

“Bombay!” If you are thinking about those selling you a perfectly copied Rolex or Sony DVD on a very tempting price with a seemingly innocent and low-installment payment, think again. That is a *salitang kalye* pertaining to a loan shark who lends money to innocent people, who after sometime, suddenly realize that they are still in deep sh...t err debt. There are some people in Northwestern who are engaged in that kind of money-making activity...though a little tamer.

Selling is not only confined to the College of Business Education...when it comes to that, everyone is business minded. One could hear people inside the school offering “oy, bag, gumatang kan. Panregalo mo sa gf mo, asawa mo o bf mo.” Or one could hear a teacher say to a student: “*ilakom daytoy yema kadagita classmates mo, adda porsyentom*” or “*mangala ka daytoy mangga ah...ibagam to ken nanang mo.*” Then at the end of the day, their money increase three-fold, adding to their “Christmas fund.”

And of course the *underground economy* of the never ending vice of the students which some students and teachers capitalize... “*Maghanda ka ng Php 5,000.00 at ako na ang bahala sa thesis mo,*” these are the usual lines of some “unscrupulous teachers” who only want to have an easy money (*gahaman!*). The “*pagawa*” of these lazy students are making them rich.

Those who are looking for someone to make their research papers, just contact me...my number is blah! blah! blah! (I am in need of money too, you know.)

A “noted authority” on student, teacher *underground economy* has added some to my list: there are students who are free lance artists (“*i-drawingan ka ti plate mo ta bayadam*”), encoders (*taga-gawa ng laboratory work sa computer*), assignment makers (*siak ti maysa. 100 ti bayad na agpaaramid ...*); *bugaw*, prostitute and pushers (*han ko ammo daytoy, innayun da lang apo!*).

Whatever, the *underground economy* certainly flourishes in our beloved school specially during Christmas. As long as they are not hurting anyone, and they are doing these for their family, let them be. Those who are sharks and crocodiles, they have to change and live a new life...it’s Christmas anyway...miracles happen!

HOW TO GET BUSTED

BY YOUR LADY LOVE

○ Charwin C. Belisario

Ladies and Gentlemen and friends (addressed mostly to the male species), this is a compilation of signs and ways on how your oh-so-loved lady will dump you.

This, I hope, one way or the other will forewarn you what happens after your efforts to win her and then drop you like a hot potato.

Here are some examples that would most likely happen to anyone. You say you know the ropes...think again, one or two of the given scenarios might just happen to you.

BUSTED tsiong!

Suitor: (down on one knee with all the flowers, chocolates, and ring) I love you, [insert name of girl here]

Girl: (in the guise of concern and regret) Can we just be friends?

A friendly statement? Try that to a mental lady! That's what Niña told Bam when he confessed his love for her and I must say I really feel sorry for the guy. He really looks like the famous gay (in both sense of the word), John Lopus.

Better watch out for that freakin' statement because it's a common line among the girls to shove off those unwanted suitors. According to my survey, three out of five girls have this reserved for those who they like only as - you guessed it — friends!

It can also be rephrased into: "we're better off as friends" or "friendship lang ang kaya kong i-offer sa 'yo eh' it can also be "kaibigan lang ang turing ko sa 'yo." Whichever the girl chooses, the result is still the same and it hurts like hell. Trust me on this one.

Another ingenious technique of dumping an unsuspecting man is by

diverting his attention to something else or giving him something else to think about: a mind-boggling idea.

How, you may ask. I may have a statement that answers that question and it spells like this: "you're nice, *mabait at matalino*.... And I can't afford to lose a friend like you (compliments of our former E-I-C)," again, the damned friend word. Check out how the statement started by feeding a man's ego and then abruptly shifting for the kill.

Oh yes, a very fine demonstration of a *femme fatale*; deceptively deadly to those who dare succumb to their infatuating curves.

Suitor: (txt to girl) *Hi! Gud AM! Did u have bfast olready?*

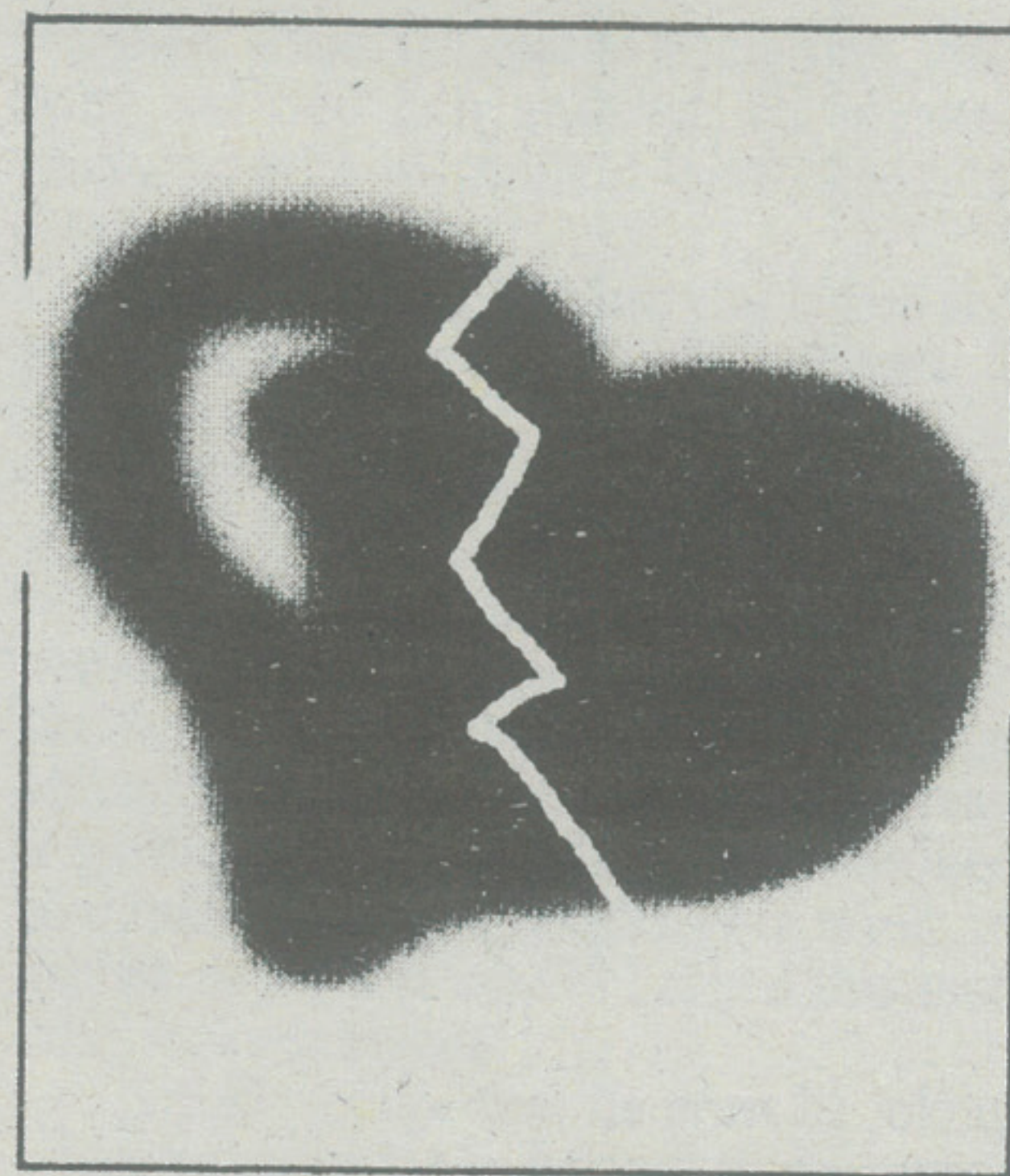
Suitor: (txt to girl ulit) *Gud PM! Lunch kna? :-D*

Suitor: (txtx to girl na naman) *Halu! 2log kna? Swit drims..*

There's obviously something wrong with that dialog. Or if you're too dumb, you didn't notice it's more of a hopeless monologue.

If you text a girl but she didn't reply, maybe she's out of load. If you text that same girl again but didn't reply, maybe her battery's drained. If you text her again for the umpteenth time but still didn't reply, somebody's got to get a popularity check. There's a big chance she's avoiding you or maybe she doesn't even know you exist - or pretends to. Some girls are like that. They're just too self-centered to notice others.

So, before you text a girl your songs of praise, better make sure you are recognized, and I don't mean recognized as another one of those geeks wanting to score a hot chick but as one sexy hunk with magnetic appeal among the opposite sex! Well, if you're the exact opposite of the ideal man described in the previous sentence, science can work that out—if you're not too much of a mess, that is! Like what people say "How can you face your problem if the problem is your face?!"



Another devastating implication that your beauty thinks you're a beast - and not the *they-lived-happily-ever-after* movie *Beauty and the Beast* - is when she tells that "I am not in love right now."

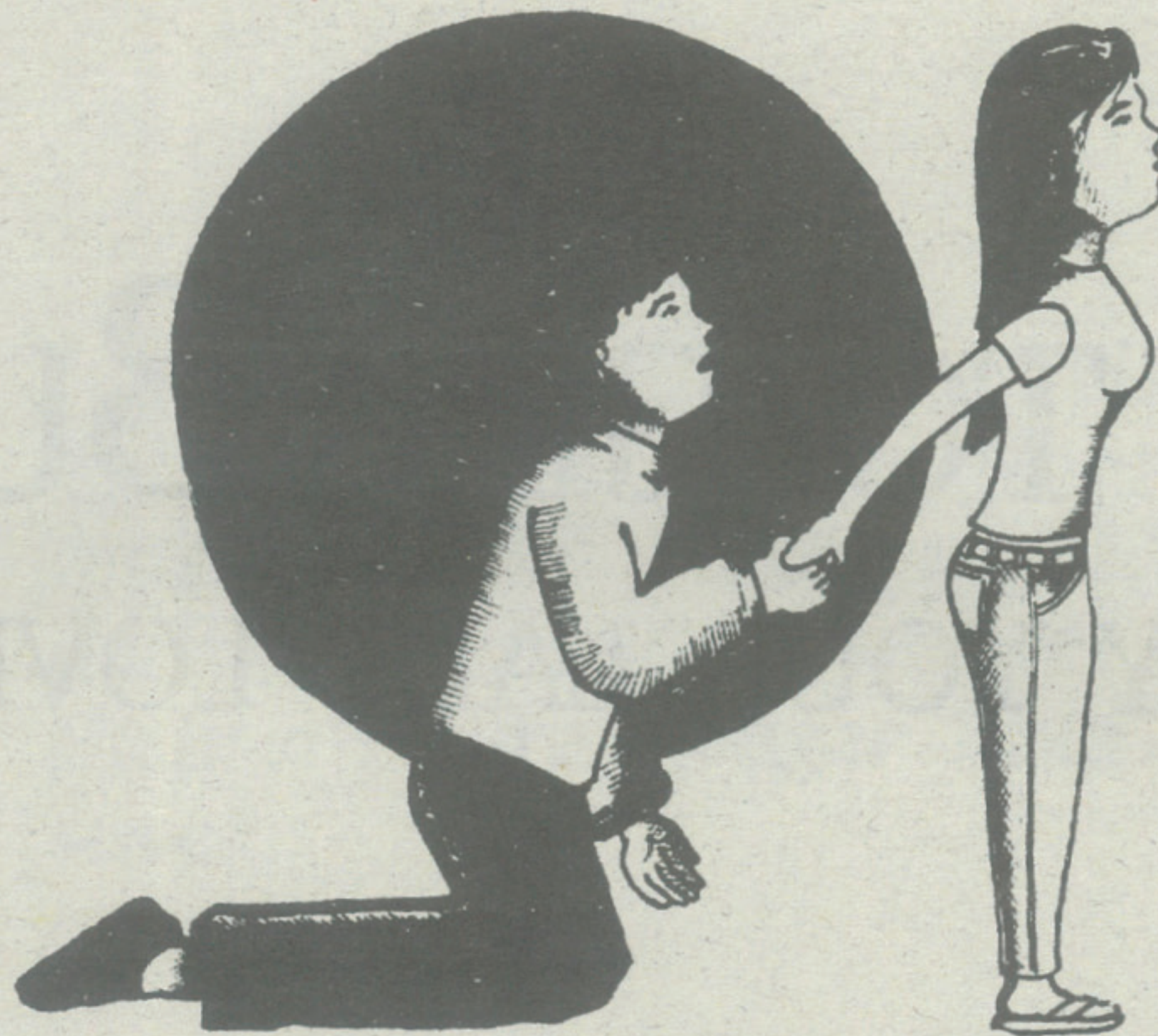
This is a smart way to insinuate to us, guys, that we are unloved by our dearest. "I'm not in love right now" means she's not in love with anybody, unfortunately, including you and possibly never ever, ever, ever will.

So, the best way to keep you from more pain that reduces yourself to smithereens or feel like a real beast, for that matter, is to get over her — fast. Abort Mission! Abandon Ship!

The opposite scenario: She is in love! But the problem is NOT with you.

Ah, yes, there's nothing like an adversary with love. The naughty god of love's arrow must have missed you and hit instead another guy. Like what the song says, "Stupid Cupid", oh, you really are stupid. Why can't you just shoot your arrow at the right guy? Has Psyche messed up with your aim?!

Some girls say that they are in love with another guy even if they are not. Some girls show you the picture of their alleged boyfriend when it's actually her



brother or not-so-famous model or actor. And some girls even resort to claiming that they are already bound by the holy matrimony when she doesn't even go to church or probably doesn't even know where the nearest one is!

Well, the point: if they tell you they already have a boyfriend or a husband, it means they're giving you the red light, RED MEANS STOP!

"Strict ang parents ko eh"

What better way to toss us off and permanently get rid of us than to include their unknowing parents in conversation. When you ask if it's okay to visit her at their house she replies: *"Okay lang sana sa akin but strict yung dad ko eh. Malalaki ang mga masels niya at marami din siyang mga baril. Gumagawa rin siya ng mga home made bombs at supplier siya ngayon ng NPA at MNLF. Oo nga pala, dati siyang hired killer at kalalabas lang sa Muntinlupa dahil itinakas siya ng mama ko. And oh yeah, dadalaw din si Tito Osama bukas and magta-target practice sila ng dad ko. Siguro nga it would be okay kung pumunta ka para maipakilala kita!"*

You might think that the story is a piece of crap and I may have exaggerated a bit but what if it is true (or a same scenario may present itself)?! They'll make you the target.

(Attention: Names of people and organization used in the paragraph are all made up by the writer, if, by coincidence Osama ang pangalan mo or you're a member of the NPA or MNLF, my name is not Charwin Belisario!!!)

When you ask a woman about your chances on her and she replies 50/50, what comes to your nut-sized brain? Dude, this may either imply you have a fairly good chance on her...you're facing the brink of your not-yet-started love life, in short dumped!

So, how will you know if she's implying the latter? Here's one way to find out, planned and tested: Ask her to give you a clue if 50/50 chances on her can improve to a 60/60, if seemingly close to impossible, 51/49. if she digs you like a mad dog craving for a bone, she'll most likely think you'll be shagging each

other sooner or later, so hell, she'll probably give you one (or two). But if her reply doesn't come a million years later or may sound like *basta 50/50*, or *"secret"*, or *"it's for me to know and for you to find out"*, or *"no comment..."* man, the 50/50 may be just as good as 0. I mean why in the hell wouldn't she answer that stupid question if she likes you anyway?! Dude, better discard your dreams of entering a cheap hotel room with this kind of lass 'coz better safe than sorry.

Pushing the right buttons while courting a girl is imperative as this may serve as the foundation of your romantic shagging moments. But dude, if you have, by any chance, woke up the savage witch just skulking in her and made her transform into a filthy and live you're your chances on her has just gone from [insert number here] to a devastating zero (possibly even earning negative).

Some of them - members of the female species that is - were just naturally born to give us *Adonises* and *Machettes* a hard time. I mean, the *in-your-face* "I don't like you coz you're not my type" kind of dialogue does exist, you know. It is an excruciating appalling way to get dumped. Some guys would choose getting shot by a group of villain-looking firing squad than experience such dread and shame and suffer for the rest of their lives.

According to Erik Erickson's Psychological Developmental Theory, the Young Adult Stage is the beginning of the development of intimate relationship of a person with the opposite sex. Now that explains why some women mysteriously get bloated tummies in the middle of the semester...!

It depends on the person, however, to fulfill this developmental stage. If one fails—let's say because of a series of dumbfounding dumps and break-ups, a person gains a weak sense of identity, develops isolation and degenerates self-realization. So better make sure you have good chances on the girl you're courting to avoid these symptoms and of course, to avoid experiencing the terror brought about being DUMPED.

Amen.

The Young Adult Stage, according to Erik Erickson's Psychological Developmental Theory, is the beginning of the development of intimate relationship of a person with the opposite sex. Now that explains why some women mysteriously get bloated tummies in the middle of the semester...!

A WRITE TO LOVE

○ **Al Hadji S. Rieta**

Let me start by introducing myself. I'm Marielle, in my mid-20s and a magazine writer. I write about fashion, entertainment, and anything that interests me and my colleagues.

What made me decide to choose this career is the chance to travel around the world. By the way I work for a foreign-based magazine. The travels make me believe that the world is really a big ball. I'm single. I don't know why! I am this kind of metropolitan woman who is choosy, as my gay-friend George always tells me. There are so many boys out there, but I can't choose one. That's why traveling around the world helps me a lot to find this man of my life.

"Ding... Dong... all passengers, please fasten your seatbelt, we are about to land..." It's two in the morning when I arrived in the airport. I came from London to attend the annual fashion gathering. I met Dolce and Gabbana, two gay couple, who are so fun to talk with, who share stories about their love life. Madonna was there as well. Naomi Campbell was one of the models that wore this Filipina-like evening gown, glowing with gold sequins and mother of pearls.

"Taxi!!" I'm home again.

Everyone searches this half piece of our heart, even if it is not yet the right time. Why we have to do this, if we can live alone... alone... alone.

I am in this circle of single ladies... single and free. But I'm not like them who always dates with whoever they meet. I'm kind of choosy.

December 23, Saturday, 6:00 in the morning.

I'm having this breakfast while the song of Tracy Chapman "So True" is playing. What a nice mood, so soft, the sun is

not yet hot, and it's kissing your cheeks, something like it tickles you, and then...

My alarm clock rings. It's 6:30 in the morning and my office work starts at seven. I was dreaming..nah... it is Monday and I expect... TRAFFIC!!!

I decided to get off from the taxi and just walk, anyway it's just a few blocks away. While walking, this man bumped me. "What the..." I said to him. He said, "Oh miss I'm sorry..." He's in a hurry as

I told George that he must be joking when he chose me to be with this arrogant and boastful man. He called the man and introduced him to me. "Marielle... he is Jason..."

well. He didn't even help me pick up my things... damn.

While walking stiffly to my office, George grabbed my hand. "Where have you been...?" And I said, "It's traffic so I walked..."

All of my bosses were there, they were talking about some finance and marketing. And then suddenly, "By the way ladies and gentlemen this is my secretary..." and he called my name. Oops sorry, you might be confused, I'm not a writer, and it's just my ambitious dream. I was kind of shocked at that moment. So I stood and said, "Hi, thank you..." and returned to my seat. Everyone was clapping.

And a man stood up, "By the way here's my..." he paused from talking, he looked around, then suddenly the doors opened, "...my photographer..." A man in

business attire, tall, not so white skin, with long but tied hair entered. He greeted everyone with his smile. I know this man, I said to my self.

George stood, "Thank you ladies and gentlemen...these two will be partners..." And everyone claps.

"What?" I whispered. Meeting adjourned.

I asked my boss if I can recommend someone else for my place, but he said a big no. I went to George's office, and surprisingly, I saw him talking to the man who bumped me on the road. I walked towards George, "Would you mind to excuse us for a second?" I asked this man who looks arrogant.

I told George that he must be joking when he chose me to be with this arrogant and boastful man. He called the man and introduced him to me. "Marielle... he is Jason..." "You're familiar..." Jason said, George paused. "So..." I said to him and went back to my office.

Finally, 'twas time to go home. It's 30 minutes after six in the evening and usually there are many who compete for a taxi and worst, it is raining and I didn't bring my umbrella.

While standing on a shed with other people, a black car stops in front of me.

I don't know this car for I haven't seen it before. He opened the window. I saw this man wearing Oakley shade. I laughed at him, because who would be that stupid to wear a shade at night.

He removed his shades, "Marielle..." he said and offered a ride. I refused. He insists but I still said no.

It's our first day of working together, I am not comfortable. His presence irritates me.

We are at the airport and will be taking our flight at three in the afternoon. It's already 2:45 but still no Jason appears. As expected, George is getting jittery, about to burst.

I don't know why I feel this way. I feel incomplete, maybe I'm just hungry. I

“While listening to him, I can’t help but stare at his face. There’s happiness inside me while watching his lips as he talks. His eyes are attractive. But I said to myself: I will not fall in love with this guy. He is not my type.”

went to a *Dunkin Donut’s* booth to buy something to eat.

While eating, I saw Jason came rushing. “You are dead Jason...”

“You two... where have you been...?” it’s George, with Leo, getting mad.

Finally we’re on the plane. After almost two hours, we reached our destination—*Boracay!* We choose an elegant and truly world class hotel owned by a German.

“What do you mean...” George asked the receptionist. “Sir, there was an error with your reservation...”

There was a problem so we moved to another resort, the *Lorenzo Resort*, a world class hotel owned by a Filipino.

George and Leo will stay in one room. Me and Jason will be spending one month together in one room!

“This must be a joke...” Jason laughs while holding his head. I didn’t react. I fix my baggage, assessed myself and went to the shower room to have some warm and relaxing shower, leaving Jason talking to himself.

While making myself dry, Jason knocked on the door. “Can’t you wait for a minute...” I said. He didn’t answer. Minutes after, I opened the door, I saw him standing in front of me with his hands on his waist wearing only his towel. I was shocked. I closed my eyes and went out immediately. I looked back at him and he stirs me with his smile. Admittedly, he’s so sexy.

The morning has come and... LET THE JOB BEGIN!

Usual thing. I did mine, he did his own. I had the moment to interview people, and since we needed documentation, Jason had to take pictures.

After that busy time, Jason decided to take a rest so I followed. We went in to this tropical café that serves fruit shakes and everything cold. I ordered my favorite *four seasons* with milk shake. Jason ordered the same. Then night came.

We walked towards this restaurant that offers buffet meal for only hundred bucks, eat all you want... and that was what I did.

Then I got hiccups. That was a long big burp. I blushed when Jason joked that I wasn’t that hungry.

It has been two weeks since we started our work. I must admit that the trip was good and fun, for I met a lot of nice and hospitable people, and away from the traffic jams. Jason and I got this chance to talk, an intimate moment.

He shared his life. He grew up in California and got the opportunity to work in several jobs, but he loves photography so much, so he had to make a choice. He came home in the country to search the half of his life. While listening to him, I can’t help but stare at his face. There’s happiness inside me while watching his lips as he talks. His eyes are attractive. But I said to myself: I will not fall in love with this guy. He is not my type.

I asked him if he has already a girlfriend. “Never in my life...” he answered.

“Can you be my partner?” he asked. I answered him, “Don’t dare ask me that...” and said that never in my life someone asked me that question. I didn’t expect that he would do that. My heart beats faster... and faster... and faster...

“No...” I said to him and pulled my hands. I stood up and went to the terrace and he followed.

“I am so sorry...” he said. I didn’t answer him back, tears fell from my eyes. I wiped it quickly. He went beside me, and asked if I were okay. “You don’t understand...” I told him. “I’m 26 Jason and all those years I’ve been searching for this man who will complete my life...” I said.

He held my hands. “Marielle... I’m serious... I like you...and I love you...” I didn’t utter any word. I closed my eyes. Then he kissed me.

He promised to take care of me no matter what. He is the man I’ve been looking for in my whole life.

A week after that, we strolled the whole place. We went to souvenir shops, to the beach, and took pictures. I really thank God for giving me the right person at the right time, but is he the right person for me?

“Jason...” a lady passed our way with a boy, about seven. The lady wore a long white skirt, with a big hat, really summer thing. Then she hugged Jason tightly.

“Jason, your son... Amber...” I was shocked, I felt like my whole world stopped turning. Jason didn’t say any word, he seemed shocked.

Cindy is Jason’s ex-girlfriend in California with whom he has a son, Amber.

“You lied to me...” I said to him while packing my whole stuff. He pleaded me not to believe her.

I finished packing my things and went away.

“Marielle... come back here... Marielle...”

“What are your plans... we have four days to go to complete this project...” George said. I have already made the decision to go home.

Jason stood up and grabbed his bag. We all decided to go home.

It is again raining while on my way home. I played the song “*So True*”.

“*So true funny how it seems... always on time... this is the sound of my soul...*”

Then suddenly my phone rings. I answered it. It’s Jason, I didn’t talk to him, and I just listened to his words. “Marielle... I’m sorry... I know I was wrong, can you give me a chance...”

Then the time has come to present a report about the trip.

I went to my office at 6:58 in the morning. I opened my computer, and finished the report for the day’s presentation.

At the presentation, the people didn’t give any reaction, they just watched. After 45 minutes, I concluded, “...and that was our trip to Boracay...”

“Congratulations...” Jason said. “Thank you...you are a part of this...” I told him. He apologized about what happened. I forgave him. He gave me a hug.

He took something in his pocket, a mini-box, red in color. He opened it. I wondered what’s inside the box.

“Marielle, will you marry me?” he asked. “Yes...” I didn’t think twice, because I knew I love him. He hugs me again and then we kissed. People were looking at us and they were clapping.

Two years later. December 23, 2005.

It was two in the morning when I arrived at the airport. I attended the annual fashion gathering in London. I met Dolce and Gabbana. It was fun talking with them as they shared their love life. Madonna and Naomi Campbell were also there wearing a Filipina-like evening gown, glowing with gold sequins and mother of pearls.

I went to London with... Jason and we had our great time together.

Finally, all my dreams came true; I am now a fashion magazine writer and editor as well and travels around the world. No longer to search for the man of my life, because I already have him, my lifetime photographer... Jason. I am now three months pregnant... and all of these things are blessings from Him.

No "YOU"

○ *Filamae Jayahr Caday*



I closed my eyes then felt the sudden desperation of my heart. I wanted to watch it beat in front of me with every thrust begging for deliverance from the loneliness that seems to envelope it eternally. As it painfully underwent spasmodic yearning to be loved and to love. I wanted to feel the blood rush out of dripping in my hands and staining my virgin clothes of hate and insecurities. I closed my eyes waiting for death.

Then you came along...you found me drenched in my pool of blood, not a princess in deep sleep but a desperate, dying. You took me in your arms and you stripped me of my clothing. You took my frantic heart from my grasp which had turned into deep black mess. You put

it in the incinerator. You gathered the ashes and blew it away with the wind of the past. I did not speak. I did not hesitate.

Then I saw you ripped your heart out, the same way I did. You watched your heart beat healthily with a smile of hope and acceptance. I watched you cut into two then the next was an utter wonder. You placed the first half back in its throne. Then you placed the other gently inside of me.

I was speechless but it felt good I don't have to say anything. You carried me up and wrapped me in your loving embrace. And right there and then, I just saw salvations, I just knew that I'm given another life. I just knew we're one. Our hearts will beat together in the same music called love. We're one...you gave me life... I live with you...you die...I die...we're one...we're one...

Then I opened my eyes to finally utter words of gratitude and love... I opened my eyes but like a smoke of illusion you weren't there...I say my room; I saw reality...no blood, no hearts out, no YOU...

LAST DANCE



○ *Ronald Manglal-lan*

Raphael stands frozen at the center of the dance studio. But as the strain of music starts to fill the room, he seems to awaken from sleep and begins to move. He is now in the center of the universe. Eyes are drawn to where he is dancing. It is always like this. Raphael commands attention when he starts dancing. He dances with much grace and passion, intensity and precision. As he finally leaps to the end of his routine, his classmates and teacher cannot help but admire his genius as a dancer.

"Very good Raphael," said his teacher.

"You're now ready for the competition," she continued.

"Thank you madam," he replied.

"Is my preparation enough for the competition?"

"More than you could imagine. The Russian will give you a tough competition but I know you will do well," the teacher answered.

"Better than I have imagined, actually."

"Coming from your madam, that says a lot," he said.

Raphael is engulfed by his ballet classmates. They are all enthusiastic about his performance. They are all happy for Raphael.

"Is that you Raphael?" the loving voice of his mom asked as she heard the front door.

"Yes mom! It's me," he said.

"Well you better hurry up and change. Your dad will soon be here," she nagged.

"No worry mom, I could do that in time at all. But let me tell you my good news first..."

"What is it son? Go on tell me."

"My ballet teacher told me that I have prepared well for the Dance Olympics," Raphael proudly narrated.

"That's good son. But don't tell your father yet."

"Mom, you have not told him until now?" asked Raphael.

"Not yet. But I will soon..."

"Okay..."

The father of Raphael is an old-fashioned man. Coming from illustrious family, Don Reynaldo expects that his wishes are obeyed. He had made plans for his son. All his plans will come true. He knows this for a fact.

The family always eats dinner together. It is their time for bonding. It is their time to talk about the things that happened to them in their everyday lives.

As always, Don Reynaldo retired to the house library where he works. A knock on the door catches his attention.

"Come in. it's you Rapha. What do you want son?"

"I want to ask a favor dad," Raphael said.

"Tell me. A raise in allowance? A new cellphone? Come on son, tell me."

"Well..."

"Hurry up Rapha, I have loads of work to do."

"I would like you to watch me in the Dance Olympics"

"What?" he thundered.

"What is it all about? I have told your mother not to allow you. Consuelo...Consuelo!!!"

"Yes dear," Doña Consuelo hurried into the library barely looking at her distraught son.

"Why did you allow our son to compete in the Dance Olympics?" Don Reynaldo shouted. Doña Consuelo did not answer. She took time to compose herself. She was nervous.

"Why?" Don Reynaldo repeated.

"Because I know that Rapha is good."

"Even against my wishes?"

"Oh Reynaldo, you should see him dance for you to know why I am letting him dance," she continued.

"Please dad. Don't get mad. I know that you don't like me dancing."

"Why can't you just be a good son and leave dancing to the sissies?"

"But that's an old-fashion notion on dancing dad," Rapha shot back.

"Let us be sensible about this," Doña Consuelo said.

"How? If I may ask," fumed Don Reynaldo.

"You come and watch me dance dad. If you think I am no good and fail in the competition, I will turn my back on dancing and do as you wish," Raphael explained.

"Are you serious about this son?" his mother asked.

"Yes mom. Is that a deal dad?" he threw the question to his dad.

"Okey son. I am so sorry. But I cannot watch you waste your intelligence to dance. I have big dreams for you Rapha," his father said.

In the next few weeks, Raphael exhausted himself with practice. He danced and danced until he perfected his routine. He danced and danced until his lines were beautiful. He danced and danced as if his life depended on the outcome of the dance competition. Raphael prepared well for the competition. He knows it. He took it after his father. Their confidence in their capabilities and abilities. And the day of the competition arrived.

Raphael is now on the stage. Frozen like a beautiful sculpture at the center stage. Don Reynaldo and Doña Consuelo were at the audience. Don Reynaldo is irritated, showing that he is not comfortable at all. Doña Consuelo, on the other hand, is nervous. Nevertheless, she is excited to watch her son dance. She knows how good her son is. Before the music played, Raphael made a promise to himself that he will make his father proud of him whether he wins or not.

And the auditorium dimmed. Leaving only the lights on stage. Once again, Raphael has the world at his feet.

Every moment of Raphael is studied and choreographed. Yet when he executed them, it is as if it was an extension of his soul. The movements are natural, flowing freely from his body. He owned the stage. He commanded the attention of the audience. He won the hearts of the judges. Raphael impressed his competitors.

As Raphael is nearing the end of his routine, tears welled in the eyes of Don Reynaldo. He cannot believe what he is watching. Not only Raphael is good. He is the best dancer he had seen. His son is good. He is the best. He is thankful that he was able to see the gift of his son.

Amidst the applause and bravos of the appreciative audience, Don Reynaldo promised to himself that this will not be the last dance of his son.

December, Moment of Love
Catherine Balaan

As the cold wind silently caressed the night
Whispering to my solemnity
In the dark you suddenly appear
 As your radiant eyes brighten my soul
And my pale blood flows over my heart with joy.

Your warmth invades my soul
Read in my eyes, my heart of overflowing love
The breeze of December sings the melody
 only the two of us can hear
Making us remember our vows of infinite love and care.

How I love the smell of your cologne
As the flower around us bloom savoring your masculinity
I crazily grasped the cheerless wind
as it jealously takes it away from me.

With wonders fireflies came
 as they give light to our paradise
Amidst with flowers sing with innocence
 a melody abandoned by rhyme
We danced as the cold breeze of December sings
Then fling the joy from rhyme to rhyme.

The moon is in blue telling the dark clouds to go away
 as it tries to witness the two of us
Stars slowly they fall
 as servants into carpet of strong, pure and infinite
love.

We danced with the rain
 with melodies of love and pain
I wondered why your shadow vanished in the dark
Leaving my tears unnoticed in the rain
I wish the wind is with me but I am alone.
as it annihilates your shadow
 in the darkness of the night
My pillow cried with sympathy
 as it tries to try to dry my tears.

I hope it's you.
My mind refuses to remember
 the memories we shared
As the moon refused to shine, my tears refused to fall
Farewell.

Farewell to the memories of love and care
Love is infinite, memories stay forever
All good done but ill intention
Best deeds but I served the worst.

I'll never forget the pain.
But I'll learn to live with the pain
I realized that you'll forever be an apparition
 a dream, a fantasy
 away from reality.

Mother...Merry Christmas!
Leslee

It's already midnight
But I'm still wide awake
My mind keeps on working
Wondering about Christmas.

Then I whispered and asked
Why do you need to go away?
Can you not just be with us
So we can celebrate Christmas all together?

I closed my eyes
But I couldn't sleep
Questions lingered in my mind
So I try to find the answers.

I know you wanted to be with us
You just couldn't because of love
I couldn't blame you
'Coz it is for the good of us.

Again it's Christmas!
Another year without you
You're across the miles
Working hard to give us good life

Mother,
Thank you for everything
Merry Christmas...
I love you!

WWW -BLU-

DA RETURN OF
DA COMEBACK

UY, NO SMOKING
DITO SA STUDENT
CENTER! DOON KA
SA LABAS!

HINDI NGA
SIGARILYO
ITO! LOLIPOP!

S#!\$
BAKIT
WALA AKO
REGALO?!

NYAHHAHA!
MALAKI AT
MABIGAT ANG
REGALO SA
'KIN! BEEH!!

ANO BA
INIREGALO
MO SA KAN-
YA AT GAN-
YAN KALAKI
GIFT NYA?

CRAYOLA
AT SAMPUNG
BATO SA
LOOB NG BA-
LIKBIYAN
BOX.

YABANG!

ANO REGALO
SA 'YO NG
BABY MO?

BABY!

INTAY
AG CARO-
LING!!



O,
GIFT
MO!

SAY IT
WITH A
KISS!



HAPI KRISMAS!
MERI NYU NYIR!

PARE, H'WAG KA
NA MAINGAY, MA-
HAHALATA NA NA-
KA INOM TAYO...

