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MEMENTO

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Message from the Founder

Dear Scribblorists,

“Hindi na tulad ng dati.” (It’s not like before.)

While Christmas is often called “a season to be jolly”, the truth is it isn’t always merry for everyone. We can’t help but ascribe Christmas to things (how we celebrate it) and people (who we celebrate it with), and it’s inevitable for our perspective of it to evolve as we age . . . as we lose our loved ones.

For my family, Christmas always brings memories of Mama. It was her favorite time of the year, and it’s impossible to forget the sparkle in her eyes every time Christmas songs began playing as the *ber* months rolled in. She was the one who started Christmas traditions in the family—placing presents under the Christmas tree; waking up at midnight for the *Noche Buena*, playing parlor games, and exchanging gifts; and taking the long road trips from Manila to Baguio.

Since she passed away, Christmas hasn’t been the same. Papa often says, *“Hindi na tulad ng dati.”* Many of our traditions slowly faded with her. Now, with my sisters living abroad, Papa and I celebrate Christmas with our extended families. Considering the time differences, we greet each other through a video call on the midday of the 24th. However, despite these changes, one new tradition took root: Papa and I now attend Simbang Gabi and never miss Holy Mass on Christmas Day. We have more time praying and talking about the past Christmases, cherishing the good bygone. And that’s how we gain solace, joy, and peace year after year.

Since then, our perspective of Christmas no longer means things (how we celebrate it) and people (who we celebrate it with). We realized that even when traditions and loved ones pass away, the True Meaning of Christmas endures. And that truth is enough to make the season genuinely jolly.

Create great memories this Christmas,
Elaine

Preserving Memories: Strength in the Second Life of a Single Mom

Lorelie Hernandez as told to Aiko Hara

At the age of 28, Lorelie “Lie” Hernandez got pregnant out of wedlock. After she gave birth to a son, she had profuse bleeding because of uterine atony and had to be sent back to the OR. At that moment, she had a near-death experience she can’t forget.

“I [was dead for] seven seconds. They had to revive me.”

During the seven seconds in her flatline state, she saw a very bright light and a man’s hand, telling her to come with him. She was supposed to reach the man’s hand until a very beautiful image of a lady appeared in her vision. Lie opened her eyes and was revived.

What happened to Lie brought tears of joy to her OB who was leaning on her feet, telling her it was the first time it happened. Lie laughed at the memory of it, and even said, “Gusto ko tadyakan eh, para sabihing buhay ako.”

God worked a miracle for her as she lives her second life. Lie believes that God has a reason to allow this to happen; that is, to fulfill God’s purpose for her as she gains more strength from her Savior. She praises God for she’s still alive.

Lie had a hysterectomy right after she gave birth. Her surgeries were cesarean section and hysterectomy in 2003, total thyroidectomy in 2016, cholecystectomy in 2018, and—just lately this year—brain surgery. What was just painful from all these experiences was that core biopsy of the lump in her breast; her right breast was swollen and bruised for a week.

Just like Lie’s father, uncles, brother, and eldest sister, she is an OFW working in one of the private hospitals in Dubai, UAE. She grew up with the notion that working abroad means earning a lot of money—but not everything is as it seems.

“I thought that being an OFW is an easy-peasy job. I was wrong. I am the youngest [among] four siblings and I can say that the adults around me [had] sheltered me so much from ‘reality’. I do not blame them, but I think I [was] just not ready when I [faced] reality myself.”

After all the experiences she had, unfortunately, the father of her son left them for another woman, three years into their relationship. As Lie playfully pointed, “Sumakabilang bahay, literally!”

She has been raising her son with the help of her siblings who are all very supportive. Her son is now 19 years old studying in his first year of college, taking up Radiation Technology. She even thought that maybe his son took this course upon knowing the procedures that were done to his mom in the past.

By surrendering her life to God, Lie has been much stronger even now that she’s facing another battle of her life as dramatically ‘real’ as it can be.

“I am battling stage 4 breast cancer that has metastasized to the lungs and brain. I had brain surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy. I am still undergoing chemotherapy. Praise God for the strength.”

Lie loves the smell of paper; she prefers reading physical books more than ebooks. She also loves snail mail, scrapbooking, diamond painting, acrylic painting, bead crafts, paper twirling, loom bands, and rosary bead crafting. There may be a lot of things that Lie has been already doing and has done in this world, but there’s this one thing that Lie has been wanting to do: to write a book—a memoir of her life, offering an inspiring portrait of peace, obedience, hope, and strength.

“Honesty goes a long way. Always tell the truth. . .I [would like to] write [a book] because I want to preserve the moment and I want the world to know about something –or anything. I want to remember well and write a book before I die.”

Lie also added, “With the little strength I have, I [will] give it [all] to God. I’ll serve the Lord [in] whatever capacity. Kahit hinang-hina na ako, para kay Lord lahat [nang] ito.”

Here’s Lie’s message to all aspiring writers:

“If you want to tell about yourself, your story—write it down...to preserve the memories. That would help the future generation—or the people—who would need [your story] at that time and inspire all of them.”

This article was first published in Scribblory News on Sep. 13, 2022. Visit <https://www.scribblory.com/news> to read more stories.



Lorelie is a student of Scribblory's devotional writing workshop and memoir writing bootcamp.

Lie wrote diaries and slam books when she was in grade school. She has been sending snail mails to random people since grade school through the help of an online website. When she was in high school, she was sending random mails—in a form of letters— to religious organizations she would read from magazines—some replied, some did not.

She's currently a member of post crossing wherein she would send postcards to random people all over the world. Her article about her hiking journey in one of the highest mountains in the Southern Region of Saudi Arabia was featured in Saudi Gazette. Some of her Filipino lifestyle articles were featured in Arab news (Middle East newspaper) in Saudi Arabia. She has written in the newsletter of her current company in Dubai, UAE. Currently, she is part of the team doing the content for The Late Night Worship of Couples for Christ, UAE.

Lie's favorite Bible verses are found in Leviticus 26:10, John 15:13, and Joshua 1:8.

*Echoes of
Christmas:*

Reflections on Love
and Giving

WHAT DO PEOPLE FORGET IN THE CHRISTMAS SEASON?

by Judelin Alvarez

Growing up as an only child in the family, I was used to receiving care, comfort, attention, and love. I was surrounded by walls of dreams, a tower of inspiration, and a sea of gifts. My parents were my stronghold and refuge, on whom I depended my whole life. I thought what my family gave me was all I ever needed. But I was absolutely wrong.

Sixteen years ago, I met this Man who I never thought had so much love for me even when I barely knew the world. His eyes were on my every step, His ears listening even to my unsung cries, and His hands caressed the fatal pain waiting to happen. He calls me mine, and He promises the most precious things the world does not deserve. I barely know Him, but He knows me completely – the number of my hair, the days of my life, my getting up and lying down. He assures me of His plans to prosper me and never leave me. Is there someone to embrace me despite my filth? To give their life just for me to live? No one in this world can ever do such a thing - only God can do this. But people do forget this kind of love even during the Christmas season.

Christmas, as many people believe, is a time of celebration, happiness, forgiveness, and love. That is why we fill our homes with bright lights, colorful trees, and gifts. We sing Christmas carols, plan vacations, and hold family reunions. We forget what is in Christmas that we rejoice. Let me walk you through a story of love that makes Christmas the most joyous occasion every year.

Two thousand years ago, a baby was born to whom God has promised us eternal hope and salvation. He came down to this earth in a human form and in the lowest place to give us life which we never thought we needed. His life is but a preparation for death. But only a few would remember to thank Him for this gift because we center our minds on the things that make our hearts leap for joy.

The reason Jesus came into this world is to save us, and I think that is an enormous gift we should not forget to celebrate. Of course, I do not mean to say we should not hold parties, give gifts, and treat ourselves and our families. What I want to stress is that we should thank God for this incredible gift. Unless we realize this gift of grace, we will not realize the value of material things we enjoy in this world.

Go back to the manger – the lowly place that comforted Jesus. Go back to Mary and Joseph – who embraced Jesus despite the danger of being mistaken for conceiving before marriage. Go back to the shepherds – the lowliest of people, yet chosen by God to reveal the Savior. Go back to the three wise men – who, despite the uncertainty and a difficult journey, followed the star to worship Jesus, sent to save sinners. Go back to the angels – who sang joyous praise to worship the Lord's Christ.

May we not forget this kind of love – a love that we do not deserve but God lavishly showered us.

LOVE IN ACTION: TOUCHING HEARTS AND TRANSFORMING LIVES

by Plunmarupok

As I reflect on my life's purpose, I realize that adversity became the catalyst for my greatest joy. Growing up, I knew the pangs of hunger, the sting of scarcity, and the ache of loneliness. Yet, those dark moments ignited a fire within me – a passion to serve, to give, and to uplift.

After years of personal struggles, a broken marriage due to repeated infidelity, and becoming a solo parent to two children – a boy and a girl – I found solace in my faith and discovered my true calling: humanitarian service. I joined the *Malasakit sa Pilipino* (MSP) Lady Eagles Club, a local organization of The Fraternal Order of Eagles Philippine Eagles, dedicated to supporting vulnerable communities. While working as a caregiver, I also joined the writing community from local and international. With every step, my heart swelled with purpose.

My mission began with sharing my most valuable assets: knowledge, time, and resources. In every community service, I volunteer myself teaching Bible study classes in the community, together with other Ate's (In our Club, we called all women "Ate" and all men "Kuya") focusing on children who craved guidance and love. Watching them grasp the teachings, their faces aglow with wonder filled me with indescribable joy.

To make learning fun, I incorporated games, quizzes, and interactive activities. Laughter echoed through the open ground as we explored scripture together. The children's smiles were a testament to the impact of compassion.

Regular gift-giving initiatives brought additional delight. Seeing the sparkle in their eyes when receiving small treasures – books, toys, rice, groceries, vitamins, or clothes – reminded me of the simple pleasures in life. These gestures not only brought happiness but also fostered hope.

One child, Sarah, touched my heart profoundly. She had lost her parents and lived with her grandparents at a tender age and clung to every word during our Bible study sessions. Her eagerness to learn inspired me. Sarah listened nicely and assisted me with the kids paying attention, too.

As our community bond strengthened, I witnessed transformations. Families, once struggling, began supporting one another. The children's grades improved, and their self-esteem blossomed. The ripple effects of kindness and compassion resonated deeply.

And before we left, a mother approached me with tears streaming down her face. "You've given my child more than just knowledge," she said. "You've shown her love, care, and a sense of belonging. Thank you for being an angel in our lives. This was the first time that there's a good person like you to reach us like this."

At that moment, I knew that every sacrifice, every late night preparing lesson, and every peso donated was worth it. The true wealth lay not in material possessions but in touching hearts.

From adversity to advocacy, my journey and my purpose is to write to inspire every woman, and every child to stay positive and believe that there are more possibilities to happen.

Today, as I look back on my journey, I realize that serving others has become my life's anthem. The struggles of my past now serve as a reminder of the power of resilience and compassion. By sharing my blessings, even if I don't have wealth, I've discovered a sense of fulfillment that transcends worldly riches.

In the end, it's not about what we have, but it's about what we give. As I continue on this path, I'm reminded of Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Giving: My Greatest Gain

With empty hands, I once did stand,
Knowing the ache of empty plans.
But in the depths of my barren land,
I found a seed of love to expand.

Though my pockets were threadbare and worn,
I learned to give, to sow, and to share.
For in the act of letting go, I'm born,
To find true wealth beyond compare.

Love multiplies, never divides.
In scarcity, it abounds and hides.
The less I have, the more I give,
Finding riches in the hearts I live.

Memories of hunger, and of darkened nights,
Fuel my passion to illuminate lights.
In the shadows of my own struggles' might,
I find the strength to make another's sight.

So let me give, though I may not have much.
For in the giving, love's true treasure clutch.
And though my resources may dwindle and fade,
Love's abundance forever will be displayed.

FINDING THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

by Alfred Pagunsan Gadayan

The air crackled with anticipation, a symphony of carols and laughter echoing through the crisp December air. The scent of pine needles and cinnamon hung heavy, a comforting aroma that whispered of warmth and togetherness. Christmas is a time for reflection, gratitude, and the simple joy of being surrounded by loved ones. As I gazed at the twinkling lights adorning the Christmas tree, a wave of memories washed over me, each one a precious echo of Christmases past.

I remembered the magic of childhood, the unwavering belief in Santa Claus, and the thrill of unwrapping presents on Christmas morning. The anticipation was palpable, a tangible excitement that filled every corner of our home. We'd gather around the tree, our eyes wide with wonder as we exchanged gifts and shared stories of the year gone by. The laughter was infectious, the warmth of family love radiating like the glow of the Christmas lights.

But Christmas wasn't just about presents; it was about the spirit of giving, the act of selflessness that transcended material possessions. I recalled volunteering at a local soup kitchen, serving meals to those less fortunate. The smiles on their faces, and the gratitude in their eyes, were the most precious gifts I received that Christmas. It was a humbling experience – a reminder that true joy lies in giving, in making a difference in the lives of others.

As I grew older, the magic of Christmas evolved, but the essence remained the same. The joy of sharing a meal with loved ones, the laughter that filled our home, and the simple act of giving, all resonated with the true spirit of the season. I learned that Christmas wasn't about the grand gestures or the extravagant gifts, but about the small acts of kindness, the thoughtful words, and the genuine connection that made the season truly special.

One Christmas, I found myself miles away from home, working in a bustling city, feeling the sting of loneliness. The festive atmosphere around me seemed to amplify my isolation. But then, a small act of kindness changed everything. A stranger, noticing my somber mood, offered me a cup of hot cocoa – a simple gesture that warmed not just my hands, but my heart. It was a reminder that even in a crowded city, kindness could still find its way – a beacon of light in the darkest of times.

Christmas, I realized, was not a day but a feeling – a spirit that transcended time and space. It was the echo of love, the whisper of hope, and the warmth of compassion that resonated in the hearts of those who embraced its true meaning. It was the joy of giving, the act of selflessness, and the shared moments of laughter and togetherness that made the season truly magical.

As I sat by the fireplace, the flickering flames casting and dancing shadows on the walls, I felt a deep sense of gratitude for the memories, the lessons, and the love that had shaped my Christmases. The echoes of laughter, the warmth of family, and the spirit of giving, all resonated within me, reminding me that the true magic of Christmas lies not in the presents under the tree, but in the love that surrounds us – the kindness we share, and the hope that we carry in our hearts.

YULETIDE BEATITUDES

by Cris Mari

I have never donated to charity at Christmas. It sounds embarrassing to me now, but the thought just did not appeal to me. I preferred giving gifts to family members and friends—this tradition keeps the act more personal and meaningful. Or maybe it just meant that I did not care enough.

But even gift-giving could become stale. Friends and family members grow up, evolve, and change their minds about what they like. Suddenly books are no longer appealing, and kitschy items are no longer wanted.

It would be hypocritical of me to say that I did not feel disillusioned. “It’s the thought that counts” used to be my guiding principle, but when people want something else—and you can tell this from subtle hints, or a bolder request, “*Perahin mo na lang*” (Give me money instead)—it can almost feel like outright rejection. Still, you keep giving them what you think they might like. I felt like I could not simply give up on this family tradition.

Yet deep within, I could feel that something was lacking. It felt like this tradition had to be elevated – be made more purposeful.

Then one evening at the *Misa de Gallo* in our town parish, I saw a peculiar-looking Christmas tree. Instead of having the usual shiny balls and stars as ornaments, the tree had blue and yellow cards hanging from the branches. Curious, I plucked one that read “School Supplies.” I picked another one, which had the word “Toiletries” printed on it. Apparently, I had stumbled on the Christmas Gift Tree, an area to collect presents and blessings (in Filipino, it’s called *Aguinaldo*) for children, families, and Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL).

I do not know what happened, or how it happened, but something inside me suddenly wanted so badly to participate in the initiative. There was no warning, no preamble. What I used to describe as corny and unappealing, I found enlightening. It is quite difficult to explain, and what made its stranger for me was the fact that I wanted to be a part of it. I wanted my gift-giving tradition to include people I do not know. I wanted to help.

I guess this is what they call a eureka moment, only it’s less intense. It was not an AHA moment, but more of a strong, persistent calling. And I felt blessed, right then and there at the parish, in the middle of the anticipated Mass. Things just fell into place, then I thought, “This is what purposeful giving is.”

At the time of writing, I had already wrapped the gifts and made them ready for delivery to the parish office. God knows I am smiling—stupidly, to be exact—at how the universe turned the tables on me. I am not complaining, though. I like how my story is developing. No doubt that next Christmas, I will have more gifts—and a whole lot of love—to give. Yes, blessed are the poor and suffering, and I am equally blessed to be given an opportunity this yuletide season to make their Christmases a little brighter.

THE GIFT OF YOUTH

by Charly Lam

Christmas is a time that has come to symbolize much more than just a religious holiday or merely an annual tradition of gift-giving. Rather, it symbolizes a reminder of the deeper values that bind us all together – love, kindness, compassion, and of course, giving. As we gather around with our family and friends, exchange gifts, and share meals, we tend to often forget that the core essence of Christmas lies not in the material things but in the intangible qualities of the heart: generosity and affection.

In the Christian tradition, the birth of Jesus represents God's gift to humanity – a gift of sacrifice, redemption, and most of all, love, which reminds us that in its purest form, is truly unconditional. However, the spirit of love at Christmas is not solely limited to its religious aspects.

Thinking back on the past Christmases I've had, this reminds me of the December I had last year. I was still going through the paces of my senior year in high school, and in our curriculum, we had a subject called Creativity, Activity, and Service. For our Service strand, we had to curate an activity that required us to organize something that involved us giving back to our community without receiving anything in return. With this, my friends chose to organize an excursion to the Virilanie Foundation, more specifically the younger kids to spread joy before Christmas came.

That being said, we planned extensively prior to the day we scheduled to visit. We gathered books to read to them during the session and brought coloring materials for them to draw with. Additionally, we also thought that decorating cupcakes would make for a nice activity too, so we bought *mamon* (for those who don't know, a traditional Filipino chiffon or sponge cake, baked in a cupcake-like mold) as well as sprinkles, gummy bears, and M&Ms to adorn them with.

After all the planning and gathering, the day we planned to meet them finally came. We all piled into the van, spirits at their highest and excitement overflowing on an early sunny Thursday morning, to go and hang out with them. Once we arrived, we went around and exchanged introductions with some nervousness in the air, due to this being our first meeting. We halved up the activities between our five members, starting with me and my friend Edward reading books to the kids.

Seeing as it was Christmas, one of our other groupmates, Shayla, bought books related to Jesus' birth and stories from the Bible. Reading to the kids was actually a very interactive experience, as the children got very into it and sat beside us, looking at the pictures and words and reading along with us. They would even be very enthralled at scenes they thought were interesting, gasping or staring at us with rapt attention, hanging on to our every word.

Next, we went on to coloring. We helped the *ate's* set up the chairs around the tables in the next room of the house so the kids could sit and draw easily. Occasionally, they would ask some of us as we walked around to take a look at their drawings or help them out in creating the ideas they had in mind. From dragons that blew out waves of fire, to colorful flowers sprouting in a tiny garden, sitting with them really reminded us of our childhoods – getting to see the youthful happiness in their eyes as they eagerly partook in the activity made us extremely happy.

The same thing went for the cupcake decoration. They were so excited to participate in it that they ended up over piling the candies on them to the point where they were nearly about to tip over, which we found really funny.

When the day eventually came to a close, we left the house feeling refreshed and glad for the time we spent with them.

Personally, I can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of happiness and gratitude for the memories we created with and for them. For us, and I'd like to think, for the kids too, it wasn't just about the activities we curated for them, but about the bonds we formed with the children as well as the joy we inspired within them. Getting to see the unbridled glee on each and every one of their faces gave me a deep sense of fulfillment.

Considering the sadness they were made to experience at such a young age, I was extremely happy that we were able to bring some sense of delight into their lives. Additionally, this managed to leave me with the reminder of the importance of being present in our loved ones' lives and to cherish every single moment made with them. This is something I will always carry forward in my life, so I can always recall the significance of this thought.

MEMORIES OF A LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

by Albert Banico

I was just a child – maybe in grade school, though I can't recall the exact year – when I first consciously heard that Christmas was around the corner. I remember being fascinated by the Christmas lanterns displayed in our neighbor's window and attending nightly church masses, the children singing at every doorstep at night. I later joined in as part of a group—sometimes as a drummer, sometimes as a singer. I also remember the joy of food, sparkling lights, and receiving new clothes and shoes. These are cherished memories of my loving parents gently nurturing us as we grew up in the heart of Manila.

That day, for the very first time – when I became aware that Christmas was getting near – I desired to receive a gift from my dear love, Santa Claus.

I had seen him on television, in movies, and as a popular Christmas decoration in department stores while shopping with my mom. The stories of his reindeer and his love for giving gifts to children fascinated me. I even heard the song about a child catching their mommy kissing Santa Claus, and how Santa Claus knows if children are sleeping, awake, bad, or good. So, with such belief in Santa Claus, I placed a sack by the window, hoping Santa Claus would leave a gift for me while I slept.

I slept that night with so much expectations and excitement. However, when I woke up the next morning, I found the two sacks I had hung still empty—no gift, no Santa Claus. There and then, at a very young age, I realized that there was no Santa Claus. He doesn't exist and must not be promoted to the little kids.

Growing up, I learned that Santa Claus was inspired by Saint Nicholas, a 4th-century Christian bishop known for his generosity and secret gift-giving, and by Father Christmas, a traditional figure celebrated in England on December 25th, coinciding with the Nativity.

Further down the road, on every Christmas occasion, I was used to the customs of giving gifts to classmates and friends, and then later while working with my officemates. I never expected to receive any gifts to avoid disappointments, perhaps because of the Santa Claus incident. Possibly, it was a traumatic experience that I kept to myself during my childhood.

As my adult years went by, I started to understand the meaning of every image in the churches. Difficulties in life introduced me to the Bible and read stories from the greatest love of all – Christ himself.

I started to understand the deeper meaning of the nativity. Apart from the yearly night Christmas or *Simbang Gabi*, a nine-day series of holy mass during my childhood before going to school, I occasionally attend despite my still sleepy mood. It is said that the Spaniards brought this night mass sometime in the 16th century; but beyond the colonial influence, the mass reflects on the nights when Mary, the mother of Christ together with Joseph traveled and searched for the appropriate place to give birth to the child Jesus. The virtues of humility, sacrifice, hope, and genuine love shine in a world full of materialism, unfaithfulness, and greed on that silent and holy night during the first Christmas.

Today, I love to hear the legendary character of the little drummer boy and understand more about the idea of love and giving to others. It eternally resonates with the message that God so loved the world that he gave His only Son. An echo of divine love presents in all tabernacles shining making every day the most wonderful time of the year.

Last night, we had a family reunion filled with fun as we exchanged gifts. We plan to continue this tradition every Christmas as a way to strengthen our family bond. In the end, we become Santa Claus for one another, celebrating the birth of the greatest love story of all.

PASKO NA SA AMON

by Mary Grace P. Baldoza

“Pasko na sa amon.”

This is what we say as each day unfolds, turning each home into a castle of beauty, the streets filled with twinkling lights, the park illuminated with various shapes and colors of Christmas decorations, and the air shifts with so much nostalgia and happiness in anticipation of the Christmas season.

I grew up knowing that the most awaited time would be Christmas, as the community where I lived made sure that each kid would remember the significance of the celebration. Every food in each household would be brought outside, karaoke would be set up, and gifts would be ready under the Christmas tree where coins await to fall. The undeterred children would shake the tree from left to right the moment everyone shouted "MERRY CHRISTMAS!" making the coins fall for everyone to pick out.

The laughter can be heard from corner to corner as each individual sings the *I love my Manito, I love my Manita* out loud. Children would smile from ear to ear as they rip the wrapper of each gift from their *ninongs* and *ninangs*, while you would see some of them count how much money was at hand.

As the changes in time make celebrations significantly different from one to the other, families celebrate the season far from each other – priorities change and loved ones are gone from our arms. But let us not fail to remember that the Christmas season always brings us all together and that the birth of Christ is not just a festivity but a season of hope, love, and gratitude.

As traditions evolved, it warms my heart to still hear the Christmas carols of young and old, and witness the tradition of *timbang gabi*, the fireworks display, the stalls of food delicacies, and all of the festivities the Christmas season brings. I will indeed say "*Pasko na sa amon*" with joy and gladness.

TIYAK

by Arlene Ariate

Itinigil ng aking kaibigan ang kaniyang sasakyan sa harap ng aming bahay at sinabihan akong tumahan muna bago ako bumaba. Nangingilid pa rin ang aking mga luha na tila gripang may leak ang aking mga mata.

"Bakit ang sakit sakit, Lord? Kailan mawawala ang sakit?," turan ko habang inaayos ang mga gamit ko sa bag bago bumaba.

Hinawakan ako ni Roxanne sa braso at binanggit sa pinakabanayad niyang boses ang mga katagang tila nagpabago sa pananaw ko sa sitwasyong nilalabanan ko sa panahong iyon.

"Puro ka kasi tanong kay Lord," simula niya.

“Manalangin ka at sabihin sa Kaniya na gabayan ka, hilomin ka, at nagtitiwala ka sa anumang plano Niya sa buhay mo. Itigil mo na ang mga katanungan mo kasama ng mga luha mo,” patuloy niya.

Sa pagkakataong iyon bago ko tapusin ang araw ay iwinagayway ko ang puting panyo sa Panginoon. Buo kong ipinagkatiwala ang paghilom Niya sa aking puso at pagbabalik Niya ng aking kakayahang muling magbigay at magmahal nang walang takot at pangamba.

Setyembre iyon; dalawang buwan bago sumapit ang Pasko. Kung minsa’y bumubulong pa rin ang sakit ng kahapon ngunit nang tumigil ako sa pagtatanong sa Diyos ay mas lalo kong napahalagahan ang buhay na kaloob Niya. Ngayong Disyembre ay nagagalak ang aking puso habang binabalikan ang araw na iyon ng Setyembre. Ginawang instrumento ng Diyos si Roxanne upang palayain ang alinlangan sa aking puso at palitan ito ng hangaring magbigay muli at magmahal ng walang pag-iimbot. Magmahal hindi ng bagong tao sa aking buhay kundi ng mga taong nakapaligid sa akin na sa maraming pagkakataon ay hindi ko nabigyang halaga.

Masuwerte ka kung sa iyong kahinaan ay umuusbong ang lakas. Dito mo malalaman na may kaya ka papalang ibigay sa kapuwa. May kaya ka pa palang isakripisyo at may mahuhugot ka pa pala para maibigay na inspirasyon sa iba. Binabago ka ng Panginoon sa mga oras na akala mo’y hindi mo kaya. Mas pinipili mong magbigay, hindi lamang ng materyal na bagay kundi ng bahagi ng iyong sarili na akala mo’y nilunod ng kahinaan.

Ipinapakita mo rin ang pagmamahal sa mga simpleng paraan – pakikinig sa hinaing ng iba, paggalang sa sitwasyon ng kapuwa, pagluluto para sa lahat, pagbibigay ng serbisyo ng walang kapalit, pag-intindi sa kalagayan ng kaibigan, pagiging mabuting anak, pagiging tapat, at marami pang iba. Napakapanatag ng isang pusong sa kabila ng benda’t tahi na inabot mula sa mga pagsubok ay nananatiling mapagbigay at mapagmahal.

Sa mundong tila dumarami ang tanong kaysa sa kasagutan, may iisang tiyak – may iisang sigurado na hindi ka iiwan at hihilomin ka hanggang sa kaibuturan. Hindi mo mamalayang sa ibinigay Niyang gabay at pagkakataon ay binuksan mong muli ang iyong pagkatao sa kultura ng pagbibigay at pagmamahal. Tiyak ang Panginoon anumang buwan sa taon hindi lang ngayong Pasko.

Sa pagtatapos ng taong ito, maraming pagdududa’t takot na hindi ko natalikuran nang buong-buo, pero sa nag-iisang “tiyak” sa aking buhay, humahawak ako sa paniniwalang sa patuloy kong pagbibigay at pagmamahal. Darating din ang panahong matatanggap ko ang regalong inihanda Niya para sa akin. Inihahanda lamang Niya ako para dito. Sa tiyak Niyang pag-ibig, tiyak din ang aking paghihintay sa kung saan Niya ako dadalhin.

UNDER THE TREE, LOVE'S GUARANTEE

by Razel Jean T. Achacoso

Under the tree, where lights softly gleam,
A promise of love, like a gentle dream.
In whispers of joy, the season unfolds,
A story of giving, as Christmas is told.
With hearts wide open, we all feel the grace,
In the warmth of love, in this sacred place.

Beneath the stars, our wishes take flight,
Bound by the magic of this holy night.
The gifts that we give, the smiles that we share,
Are tokens of love, a bond so rare.
For in every moment, both small and grand,
Christmas lives through each helping hand.

The laughter we share, the memories we make,
Each simple gesture, for love's own sake.
A hand to hold, a heart to give.
In kindness and care, together we live.
Under the tree, where dreams take their place,
We find hope in each other's embrace.

The wrapping may fade, the bows may fall,
But love's tender echo remains through it all.
In every corner, in each gentle sound,
We hear the spirit of Christmas all around.
For the truest gift is not what we see,
But the love we give so freely, so free.

So as we gather, both near and far,
We remember the gift of who we are.
Under the tree, with hearts full of cheer,
Love's guarantee, forever sincere.
In giving, we find the greatest treasure,
A Christmas of love, beyond all measure.

CHRISTMAS TANKAS

by Ma. Elena Yusay

I: Parols

Beacons of Yuletide,
Lighting up roads in the dark,
Stars put on display,
Made of rainbows, love, and hope,
Showcasing the crafters' skills.

II: Mama's Pasta

Mother's gift for us,
Ready for *Noche Buena*,
Al dente like her,
Simmered sauce filled with flavors,
Grated cheese for extra zing.

III: Paella Valenciana

Artwork in a pan,
Painted with seafood and rice,
Spices for shading,
Warmness in a black canvas,
Let us eat this with Lechon.

IV: Fruit Salad

Jewels in sweet snow,
Cups of love and affection,
Temporary bliss,
Reminding us of childhood,
One more scoop to fill bellies.

V: Monito Monita

Whispering secrets,
Acting like shadow agents,
Wrapping mysteries,
Thanking thoughts in boxed wishes,
Father Christmas blessing us.

FIVE POEMS FOR A LOVE FEAST

by Dennis Espada

Kneeling at the Chapel

I listen because your words cut deeply;
I come because you called so lovingly.
I arrive because you're waiting for me too;
I stay because I cannot live without you.

Presence

He who makes present His greatest sacrifice
gives His greatest present on the Cross/Crib,
in the presence of countless believers
from all walks of this life and in the next.

Because We're Loved

Because we're loved by God,
we become loving like Him,
and others loving us back
so we can love more and more.

Prayer over Possessions

Teach us to use possessions
for our eternal salvation, O Lord.
Lead us not into hoarding,
but deliver us always
from self-condemnation.

Partaking

I was told that you're looking for me.
So today, I thought I'd make a visit
to see you because I want to share
in a meal of infinite joy and value.

Here I am. Are you there?
I always had a thirst-craving
for mysteries, revealed and hidden.
You, O Lord, fill me with awe!

Are you the one Lamb sacrificed?
Contained in this food for believers?
Offered for the forgiveness of sins?
And received as Heaven's lifeline?

And so I humbly kneel in adoration;
I strike my breasts in contrition;
I sing hymns of grateful exultation;
I ask God to hear this supplication.

Though guests bring presents daily,
the grace of your presence is enough
to trigger a sudden rush of metanoia—
reborn in the altar as in the Cross.

Through you, with you, and in you
is the power to give boundless love
that no gourmet or earthly beverage
could ever replicate for all time!

'MHERRY'*by Nicole Audrey D. Co*

Christmas isn't just about gifts.
It's about sharing love and lifting spirits adrift.
A childhood full of happy memories—
The best parts were making desserts and giving gifts with glee.

As *Noche Buena* draws near,
Time moves so fast, like the blink of an eye.
Everything that happens this season has its reasons:
Will you dwell on the past or embrace future horizons?

Each night, the air grows cold,
And we're reminded that we're all growing old.
Things have started to change—
We can't bring back the past, but if given a chance . . .

I guess we'd all want to press the rewind button.
Everyone wishes to correct their mistakes.
We need space to breathe, to pause,
And to take some time to reflect.

Christmas feels different each passing year.
Most of us long for our loved ones to be near.
While others want to sleep or distract themselves.

They've reached the point where the table is full of food,
But the chairs remain empty,
And the silence feels louder than it should.

A SELFLESS CHRISTMAS GIFT

by Esperanza Flores-Fulgar

I wish to gift you something
That I could buy and wrap.
Despite the fact I was broke,
Oh! My budget was that tight.

Still, I went out shopping,
And even filled my cart
With items I believed
You definitely would love.

I also shopped online
As if I was starving.
My orders abound,
My parcels kept on arriving!

But then I had to question,
“Would these gifts be enough?
Do you need all these items?
Are these the ones you want?”

And so I threw the wrapper,
And then I crushed the box.
Instead of fancy gifts,
I opted to share some Love.

A selfless Christmas gift -
This would delight your heart!

THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

by Jeffrey G. Delfin

Christmas is not just about giving of things,
But about the joy a wrapped little present brings.
It's not just for lovers, exchanging delight,
But a season of wonder, a holy night.

It's not merely kindness, spreading afar,
Or sharing our hearts where the lonely are.
Though love for mankind is a gift to embrace,
It pales in the light of God's boundless grace.

It's not just the laughter of friends drawing near,
Or families united in holiday cheer.
Though sweet are taste of memories made,
They are shadows of love that will never fade.

Christmas is Jesus, born in the hay,
A Savior who came to show us the way.
He bore every sin, the weight of the cross,
To turn all our sorrow and shame into gloss.

So let us remember, this day of His birth,
The gift of redemption, of heaven on earth.
For Christmas's meaning, so pure and divine,
The love of our Savior, eternal and sublime.

HYMN OF PRAISE

by Michelle Joy Velasco

In moments of joy, I celebrate the boundless love of God,
recognizing how His presence fills our hearts with warmth.
He is always by my side, never leaving nor forsaking me,
believing in me and offering His unconditional love.
Oh, how my heart swells with joy for the Lord!

In times of distress, when loneliness presses me down,
I find comfort in God's unwavering love,
guiding my prayers and gently holding my hand.
Despite my struggles and imperfections,
His unexpected blessings remind me
of His steadfast faith in me as His cherished child.

I am filled with deep, indescribable gratitude.
At my weakest, His embrace makes me strong,
reminding me that I am never alone.
I praise Him, for He is a nurturing Father:
I express this praise through a song
born from a heart overflowing with love.

In His presence, I find refuge and resilience,
knowing I am treasured, a beloved soul in His eyes.
He is my shepherd, and I am His gentle lamb;
I love Him with all that I am.

Let us come together to lift our voices in praise of God,
In this life filled with challenges, He is our guiding light.
May we continually seek His love and lift our grateful hearts,
for God is our Lord; let us honor Him in all His greatness.

A MENDICANT'S PRAYER

by Cristy Madel L. Abagao

I am no beggar of alms, but a beggar of mercy,
For my life has been in distress and I need your empathy.
Life is hard, my fate is outworn, my hope is all torn,
Struggling to be strong, for every meal is a battle I must've won.

Living in destitute, in the poorest slum I dwell.
I possess no riches—a penny's more worthy than my name.
People just pass by; I am invisible to everybody.
Even my closest kin will never acknowledge me.

Lord, I beg with my bended knees, hear my agony, see me weep,
Make me strong enough to live this life with hope and no regrets.
I plead with You to embrace me in my life's lowest phase,
Because in Your arms I find peace; You are my solace.

Your birth is celebrated by everyone including me,
Though I can't offer any gift but prayers only.
The streets adorned by glimmering lights,
Giving me rays of hope in my dimming eyesight.

A sense of peace during this season I have felt,
Even the wind's calm and gentle breeze I feel their warm embrace.
My Lord, I thank You for this joyous wonderful moment.
Your birth is a rebirth of my soul's inner peace.

MY VIEW OF CHRISTMAS

by Maximo Tumbali

Everywhere, cold winds breeze through the morning and evening—
This time of the year, when the spirit of Christmas spreads far and wide,
But the joy of the holiday season isn't something all can enjoy.

The poor and the marginalized knock on doors,
Hoping for goods or cash to partake in the Yuletide.
More often, they receive only a handful,
Perhaps a little more, if they meet generous hearts.

But Christmas should be for everyone.
Yet, it seems this is not the case.
The rich can afford fancy Christmas celebrations,
While the poor depend on handouts.
For their Noche Buena, they settle for sardines.

On Christmas or New Year's Day,
They have no brand-new outfits to wear.
And yet, they do not complain.
In their hearts and in their eyes,
The essence of Christmas is manifest:
Their love is pure,
Their smiles are sincere,
Their hearts are caring,
Their attitudes are humble.

Though lacking material possessions,
They are rich in moral and spiritual values.
Simple and honest living defines the poor.

In our materialistic world, life seems to favor
The affluent over the less fortunate.
A glaring disparity between the "haves" and the "have-nots"—
A stark indictment of our hypocritical way
Of celebrating Christmas.

While the rich indulge in expensive feasts and gifts,
The needy make do with whatever little they have.
Seldom do we see the well-off rubbing elbows
Or partying with the poor.

What is truly disheartening
Is how benevolence, love, peace, and understanding,
Are emphasized during Christmas—
Yet they are forgotten in our everyday lives.
When the holiday season ends,
We return to our usual ways:
Apathy, hypocrisy, greed, selfishness, and vanity.

If the meaning and spirit of Christmas truly lived in our hearts,
We honor it by treating and loving one another equally.
Christmas is a yearly commemoration
of the nativity of Jesus, our Messiah and Savior,
yet the essence of Christmas is undermined
By the growing divide between Christians and non-Christians,
Believers and non-believers,
And the gross commercialization of the season.

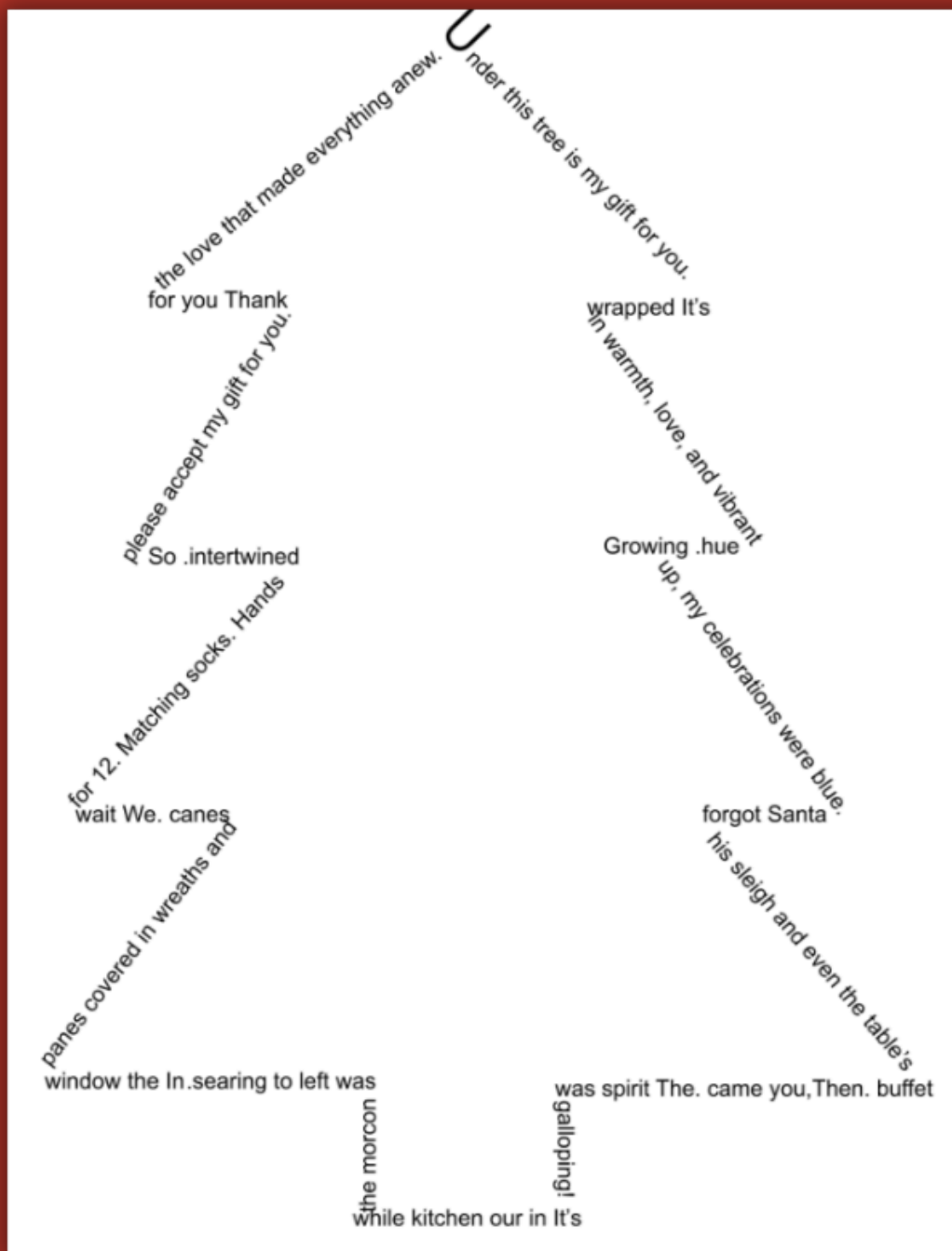
In war-torn countries,
I wonder how Christmas is celebrated.
Can they put down their guns,
Stop killing one another,
And end the violence?
Can they forgive and embrace one another
For the sake of peace, love, and harmony?

In this digital age,
Where technology dictates how we think, act, and behave,
We witness the degradation of moral values and character.
Advanced technologies like artificial intelligence,
Are replacing humans in various fields.
Should we become subservient to machines?
How will this affect our view of ourselves?

Will Christmas still be worth celebrating
When robots act more human,
And humans fall in love with robots?
Will Christmas ever be the same again?

UNDER THE TREE

by Agnes B. Abunio



MAMAMASKO PO!

by Mira Bless B. Chavez

*Tawagin mo ako sa pangalang, "Ninang"
'pagkat kota na ako sa mga binyagang
walang katapusang pagimbata
ng mga kumare at kumpareng sinisinta.*

*"Mamamasko po!" sabi ng inaanak kong paslit,
Na tila naiwan noon pang siya'y maliit.
"Mamamasko ho sana ng...ng pagmamahal! Yung walang hanggan."
Ngunit kahit si Ninang ay hinahanap pa rin ang kanyang walang hanggan.*

*"Mamamasko po!" sabi ng inaanak kong kolehiyala,
Na desperadong desperado sa isang libo't isang tuwa.
"Mamamasko po ng sipag at tyaga! Para sa kinabukasan!"
Nagkamali pala ako sa aking inakala.*

*"Mamamasko po!" sabi ng inaanak kong dalagita,
Na muling babalik sa kanyang pag-aaral, sa buhay.
"Mamamasko po ng lakas ng loob."
Ngunit kahit si Ninang ay minsan na ring nawalan ng lakas ng loob.*

*At tumiklop ang mga ampao,
Na tila ba hindi ito kakasya sa kanilang pang araw araw.
Nahiya ang mga aginaldo,
At kulang na lang ang tahanan ko'y magsarado.*

*Kaya't ako'y namamasko rin—
Sa Pag-ibig na hindi makasarili,
Sa Salita na naging tao,
Para sa akin at para sa'yo.*

Mentors Corner

*(Writing pieces by
Scribblory mentors)*

THE EVERLASTING STAR

by Aiko Hara, Fiction Writing Facilitator/Administrator

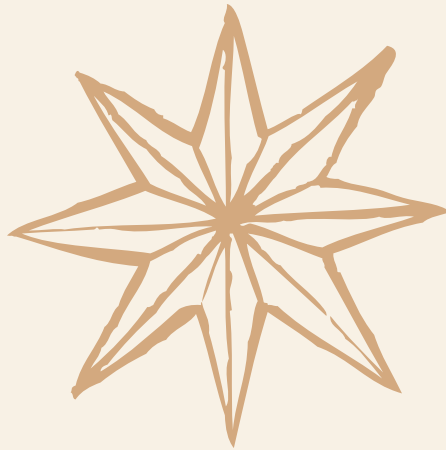
What I love about Christmas is the feeling of embracing the cold December air, the joy of wrapping gifts, and decorating and lighting up a Christmas tree. I used to feel this excitement and partake in these traditions when I was younger, but things have changed over the years.

I admit that I still feel a pang of sadness as I watch others prepare for Christmas, decorating their homes and putting up trees. It's as if a part of me resents the holiday ever since Papa passed away. We got rid of our Christmas tree and all the decorations and ornaments when we moved out of our old house. Since then, all I can do is reminisce—vividly recalling Papa's face, his smile lighting up as he admired the Christmas tree I helped decorate. I can still see it in my mind: the garlands, the hanging Christmas balls and angels, and the wreaths that adorned our home.

Perhaps we stopped decorating because Papa is no longer here to praise and compliment our Christmas efforts. His reaction was the best gift I ever received during the holidays.

There were moments when I could have blamed God for taking Papa from us. But as I grew older, I came to understand that Papa's life belonged to Him, our Savior. I realized that I had no right to hold anger toward the One who gave us everything. Over time, I came to see Papa as a gift from God. Without him, I wouldn't have understood the beauty of Christmas—the joy of family, the wonder of looking at a brightly lit Christmas tree every year, and the deeper meaning of giving from the heart.

This Christmas, I want to give back to my Savior, Jesus Christ, by dedicating a poem titled My Everlasting Star. Just like the star on top of the Christmas tree, God will always hold the highest place in my heart and mind—not just during the Christmas season but every day and forever.



My Everlasting Star

My mood embraces the darkness of the night,
As I lay in bed, my arms unfolded.
The gleaming glow-in-the-dark ceiling paint
Draws me to a star that endures, unfaded.

My attention drifts to tiny pea-sized stars,
Bright as the moon, gleaming like Christmas baubles.
They remind me of war heroes braving gunfire—
Exhausted yet unwaveringly courageous.

My eyes then lock onto a palm-sized star,
Slightly smudged but shining brightly still.
It reminds me of a Person I deeply admire—
Once aggrieved, now crowned with well-deserved honor.

Above all, the largest star radiates,
Inexpressibly vivid and luminous.
Just like the Most High, faithful to His promises,
Our everlasting Savior – Jesus.

THE GIFT OF GIVING

by Vergie Manligas, Blogging Mentor

When I was a kid, I wanted to give my siblings and cousins something special for Christmas. With the money I saved, I bought cheap snacks and wrapped them in used paper or newspaper I found around the house, writing “to” and “from” on each one. I had so much fun watching the pile of wrapped gifts grow.

As I checked my list, I remembered my three other cousins who lived far from our home—one boy and two girls. However, I had no items left to wrap. So, I scoured the house for unused items that still looked new and found a sling gun toy and a few hair ties. I smiled as I wrapped them up, completing my list.

Every year, I make a list, and the joy of checking off each name as I wrap their gift fills my heart with happiness. Sharing is one of the values my parents and grandparents taught me and one of the lessons I learned from my spiritual community called The Feast. They taught me to let my blessings flow so I would be ready to receive more.

Their “Thank you, Ate” was enough to make me smile, and I am grateful for the gift of being able to share my blessings with my family and friends. Christmas is the season of giving, and wrapping gifts is my favorite part, making it my favorite season. I always remind myself that it’s not about how big, small, or expensive the gift is.

Give from the heart and receive with a grateful heart. It’s the thought that counts.



*Fiction
Story
Section*

ORION'S ARCHIVE: A SERIES (#10)

by Ulysses Tejano

In a town like this, there isn't much to tell about yourself. Everyone here does it for you. No sooner do I say, "Hi my name is Orion Barrera" do the hecklers drown the next sentences out of my mouth.

"Stale Biscuits!" Kurt shouted over his cupped hands." Cookie crumbles! Oreo Dough!"

The outburst catches Mr. Everett by surprise, along with the collective laughter of my classmates. I am not sure how long he has been on the teaching job, but by the way, his jaw hangs wider than a basking shark; it can't have been for long.

It garners a few laughs from my classmates. Given how I got my butt kicked on the tryouts last year, I'd say a bit of cringey ridicule is somehow warranted even if it is a little bit too mean-spirited.

In my defense, Kurt is a sturdy fellow with muscles, thicker than tree trunks and throws with the force of a battering ram. I am far from being built like that. Coach Crock should have considered weight classes.

"Airball Barrera, Soap fingers, Orion Free ball!"

Jeers are worse when the girls join in on the laughter. Even Rhonda Gellar, the new girl and self-declared advocate of social justice. Then again, six feet tall, feathery blonde hair, and the kind of face that's never going to grow a beard. I guess Troy is just the kind of guy that girls just want to impress.

In hindsight, it wasn't smart of me to play a game of heights. I stand at five eleven in the basketball court, and I am a mortal in the domain of giants. I was no smarter than that nude Emperor who bragged about his new clothes, so I ate up the ridicule like a four course buffet.

"Checkmate, king." the reedy voice of Riley, the chess team captain. Limp wrists, oversized turtle shell glasses, and a face dotted with a constellation of acne. What has my life come to?

It's one thing when the big strapping Jocks mock you, and a whole new level when even the chess team can join in on the fun.

"We call him the great disappointment... The try-hard and the have-not.." Chirps. Evelyn. She brushes her long hair and whips the strands to the face of a poor gawking boy. Her mocking is uncalled for but never unexpected. Not from her of all people...But it drips with a venom that would make a snake blush.

"Detention, Ms. Reagan." Says Mr. Everett, his tone rings with a bell of authority, his brows fold in a stern furrow, and his hands dart to the notepad...The class stops laughing. The smiles on their faces vanish like dry ice as a heavy silence falls on the room. I could hear the ticking of the classroom clock and cracks forming on Evelyn's heavy makeup as her eyes widened in shock. She stares at the new teacher as if he just threw cold water on her face.

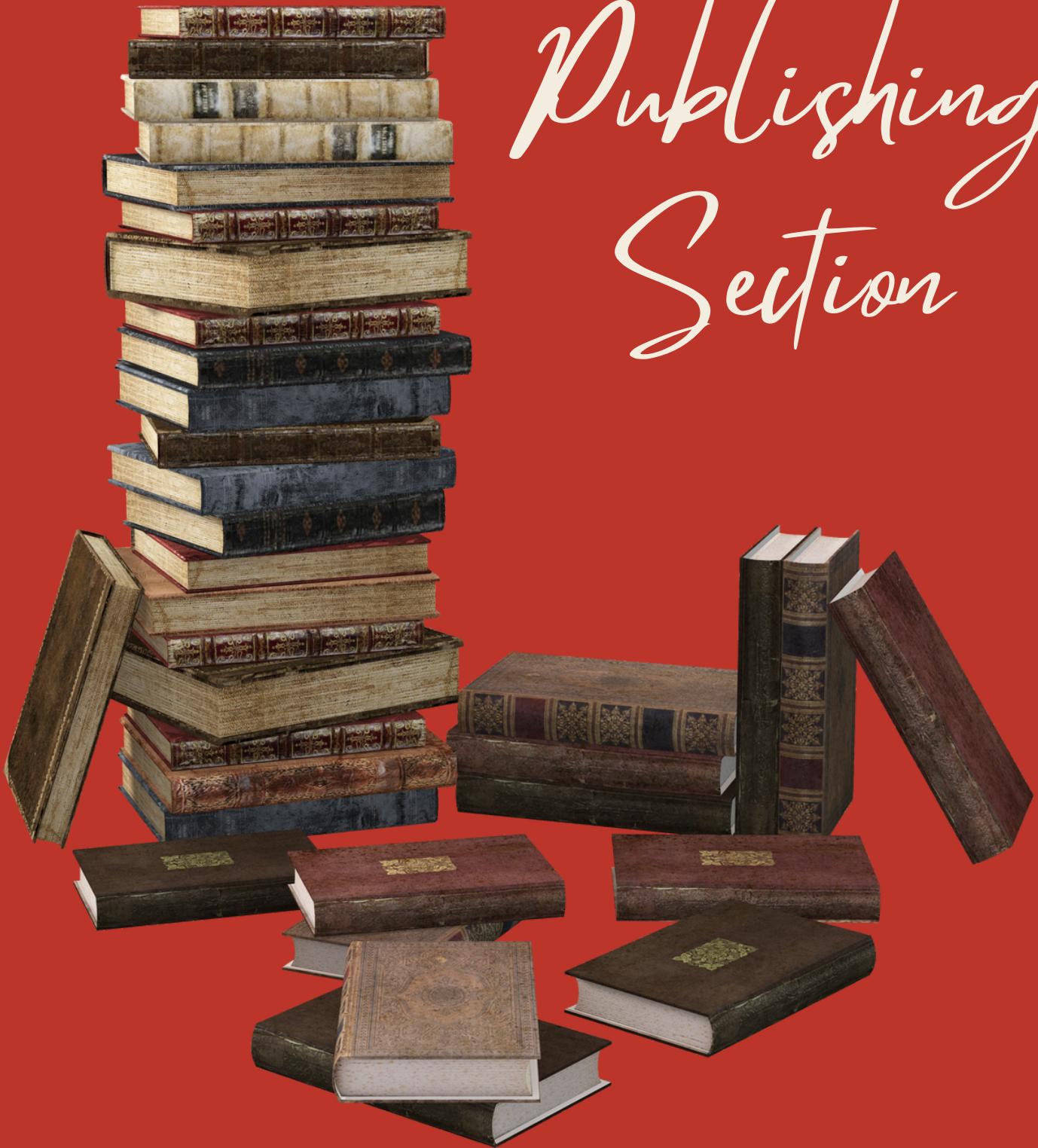
Designer clothes made by tongue-twisting names from far-reaching countries and accessories that are more than a year's worth of the average salaryman are the sort of armor, that often spares the queen bee from having detention, and Ms. Reagan in the same sentence.

Selena stifles a short giggle in front of me and I try my best to keep from being as indulgent. Day one, barely past homeroom and the first to get detention would tick off any student. A lost saturday is one thing, but even a queen bee would not want to tell that to her dad when she comes home from school.

I slump back down to my chair, hoping that the school clocks would run a little bit faster.

DECEMBER 2024

MEMENTO



Publishing Section

HOW WILL MY BOOK SELL?

(PART 3)

by Felz Storne, Founder of Metacognia

This article is the final installment for this series tackling comps, which help traditional publishers determine book sales even before a book is published. If you're reading this for the first time, it will be helpful for you to go back to the two recent articles under this topic. In this issue, I will share some more important pointers to remember when making or choosing comps for your own story.

1. Comps should be recent, meaning, choose works of art from the last two years especially when it's a book title. This will ensure that your own work is fresh and keeps up with the current trends in book publishing. Considerations are also given to works from three years prior, but that is already a stretch. When we talk about book sales, trends are always an important factor to keep in mind especially the originality and uniqueness of your premise.

2. Always remember, that comps can serve as the elevator pitch for your book. It's the shortest way to describe what your book is all about and catch the attention of potential readers or publishers. An elevator ride usually takes just a minute. You may practice describing your book using comps within the one-minute mark.

It will be best to practice it with someone who's still unfamiliar with your book project and test how you will be able to gauge someone's interest in your book. This sort of feedback will be useful to you when pitching your book or how easily it can catch eyeballs (or interest) in the future once you sell or launch your book.

3. Comps can help you identify your target readers. As much as comps show how well you know your genre, it also shows the market segment your book belongs to. Sometimes it's not up to you to decide who your target market is; when you make or test your comps, you will be able to identify which demographics your book will be popular with or which audience it resonates with the most. You can take advantage of this discovery when choosing the best platform to showcase your books on (i.e. bookstores, pop-up stores, online, etc.). Testing your comps can also help you identify the statistics of your book readership.

Recommendations

In this part, I will show you how to test your comps manually on your own. As I said in my previous article, major traditional publishers use BookScan connected to retail outlets to determine or project book sales. You can also do this manually through social media.

You can use social media to your advantage by starting within your own circle of book lovers. You can pretty much gauge through this whether this will sell with actual readers you know. The number it will show you can help you determine how well your book would do in the larger market.

In previous years, posting comps (on X, formerly Twitter) as your status and using hashtags that targeted literary agencies or publishers worked well in catching the attention of potential readers. But rumor has it (or probably not a rumor as I saw it on a post one time) that hashtags will be abolished and not work anymore, hence will be deleted. Therefore, doing hashtags will no longer work to catch attention for your book. Keep up with the social media trends and use their tools to test your comps.

Another thing you can do effectively is follow pages or join groups where book lovers and actual passionate readers thrive. The best place to start is on platforms whose audiences genuinely have a passion for reading and share book recommendations with each other. Readers belong to a minority, therefore it will be best to maximize the reading groups you take part in. Ask permission from the admins if you can post or pitch your book to gauge its readership. Just express your intentions clearly. Join in discussions, so that those groups will be familiar with you and not think you're just a lurker or only participate whenever it suits you. In other words, genuinely make connections with your target audience.

Make and take advantage of your TikTok, Instagram, or Facebook pages/accounts. While posting comps may just be a one-time thing, you can keep posting whenever you revise them or something new comes up. If you are very particular with book sales or ROI, it will be best to keep practicing pitching your comps using these platforms until you get it right and you're happy with the numbers you're getting. Only then you can start writing or publishing your book. However, always be mindful that writing your manuscript will definitely take a long time, so before you know it, your premise and your comps will have already gone cold before you even finish. In retrospect, it's still best to put your book out there for the sheer joy of writing and reading. It will be just helpful to learn all of the above so that you can ensure you have and know your audience.

After everything has been said and done, the most important thing is that you enjoy the process. A book deal is a business deal. If you want to be a book author but don't want to do the legwork that goes with publishing a book, you will not be successful. You have to learn the ropes when it comes to writing and publishing a book that sells, especially when you're a self-published author.

If you have questions about this topic, anything to do with publishing, or suggestions for new topics, you can email me at metacognia2013@gmail.com. You may also reach out to me through the following active social media handles: @metacognia on Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook.

Writing Tips

Writing Tip 17:

Five Possible Reasons Why
You Don't Feel Enthusiastic
About Your Book Anymore

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1.

You chose a topic you're not
deeply interested in.

Solution: Change your topic.

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Need help with implementing these tips?
Get a writing mentor today.
Email your writing goals to scribblory@gmail.com

2.

You chose a difficult topic and/or approach.

Solution: Do more planning. Write a comprehensive book outline and consider doing an approach that you're more comfortable and confident with.

Scribblory
Scrambling from Memory



3.

You deeply liked your topic, but you had to take a very long rest from writing. Now that you can work on it again, you don't feel interested in it anymore.

Solution: Try reading everything you've written thus far.

Scribblory
Scrambling from Memory

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Email your writing goals to scribblory@gmail.com

4.

Your busyness takes away your time
and your joy for writing.

Solution: Whole-heartedly decide to
make time for your book—lest it will
never ever be finished. Assign a
writing time for yourself and show up.

Scribbblory
Normalizing your Memento



5.

Someone discouraged you or told
you, "It's not going to work."

Solution: Share and process your
pain with someone you trust. Get
feedback and support from the
"right" people and be motivated by
their love for writing.

Scribbblory
Normalizing your Memento

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Be part of our writing community.
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and events. Join Scribbblory Writers
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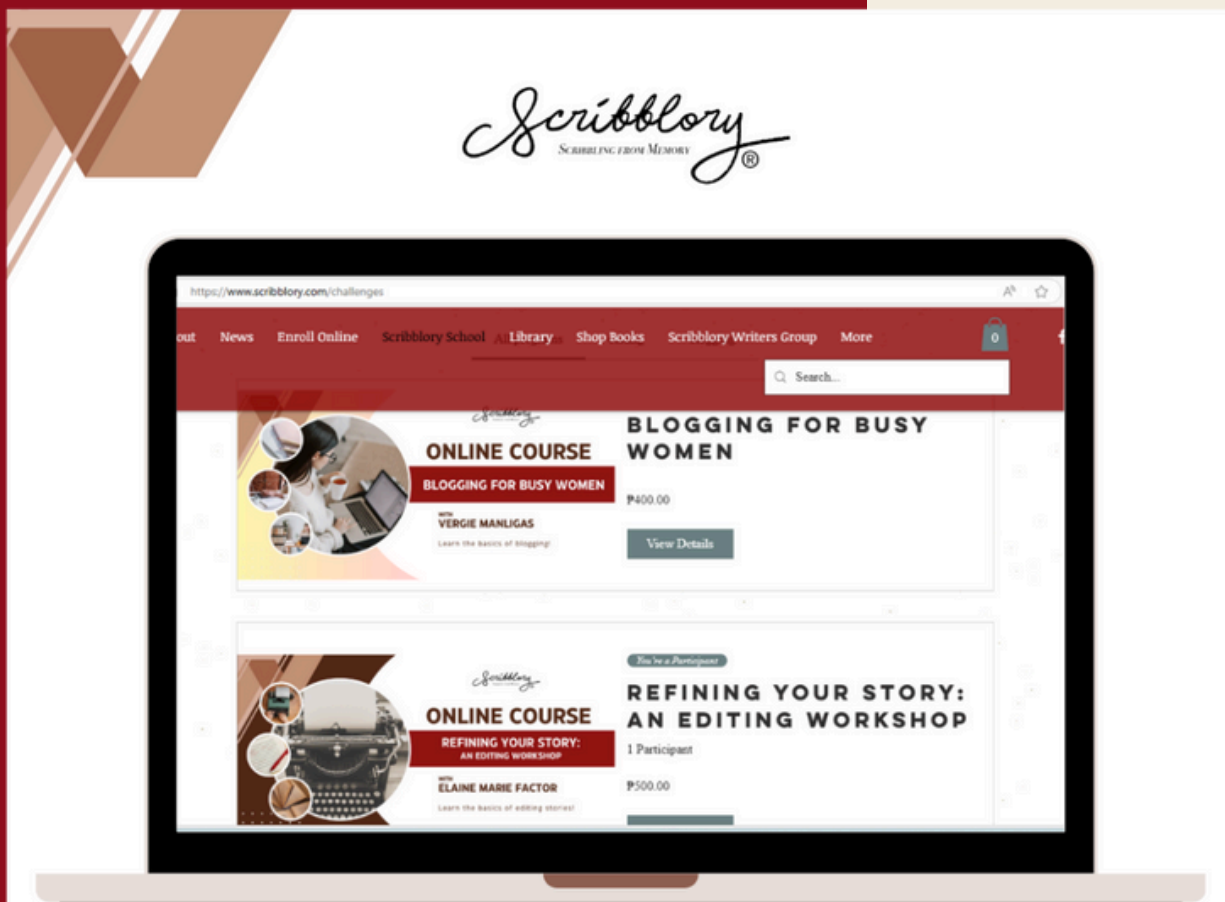
What do you do when you experience your first heartbreak? You write it out.

The first month of a first heartbreak by a first love by Christianne Fayth Ong is a journey that shows the raw emotions of a shattered heart. Broken, complicated, and vulnerable, this collection of poems, letters, and text messages captures the messy and complex process of healing after the end of a first love. From the initial shock and denial to the gradual acceptance and rediscovery, every word resonates with the universal pain of letting go.

Inside these pages, you'll find the author navigating solo travels, seeking solace in new places, and making symbolic gestures, like cutting her hair, to move forward. It's a candid look at the unanswered questions, regrets, and the paradox of wanting to hold on while knowing you must let go.

This anthology is more than just the story of heartbreak—it's about growth, resilience, and the power of self-expression. *the first month of a first heartbreak by a first love* offers readers a chance to connect and find catharsis, reminding us that even in the darkest depths of hurt, there is always healing.

Announcements



Scribbstory School is moving from Teachable to our official website!

Better space. More courses. Broader learning.

Announcements

Memoir Writing Bootcamps

BATCH 6

.....
w/ Elaine Marie Factor

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each

Product: Your Publishable Book-
Length Memoir

Perks:

- Certificate of Completion
- Free writing kit
- Free copy of Scribbling from Memory
- Book launch and marketing services

.....
Register here: <https://bit.ly/3sZVXJ8>

Announcements



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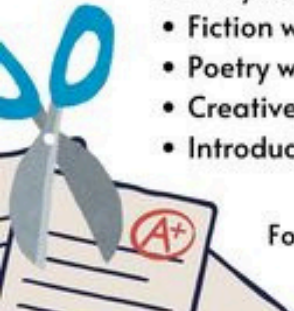





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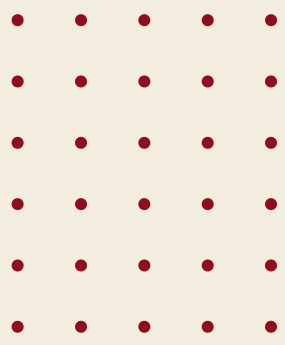
Writing Proficiency Tutorial

Be a Scribbblory writing mentee! We have students from the Philippines and some parts of the globe!

Writing Proficiency Tutorial Program is designed for children (aged 4-12), teenagers (13-19), and adults (20 and above) who are keen on sharpening their technical and/or creative writing skills. The program's content and flow depend on the student's writing goals, writing assessment results, and progress.

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