“Who is Botod?”

“Look at him, there he goes, he is there in the Plaza, that plump friar who is talking with a woman beside the trunk of the almendre tree! Do you recognize him?”

“No.”

“Look well towards the center of the plaza, look across it, and fix your gaze on that small tower of bamboo and nipa that is the belfry of the town. At the stairs, also made of bamboo and nipa, grow various luxuriant young almond trees, and beside the trunk of the largest trees and under its shade is Friar Botod, talking angrily with a woman. Do you see him now?”

“Yes, yes, I see him. He is a barbarian. How he frowns! The girl is not bad: but by what I see, by his movements and grimaces, Friar Botod, the devil, has a bestial look. What do I see? Now he raises his stick in a threatening manner.”

“He scares the girl so that she will grant him his wishes.”

“Will this rogue of a friar eat this girl?”

“He is capable of it. See the crowd of small boys who are leaving the parochial school, naked, some from the waist down, others from the waist up, running towards his Reverence to kiss his hand. The surrounded friar commands them in a scornful manner; the boys run away frightened.”

“But, look, look! The shameless friar has slapped the girl twice… Hmm… She falls down on her knees at his feet, looks as if she were asking his pardon. She kisses his hand. Poor girl. He leads her away… the bad friar. What a brute, what a detestable person. But you permit and suffer the same abuses against the honor of this weak person, victim of the brutal force of this cynical friar.”

“We are hardened to this sight; it happens all the time.”

“But what does this religious devil do in God’s world? He is the priest of this town.”

“A priest! A friar is a priest! I did not believe that the friars are parish priest in the Philippines. They told me, and I never believed it.”

“then see it for yourself and be convinced.”

“In my country there came a time when we kicked them out.”

“There is no more reedy, my friend; you must give the morcilla (black sausage) as you give it to dogs.”
“All things come to an end and all debts must be paid, says a proverb; the day will come and woe to them. Meanwhile, let us leave everything which prolongs it.”

“This is horrible, worse than China, a thousand times worse than Warsaw. Ah, let us leave these sad ideas, let us go near and see the rascally friar.”

“Jesus, Jesus! How terrible, ho ugly! ...He looks like a seal.”

“What a comparison friend!”

“Yes, yes, a seal, a seal without whiskers.”

“Well said.”

“Let us describe a seal—I mean a friar—so that the whole world will know him.”

Like this.

Friar Botod is not called so because it is his proper name nor his family name.

Botod means big abdomen, fat belly. The town nicknamed him so because of his immense paunch.

His baptismal name is Ano (anus) because he was born on St. Ann’s day; but he gets furious and very angry when he is called Friar Ano, preferring that they call him Botod rather than Ano.

It is then Friar Botod or Friar Ano Aragones, son of unknown parentage, who was found near the vicinity of Eber by the stairs of the church of Pilar on a stormy night by a certain mule driver who passed by that place on his way from work.

He educated the boy as well as he could; he wanted to teach the child his trade, but at the age of fourteen the boy ran away from the house of his aged foster father, and after walking and walking, he arrived at Valladolid, where he entered the convent of the Augustinian fathers.

Not quite twenty-one years of age, he was sent by his superiors to the Philippines, to which he brought his boorish ways.

He looked like a dead mosquito; but after being ordained and singing his first mass, after five years in the country, eating bananas and papayas and being angry and being called a priest in a town as important as this, he came out of his shell. He changed completely. He is a very valuable man.

He knows more than Lope, and he has more grammar than Santillan.

There you get a sketch of the birth and novitiate of Friar Botod and his stay during his first years in the Philippines.
[Lopez Jaena here describes the Physical appearance of the friar and concludes that Friar Botod looks like a well-fed pig who eats, drinks, sleeps and thinks of nothing but how to satisfy his carnal appetites.]

Look, he is leaving the convento (parochial house) again accompanied by that young girl who is sobbing and crying bitterly. Friar Botod is petting her, consoling her, but she is insensible and indifferent toward it all. She continues crying and being overcome by fear, obeys and follows the friar automatically.

This time they don’t leave the convent alone; following them are some young girls, very beautiful, very young; others are grown up already, but all are beautiful and well-dressed. He now enters an omnibus to take them for a ride and a picnic.

“But who are these young girls and why does he have them in his convent, the Fray Botod?”

“These are his canding-canding.”

“Who are these canding-canding?”

“In the Spanish language canding means goats.”

“If you don’t explain it to us more clearly I will not be able to unravel the story. Why does this devilish friar have in his power these innocent creatures and why are these angelic-looking girls called little goats?”

They are called little goats simply because in time when they mature... you hear it, do you understand now? He has them in his power because they come from poor families. Under the pretext of educating them in the Christian doctrine, the Catechism, reading, writing and other skills, he takes them from their homes, fooling the unfortunate parents, or even using force.

“But isn’t there a woman teacher in town?”

“Yes, but the woman is of the same tribe as Fray Botod.”

“This is unheard of! Horrible! But why don’t they denounce this barbarity of Boboo or this lascivious friar to the government?”

“There is nobody in town who wants to meddle. Oh! The one who dares...

“I do not wonder because since I was born I have not left this town but from what I have heard of the others, it is not venturing too far to infer that this practice is common.

“Wretch! What villainy! In that manner the young buds open up near the heartless, soulless, friar, having the same fate as that of the bayaderas of India.”
[An explanation of the bayaderas of India follows. They are women kept by the Brahmins, supposedly for religious reasons but actually for their own gratification.]

[For entertainment, Botod plays monte and burro with the town’s rich but he never loses. The indios let him win; otherwise he is in a bad mood.]

How does his “Reverence” discharge his duties towards his parishioners’ souls?

*Tilin, tilin, tilin*—a loud sound of the bell is heard at the door of the convent.

“Open, boy.”

The boy brings into the gambling room an old man, who walks slowly as if he had come from a long distance.

“Good evening, sir.”

“What do you want?”

“Confession, sir.”

“Go and call the assistant, father Marcelino.”

“Not here, sir.”

“What do you want?”

“Confession, sir.”

“Go and call the assistant, father Marcelino?”

“Not here, sir.”

“What do you mean, not here?”

“Father Marcelino, sir, is in the other confessional.”

“Then wait for him.”

“I cannot wait, sir.”

“Why can’t you wait, you rogue, you savage.”

“Because the sick person, sir, is dying. He will die.”

“Then let him die and let him go to hell. I am not hearing confessions.”

“Sir, pity, pity, sir.”
“Go, tell him to make an Act of Contrition and I will give him absolution from her.”
“Sir, sir.”

“Go rogue, do not bother me anymore. I am losing, damn Jack! Oh, brute, go. Boy, open the door for this old man.”

You can have a good idea here of how Fr. Botod regards his religion—

He leaves a sick Christian who is asking for the last rites of the church to die without confession because of a Jack of Clubs.

After the death.

“Sir, that one died.”

“Well, and what?”

“The family wants, sir, that three priests get the corpse from the house and a Requiem Mass be said for him.”

“Does the family of the dead person have much money?”

“No, just enough, sir, the family wants three priests.”

“I will do it; but you can’t have three priests.”

“The wife, sir, wants Father Marcelino to be the main priest.”

“No, I don’t like it. These things belong to me and do not concern the assistant at all.”

“But, sir…”

“Nothing doing.”

“Well, sir, how much sir?”

“One hundred and fifty pesos, second class funeral with an old cape with silver.”

“Three priests, sir?”

“Three? It can’t be; I alone am worth three.”

“Father Marcelino, sir, asks only fifty pesos for three priests, and a first class funeral.”

“You, with your assistant, can go to hell. You are talking to the wrong party. Father Marcelino is a scoundrel.”

“Pardon, sir.”
“Go bring the money. If you do not come with the money, your dead will not be buried. Do you understand?”

“Very well, sir, I will consult the family.”

“Whom will you consult? No, bring the hundred fifty pesos. If not, the corpse will rot in your house, and you and your whole family will go to jail.”

“Sir (in a repentant tone), sir, he does not have much money, sir, the dead person.”

“Go and ask the rest of the relatives to lend you money.”

“They don’t want to lend it, sir.”

“Go away, go away. Sell the dead man’s rice field and you will have money. Look for a loan company, you idler. If not, I won’t bury your corpse.”

“Very well, sir.”

He kisses the hand of the priest and leaves the poor man. Three hours later, the assistant priest, knowing the friar very well and that he will be the object of insults, arms himself with a strong drink and creates a scandal.

With a glass of alcohol and *tuba* which he mixed well, Father Marcelino goes straight to the convent.

The assistants of the secular order step themselves in vices to the same extent as the friars themselves. The bad examples begin to spread. The Indian priests follow the examples of their superiors, the friars. They become as wicked as they, or worse.

It is said then that Father Marcelino went to look for Friar Botod, planning to hit the chubby-cheeked “Reverence” in the abdomen.

Father Botod, foreseeing that his assistant would be drunk and what he would do, ordered the boy to close the convent with an expressed order not to let the assistant in.

Father Marcelino, doubly irritated by this measure, shouts loudly at the door of the convent, shocking the people.

“Come down, come down, Botod, if you are not afraid, friar without shame, you filthy, stingy vile, bad man, see, see what I will do. I will break your neck! Animal! Friar, coward, you do not have a bit of shame.”

Similar insults and others spurt out of that mouth, smelling of alcohol and *tuba*.

Fr. Botod does not utter a word against these diatribes, but after three days, the father assistant is called by the bishop and locked up in the Seminary.
The corpse is given a pompous funeral but the family has gone into debt.

[As host, he entertains visitors at the expense of the townspeople. As money lender, he lends money but forces the tao to pay him back with cavans of rice, the price of which he dictates.]

How does he think and boast?

Preaching:

“Indios, laborers, we are all rich in Spain. There on that soil of the Virgin, nobody is poor. We all wade in gold.”

“Jesus, what a liar is this friar.”

Botod continues.

“We came here to these barbaric lands to conquer souls for heaven, in order to be dear to our great Father San Agustin.”

“Keep still, Manola,” exclaims a Spaniard who happens to hear this nonsense of Fr. Botod.

He continues the sermon.

“We have come to civilize you, serfs, indios, carabaos, and illiterates. You are all slaves of Spain, of Father San Agustin. Do you understand? Amen.”

It is the first time that Fr. Botod has occupied the pulpit during his fifteen years of being a priest, and all he does is to hurl a lot of insults.

[He eats like a pig and is fond of pepper, luya and other sexual stimulants.]

Between a Kastila and his “Reverence”:

“Father Botod, why don’t you educate, provide and endow the town with good instruction?”

“It doesn’t suit me, countryman.”

“Your mission is to instruct the country which you administer spiritually”

“Political reasons forbid us. The day when the Indio becomes educated and knows how to speak Spanish, we are lost.”

“Why, father?”

“Because they will rebel against us and will fight the integrity [sic] of the country.”

“I don’t believe it. You will be the ones who will lose your substance and easily get gains, but Spain...”
“But why, are we not the same Spain? Go, go, go! The interest of the friars is the interest of Spain. We cannot go back to the old ways.”

How does the friar punish?

Barbarously.

Because a man did not work three days in the hacienda, he deprived him of salary and gave the unhappy laborer fifty lashes on his bare buttocks.

See it:

“Oy, tao, why didn’t you come to work for three days?”

“My wife is sick, sir.”

“Oy, boy.”

“Sir.”

“The bench and the whip, ala, ala, hapa, hapa (stretch him out, stretch him out).”

“Sir, sir, my wife is sick, my wife is sick!”

“You lie; ala, hapa!”

The poor unfortunate lies down flat keeping his mouth above the bench. Fray Botod at the same time takes off the man’s pants and his underwear, tying his head and feet to the bench.

“And you, sacristan, get the whip and give him fifty lashes.”

You should know that the punishment is in three measures, that is, that it is not fifty but one hundred fifty lashes.

What brutality!

“Enough sir, enough sir, aruy, aruy, aruy! It hurts, sir, enough, sir, enough!”

“Keep quiet, brute, animal. Boy bring the hot peppered vinegar.”

Over the body lacerated from the lashes, the inhuman friar pours the vinegar with the pepper in it, rubbing the vinegar and making the unfortunate man see stars.

“Compassion, compassion sir, enough, Padre, aruy, aruy, aruy!”

The poor laborer is doubling up because of the pain, trying to untie himself.

After such a cruel operation, the sacristan applies the rest of the lashes until he completes the fifty.
Terrible moments! The man doubles up again, a nervous spasm chokes him—groans, moans die out in his throat.

The friar in his cruelty is amusing himself, laughing like a fool.

Sad reflections of the past Inquisition! Fr. Botod is worse than a hyena.

(1874)
Meet the Writer

GRACIANO LÓPEZ Y JAENA (December 18, 1856 - January 20, 1896), was a Filipino writer and journalist in the Philippine Revolution. He was recognized as the "Prince of Filipino Orators" who wrote great and striking articles in the infamous newspaper La Solidaridad in Barcelona, Spain. López Jaena was born in Jaro, Iloilo to Placido López and María Jacoba Jaena. His parents were poor; his mother was a seamstress and his father a general repairman. At the age of six, López Jaena was placed under the care of Friar Francisco Jayme who raised him.

His parents sent López Jaena to the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer in Jaro which had been opened under the administration of Governor General Carlos María de la Torre. He was appointed to the San Juan de Dios Hospital as an apprentice. Unfortunately, due to financial problems, his parents could not afford to keep him in Manila. He returned to Iloilo and practiced medicine in communities.

During this period, his visits with the poor and the common people began to stir feelings about the injustices that were common. At the age of 18 he wrote the satirical story "Fray Botod" which depicted a fat and lecherous priest. Botod's false piety "always had the Virgin and God on his lips no matter how unjust and underhanded his acts are." This naturally incurred the fury of the friars who knew that the story depicted them. Although it was not published a copy circulated in the region but the Friars could not prove that López Jaena was the author. However he got into trouble for refusing to testify that certain prisoners died of natural causes when it was obvious that they had died at the hands of the mayor of Pototan. López Jaena continued to agitate for justice and finally went to Spain when threats were made on his life.

López Jaena sailed for Spain in 1879. There he was to become a leading literary and oratorical spokesman for the Philippine reformal issues. Philippine historians regard López Jaena, along with Marcelo H. del Pilar and José P. Rizal, as the triumvirate of Filipino propagandists. Of these three Ilustrados, López Jaena was the first to arrive and may have founded the genesis of the Propaganda movement.

López Jaena pursued his medical studies at the University of Valencia but did not finish the course. Once Rizal approached López Jaena for not finishing his medical studies. Graciano replied, "On the shoulders of slaves should not rest a doctor's cape." Rizal countermanded, "The shoulders do not honor the doctor's cape, but the doctor's cape honors the shoulders."

Rizal noted, "His great love is politics and literature. I do not know for sure whether he loves politics in order to deliver speeches or he loves literature to be a politician." In addition he is remembered for his literary contributions to the propaganda movement. López Jaena founded the fortnightly newspaper, La Solidaridad. When the publication office moved from Barcelona to Madrid, the editorship was succeeded to Marcelo H. del Pilar.


Ang pito ka sundalo nga nagbantay sa pangpang mao ang nahunahunaan ni Malta. Nahinumdom siya nga sa dayon na niyang gipong sa kalayo, iya man diay, ug sa unom ka silingan, nga turno sa pag-amot og pamahaw sa mga sundalo. Sukad ugod may nahidunggo nga usa ka lansang Hapones sa Lipata (sumala sa mga sulti-sulti nga iyang nahipos, napugos kuno ang mga Bakang sa pagdangop sa batoong hunasan sa Lipata aron paglikay sa mga ayroplanong Amerikanon nga nagahabisi na sa kalangitan sa Sugbo), ang mga tulutinamod nga lumulupyo sa balangay mihangyong sa dako nga butangan untang mga sundalo ang pangpang sa Lipata aron, kon adunay modunggo pag-usab nga mga kaaway, kini mahurot pagkatumba gumikan sa bantaaw nga pagkatubang sa mga sundalo. Ang opisyal sa gerilya (ginganlan man kuno kadto Tenyente Minggoy) miuyon, apan ubos sa kondisyon nga ang taga Lipata maoy mopakaon sa mga sundalo.

Ang tingkagol sa kabo nga bagol nga nahipangka sa rehas-rehas sa banggira nakapalingi kang Malta. Nakita niya si Imok nga nagbugwak sa tubig nga iyang gilimugmog. Hubo, gawas sa purol nga sako, si Imok wala manumbaling sa iyang asawa.

“Hain man diay sila si Tura ug Talino, Malta?” sukot ni Imok nga mibulag sa banggira ug mipadulong sa iyang asawa.

“Akong gipasayo sa dagat basin na lang dunay madala nga ikabaylog mais o lagutmon.” Gitangtang niya ang hunsoy gikan sa iyang mga ngabil ug gitunol ngadto sa iyang bana.

“Gitugway na ba kaha ang baka?”

“Ikaw na lay tugway, Imok. Gipadali ko kadto sila. Ug... uy, Imok, unsa man karoy atong hikayon alang sa mga sundawo? Ato ra bang turno karong tingpamahaw...”

“Ikaw god; mag-asal ka ba?”

“Pagtarong gani. Dili ka ba maulaw nga kita ra ang dili makapadalag pagkaon sa mga sundawo?”
“Ngaong maulaw? Wala man gani kitay ikapamahaw karon!”

“Apan katungdan nan tato ang pagtabang kanila.”


“Mobaylo ba hinuon ako, Mok, bisan usa lang ka paya nga bugas?”

“Ikaw lay mag-igo, Malta.”

Nanaog si Malta. Mikarag siya paglakaw padulong sa balay ni Teroy-Sepa. Maoy hitangkaa niya si Sepa nga nanilib nga balisbisan. Iyang gidul og gitimbaya. Mipungko si Malta sa tugkaran ug si Sepa mihunong pagpanilib. Wala dayon makabungat si Malta sa iyang tuyo kay mao may nagpasulabig tabi si Sepa. Sa diha nga nakahigayon na si Malta, si Sepa wala dayon makatingog. Nakalitan?


“Dili man tingali mahimo, Sepa, nga dili ubanan ang mga sundawo magabii. Kinsa man lang unyay mobantay kon mangatulog ang mga sundawo? Dili sab mahimo nga dili pakatulog ang mga sundawo kay magmalapoy unya ang ilang mga lawas ug dili na hinuon makasugakod sa kombat simbako duna na usay Hapones nga modunggo sa ato.”

“Kapait baya ning atong pagkabutang, Malta. Usa lang ka paya, ha, Malta?”

“Oo, lagi. Usa lang ka paya.”

Sayag ang pamayhon ni Malta nga naglakaw paing sa pangpang. Nagabitbit siya og bukag nga gisudlan sa duha ka gagmayng kulon nga gipatong. Ang nahailawom mao ang usa ka anglit nga maoy giut-otan sa iyang sinibo nga usa ka paya; ang nahai babaw usa ka gamayng dabahan sinudlan sa sabaw sa utan. Duha ka buok itlog nga linapwaan gibutang sa lusa nga maoy gitaklob sa dabahan. Sa pikas
niyang kamot, gikumkom ang usa ka tinustos nga tabako salin sa binayloan niyag usa ka gantang asin. Sa miaging gabii, usa sa upat ka sundalo ang nahisaka sa ka Malta-Imok aron makabugok og tuba, mihangyo kag Malta nga sa iyang turno sa pagpadalag pagkaon, dili unta malimtan ang usa ka tinustos nga udlot. Si Malta wala malimot sa hangyo sa sundalo, ug usapan pagakuhason niyag mga boluntaryo ang tanang pagkaon alang sa mga sundalo matag adlaw, si Malta gayod ang nangunay sa paghatod sa iyang pahat ning buntaga aron iyang ikatunol sa linawas ang tinustos.

24 Maoy unang nakita ni Malta ang tulo ka sundalo dinha sa gawas sa payag nga bantayanan. Ang usa nga hubo hangtod sa hawak, nagpurol og kanyamaso ug may pagkalabo ang nawong, gitupihan sa iyang kauban nga nagsanina og pinukpok. Ang ikatulo, nga may dakong uwat sa agigising ug nagasandig sa punoan sa lubi, nagahinis sa iyang pusil.

25 Gihinay pagbutang ni Malta ang iyang dala ug mipakong.

26 “Nganong ikaw man gayoy nangunay paghatod niana, Nang?” sukot sa naghinis sa pusil.

27 “Gayod lang,” mitubag si Malta nga naghihiko-hiko. “Kining dugay man ugod ang tigkuha; mao nga ako na lamay mianhi.”

28 “Kinsa bang mga boluntaryoha ang tigkuha karon?” nangutana ang laing sundalo didto sa sulod sa payag nga nangibot sa iyang bungot.

29 “Bawo kaha. Si Imok nga akong uban kada man Sabado,” mihatag og katin-awan si Malta.


31 Nahikugang si Malta sa kalit nga paka sa pusil. Sa iyang paglingi, ang sundalo diay nga naghinis kaganina sa iyang pusil nagapunting niini ngadto sa lawod. Gikablit niya pag-usab ang gato ug mibanos ang laing buto. Gilantaw ni Malta ang dapit sa
lawod nga gipuntingan sa pusil ug iyang nakita ang usa ka belos nga didto sa halayo.

32 Buot unta si Malta nga motutol, apan nahadlok siya.

33 “Kanang gilay-ona sa belos dili na kaha maabot sa bala?” gimatngonan ni Malta ang iyang mga pulong.

34 “Abot pa kaayol!” misinghag ang nagpabuto.

35 “Apan dili na gayod maigo ang nagsakay sa belos,” nanghinaot si Malta nga pasaligon siya sa sundalo nga walay kuydawo.

36 “Kon maigo, pasensiyal!”

37 Mibati si Malta og pangimog sa iyang kaunoran.

38 “Nang,” misangpit ang usa ka sundalo nga namilot sa iyang purol nga maong.

39 Milingi si Malta. “Ngano, Dong?”

40 “Kinsay ngalan nianang bayhana nga seksirika ganing manlihok-lihok ug matinagdanon gani kaayo?”

41 “Hain god nga bayhana?” midiyon si Malta.

42 “Kana ganing linginon og nawong ug lamurok kaayog mga aping ug ang ila ganing balay nga tabla ug wala pa gayod mahuman gitkyopan hapit sa mabagang dahon sa lagtang?”

43 “Si Naring... anak ni Kilino-Ibay. Kay ngano man, Dong?”

44 “Kay ngano man tuod, Teban?” misagbat ang usa ka sundalo nga nagkalingaw pagyupyop sa sigarilyong lumboy. “Naibog ka?”

45 “Naibog mo lang! May trato na ba siya, Nang?”

46 “Wala pa nang katilaw og trato-trato, Dong. Bisan tuod sabton usahay nga mahagiton ang iyang panglihok-lihok, wala pa gayoy gisugot kanang bayhana. Pangutana lang sa taga dinhi kon namakak ba ako.”

47 “Paskag masuod ko lang kanang babayhana, balo lang kahag di ba—”

48 “Masulod sa bunuan?” mitimang ang sarhento.


50 “Isirli!” misikmat kadtong sundalo nga naghinis sa pusil. “Abi wala na man siya makatilaw og linat-oban, abi kanunay nang puno ang iyang tungol dinhi, tahom na
kun o kaayo kining dapita nga bisan unsaon pagtan-aw naputos man kining Lipata sa mahait nga mga panas ug mga magay nga makatunok."


53 “Ikaw, Berto,” matod sa sundalo nga manunupi, “nanabi ka mang dato sa inyo sa Argaw, wala ka pa makatilaw og pagkaon nga ingon niini kadaghan og klase.”

54 “Ayaw dihag saba, Brad,” nagkanguhal kadtong ginganlag Berto tungod sa kadako sa iyang nahungit.


57 “Salamat, human na mi,” nagdungan ang tulo ka manghahatod ug mao usab unta ang ibungat ni Malta, apan wala makapadayon.


60 “Isaliyab ba lang ninyo ang salin?” nangutana si Malta nga nagpanlad-ok.

61 “Ihatag sa iro!” matod sa mugtok-og-nawong nga sundalo.

62 “Ambi, akong dad-on kay akong ipakaon sa among mga iro,” mihangyo si Malta.

63 “Hala hiposa,” miagda ang sarhento.

64 Nagharab-harab ang dughan ni Malta nga nanghipos sa salin. Sa iyang baba, gitangag niya ang hunsoy diin sa sungsongan mga agiw lamay makita.
Meet the Writer


Si Marcel Navarra ay produkto ng Amerikanong edukasyon bagama’t second year high school lang ang kanyang tinapos.

Noong 1947, sinulat ni Eustaquio Ocampo, isang manunulat mula sa Misamis Oriental, ang sumusunod sa Bisaya:

Si Marcel Navarra ang Guy de Maupassant ng ating panitikan. Siya ang nangunguna sa talaan ng mga matatagumpay at progresibong mga manunulat sa loob ng mahabang panahon – mula sa panahon bago magdigmaan hanggang sa kasalukuyan – inilahad niya ang kanyang kaisipan at damdamin sa pamamagitan ng kanyang mga panulat.

Binansagan din si Marcel Navarra na "Hemingway sa Binisaya" ng iba pang manunulat sa Sebwano. Kinilala siyang tagapagtaguyod ng modernismo at realismo sa panitikang Sebuwano na nagbigay ng tiyak na anyo sa maikling kwento. Lubhang nagiging kapuri-puri ang makatotohanang paglalarawan niya ng iba't ibang aspekto ng buhay sa baryo kung kaya’t "kon tuslukon, modugo gayud!" (kapag tinusok, tiyak na magdudugo).

Ito ang ilan sa mga kuwentong kanyang isinulat: "Apasumpay" (Pahabol), "Ug Gianod Ako..." (At Ako’y Inanod...), "Ang Pahigmata " (Ang Pagkamulat), "Si Manang Merin ug ang Kasing" (Si Manang Merin at ang Turumpo), "Tingali ang Adlaw Mosilang Ugma" (Sisikat ang Araw Bukas), "Sa Lunhawng Tugwayanan" (Sa Luntiang Bukid), "Ang Hunsoy Sungsongan Usab" (Ang Hunsoy) at "Paingon sa Bag-ong Kalibutan" (Patungo sa Bagong Daigdig).

Mumbling calmed the soul. To Selo, this was knowledge that came with old age. He would sit outside on the front ladder, his bare feet resting on the last rung, and mumble. Words would push up from between his lungs, past his tonsils, and work their way between his toothless gums. His lips spat them out in small explosions. There were any number of things to mumble about; sometimes he told a story, sometimes he just followed the movement of the sun from east to west, sometimes he grumbled about the house, the canal was a shimmering distortion in a brown palm of land distorted by heat waves.

The two boys playing in the yared had grown used to Selo's mumbling. The older, nine years of age, drew a circle on the ground with his dirty forefinger. He was not quick enough, and two drops of sweat fell from his brow into the circle. Against the soil's glitter, the sweatdrops were black, shallow holes. He studied them for a moment; then, carefully, he covered the holes with two chipped marble—one orange, one blue. Just outside the line he had drawn, his brother's toes dug into the powdery earth. The older boy ignored his brother just as he ignored Old Selo.

Grandfather's bad humor, their grandmother used to say, had started with the withering of his right hand. The bird-claw that resulted had not been her fault. As a matter of fact, she had saved his life. The claw was nothing more than an extraneous addition to the whole—regrettable but unimportant. She had saved his life. Because of the debt, the boy's memories of the old woman were rimmed with guilt. No one had been able to help her when her turn to die came.

It took place at the height of the monsoon season. The house was so waterlogged the bamboo posts had split their brown skins and were mottled green. A translucent pair of leaves even sprouted from the middle node of the bamboo holding the kitchen wall up. Grandmother, who had complained of chest pains for weeks, had a coughing attack so fierce she sounded like a joyous frog. The fit lasted for hours. It would take her by the throat and snap her small head back and forth, while bits of matter—red, flecked with foam—ejected from her mouth and darted around like tiny bats. Mother, a Lysol-soaked rag in her hand, chased the steaming bats ans shouted for the rest of the family to keep away. It was hard work, but she would not allow anyone to help. Finally, grandmother gave a terrible series of yelps. Her eyes disappeared into her head. She fell, cutting her brow on the pallet's edge and overturning the chamber pot.

Since that time, the boys had known that a man's interior was dark red and gray, spongy and foamy. This was wisdom uncovered by death: a man's interior was uninteresting, made up of tissue so dark-red it turned black in the gaslight. A man was neither good nor bad inside, only uninteresting.

Old Selo, on the other hand, could not remember that evening. One day his wife was there; the next, she wasn't. After thinking about it, Old Selo decided that death was a sin of omission where the dead forgot to live. It was all as simple as that. The dead didn't do anything. The living mumbled like him, shouted like his daughter-in-law, cursed like his son, cried like his grandsons, or turned into beauties like his granddaughter. She was fifteen years old and had dark brown skin...
and straight black hair reaching down to the small of her back. With her large
eyes, her nice mouth, she could have a future. Selo glanced at the sacks piled near
the shed-brown jute sacks fat with rice grains. It had been a good harvest.

His claw itched. His left hand caressed it. Like all the men in the village, he had
indulged in man-talk in his youth. He and the other men had been members of a
supposedly national society of peasants. They had gathered in the empty
schoolhouse during evenings and had made plans for the future. It had been
exciting to think of cramming the landlord's genitals down his throat. It had been
exciting to talk of snaring and roasting his dogs grown vicious on a diet of meat.
The dogs had chased old Selo once, when he had tried to deliver the landlord's
share of the harvest himself.

In high hopes, Selo had had the society's insignia tattooed on the skin web
between his thumb and forefinger. Other men in the village carried the blue sickle
on their bodies-on the chest, above the heart; on the thigh; on the skin web
between thumb and forefinger. It betrayed them when the landlord's goon squads
started kicking house doors down. The massacre went on for months, with the
odor of putrid flesh mingling with the harvest fragrance. The rivers seemed full of
crocodiles then, with all the bodies floating in the water.

The landlord's men hadn't reached their village yet, but old Selo's wife was already
screaming that he was a dead man. Taking his courage in hand, he whetted his
fan-knife and prepared to excise the tattoo. At the last moment, however, he
remembered his friends, bodies fertilizing the fields. He dropped the knife. His wife
cursed him for three hours and finally lost her patience. She heated a silver coin in
the charcoal stove and with her blackened firethongs dropped it on Selo's tattoo.
The house posts shook with the old man's bellows, and disconsolate screams
answered him form a cloud of ricebirds hovering over the field. The trick worked.
When the metal cooled, his wife ripped the coin off Selo's hand, deftly stripping the
flesh underneath, Selo, angered by his wife's triumph, wrapped his hand in a rag.
He refused to let anyone look at the wound.

The boys waited for the vehicle to come into sight before rising to their feet. It was
a jeep with a trailer and a dust streaking behind it. When the jeep stopped before
the bamboo gate, the dust cloud blew towards the house, forcing the boys to avert
their faces. Old Selo remained as he was and tasted gritty soil on his lips. Four
men jumped off the jeep. All had tooled leather gunbelts around their waists. One
wore a buri hat.

"Your father home?" the man with the hat asked.

The boys looked at each other. Finally, the older one shook his head.

"That's all right," one of the men called out. "The rice is here, anyway."

The hatted man scratched his nape all frowned.

"Listen now," he said to the boys. "Tell your father he left only thirty sacks of rice
for the propietario. He should have left fifty. Then, he owes me ten more for the
seeds and five more for the weeder. So, we're talking thirty-five sacks now. Can
you remember that?"
The boy felt he should say something but could not find the words for what he wanted to say. He gave a shrug and nodded.

"Okay," the man turned to his companions. "Load up."

One of the men was strong enough to lift an entire sack by himself. The other two worked together. As they moved back and forth, the pile of sacks sank closer and closer to the ground.

"Come on, come on," the man with the hat said, "it's tricky business. Never know what these peasants will do."

He tugged at a sack impatiently. Old Selo scuttled off the ladder, drew something hanging on the nearest house post. He rushed towards the men. The boys shouted. It was enough warning. The man with the hat evaded the downward slice of the machete. The blade buried itself in the topmost sack's belly. Old Selo tugged at the hilt, and gold kernels bathed the jute sacks. Without hurry, the man with the hat seized Old Selo's wrist and wrung the weapon from him. Reversing the machete, he struck Old Selo's chest with the hilt. A cry escaped the old man. His spine hit the ground and the man with the hat pinned him with a foot.

"It's okay," he said to his men. "I'll keep him quiet. Hurry up now. I don't want more trouble."

When the jeep with the trailer disappeared, the boys helped Old Selo back to the ladder. He seemed to have forgotten the incident and resumed mumbling, his lips speckled with blood. The boys looked at each other. They walked to the gate, squatted down, and waited.

It took some time for the horse-drawn rig to appear at the roads' rise. It moved so slowly that the boys could hardly keep still. They lost control when they recognized their mother and sister among the passengers. The older boy was aware of his incoherence, but impatience pushed the words out of his mouth. The afternoon's story had to be told. Still shouting, he watched his mother climb down the rig and help his sister maneuver a basket past the dirty wheel. The horse, its flanks covered with sweat and whipmarks, snorted; its skin trembled.

The mother tried to wipe off the blood from Selo's mouth, but it had dried and would not come off. She released her skirt's hem impatiently and pushed the old man up the ladder. Meanwhile, the two boys menaced the basket their sister was carrying. She threatened them with a fist. They shied away, returned and tried to peer into the basket, sending it banging against the girl's shins. She shouted at them to leave her alone. There was nothing in the basket but food. The distressing news set the younger one wailing. Mother leaned out of the window and ordered him to stop or else...

Inside the house, Old Selo had clean lips again, his daughter-in-law having used a wet rag on his face. He watched as she prepared the evening meal. She held an eggplant down with her left hand, forefinger extended and pressed against its end, while her right hand stroked through the eggplant's flesh with a knife. Her fingertip was never more than a hair's breath away from the blade as it sliced through the
vegetable. She grumbled as she worked. She had warned Old Selo's son, she said, but he would not listen. He kept talking about the law. But what in god' name had the law got to do with people? Laws were paper and ink: they were kept in filing cabinets in offices in town and city building. Now, if it were the law of the sun or the seas or of the earth, that would be an altogether different matter. People's laws had nothing to do with people.

The girl smiled at herself in the cracked mirror on the wall. Her eyes sought out the photograph of an actress pinned on the wall. Like her, the actress had limpid eyes and a small mouth. The girl sighed and lifted the wight of her hair from her nape. God willing, she would have a future. She smiled again, then picked up a thin blue towel draped on a battered bamboo chest.

"Where are you off to now?" her mother asked in her usual harsh voice.

"To the canal," she said, "to take a bath."

"Take the boys with you."

The girl crinkled her nose. "Why do I have to?"

"Because you're no longer a child," came the answer. "Because of what could happen which must not happen."

"It's not as if I take my clothes off," the girl muttered, but her voice had lost its conviction.

"Take the boys with you."

THEY tried to keep the canal's lips as bare and hard-packed as the summer fields, but green things somehow managed to make their way there. They look root overnight, dipping hair tendrils into the water: bizarre flowers of purple and yellow, stringy weeds, and the mimosa pudica. The girl hated the mimosa for its deceptive shyness. At the least touch, its leaves folded and drooped but only to bare the thorns on its stems.

The boys stripped immediately and dived into the water. They swam, transformed into sleek brown puppies with iridescent limbs and bodies. The girl watched. Then she too entered the water. First she washed her hair, scrubbing it with crushed herbs and leaves. Then groping beneath the water, she cleaned the soft secrets of her body. Her fingers cupped her unfinished breasts. Sighing, she leaned back in the water and lifted her face to the sky where the sun was beginning to cool.

It was nearly dusk when they left the canal. The boys shared the weight of a pail of water while the girl shivered in her wet clothes. At the backyard's edge, the girl abruptly signalled for the boys' eyes widened. They turned to the sister, but something in her face made them look away. A clatter of tin plates erupted from the house. There was the sound of a slap, a sharp cry. Then, the creaking of the ladder as someone came down in a hurry. The girl showed her teeth.
Dinner was ready. The mother was picking up plates from the floor. She pointed to the table. The boys smiled and carried the pail into the kitchen. The girl changed her clothes.

"Rice!" the older boy exclaimed. "Not gruel. Real rice."

"Might as well eat it," the mother said. "It won't last very long."

She drowned the rice mound on Selo's plate with soup. A twinge of anger shot through the girl. It was shame and a waste. Grandfather couldn't take anything solid anyway. But that was the way it was, the way it had always been. Even with eating, one took a vow akin to marriage--one ate as the others ate, for richer and for poorer.

Old Selo waited for the table to be cleared. It seemed hardly possible that the day was over, as the day before had been over. The sun was born in the east, died in the west; the dry season came and merged with monsoon season. Flood and drought. And all through the changes of time, men worked in the fields, holding on and holding out, coaxing the earth into yielding the golden kernels, so tiny they seemed like babies' gaps. Why couldn't the sun and the rain clouds be nailed to the sky? Instead of men, the elements should hold on. Hold on, as his wife used to say.

Obediently, the old man lowered his body to the mat spread out by his grandsons. His body loosened its moorings and entered the sea of sleep. He dreamt, his dream melting into the dreams breathed out by his daughter-in-law and his grandchildren. One dream now possessed the house, each member of the family giving to it. There were scenes of joy, a morning rimmed with hope, a child's universe of a toy.

"Wh-wh-what?" the granddaugther murmured.

Something was in the yard. It moved, its bulk rustling against the nipa fronds of the house's walls. In the dark, the boys' eyes were pitted stars. The girl looked at her mother, the older woman was also awake, listening in the dark. Before she could say anything, the door stood, his head and shoulders dusted by moonlight.

Resentment came into the room. The man halted, prowled about the accusing air of his family. His insulted soul gave him pride. Son-of-goat, he said, he was a man, and a man had rights. So the law decreed. Circling, he came upon a ace. His grief ballad itself into a fist. Without a word, he smashed a blow into his wife's face.

Something heavy struck his back and clung to his neck with little claws. The man beat at the thing on his back. He swept it off and threw it to the floor. He began to kick at it. But the white bat shrieked in his daughter's voice. The man stopped. The shadows were unravelling themselves. There were his wife, his sons, his daughter and Old Selo, his father, curled like a gnome in the corner. He found the door and lost himself in the night.

"Stop him," the mother cried out.

"Not me," the girl said. "He kicked me. The son-of-a-bitch- kicked me."
"Don't say that," the mother said. "Follow him and see he's all right."

"He's drunk."

"Do as you're told," the mother said, dabbing at the blood on her mouth. "It's curfew time. If the soldiers find him, everything will be over for sure."

The girl did not move.

"Please follow him," the mother said. She was still stroking her mouth. "Please. We have to—to hang on."

The girl kicked at a pillow.

"All right," she said. "But if he kills me, it will be on your head."

"Take your brother with you," the mother called out.

The older boy was already running after his sister. He caught up with her in the yard. She took his hand, murmured something that sounded like everything had to be over and led him to the gate. Moon-touch had transformed the world, and the two halted before the alien landscape. The boy felt he was gliding on silver water. From a distance came their father's voice. He was cursing the night.

"He's making for the town," the girl said.

"Son-of-a-whore," the boy muttered. "He'll hit a checkpoint for sure."

The girl broke into a run. The boy followed his eyes darting with suspicion among the strangely lit objects of the night world. The girl shied suddenly, bumping into her brother.

"A snake,' she said.

"I don't see anything."

"I heard it. Never mind. Hurry."

It was too late. Three shadows broke the silver road. The father was trying to convince the two soldiers that a man had the right to get drunk where and how it pleased him. Particularly when the harvest was involved, yes, sir, particularly...One of the soldiers replied by pummelling him in the ribs and stomach.

"Pets," the boy whispered and spat on the ground.

"Sssh," the girl held her brother's hand. "It will be all right. He pays now. Don't worry."

"Pay for what? They'll take him to the barracks now."
“Sssh. I'll take care of this. Go home and tell mother everything's all right. I'll bring him home.”

“Sure.”

“Believe me. Trust me. I'll get him out.”

“How?”

The girl did not answer. Looking at her, the boy saw her lips had pull back, her teeth were bare. In the moonlight, her mouth seemed full of fangs.

SHE entered the room on tiptoe but hardly a second passed before a man's voice exclaimed: "Well, what have we here?"

There were two of them—one seated behind a varnished table, the other on a canvass bed. The first held a notebook and wore fatigues; the second was in his undershirt and pants and was polishing his boots.

"Please, sir," the girl said, "my father..." The room smelled of wax and detergent. Light spilling from a naked bulb overhead turned the floor bloodclot red.

"Which one is he? The men here are so active it's hard to tell who has sired whom," the sergeant said.

"He was picked up, sir, just a while ago." The girl swallowed. In a softer voice, she added: "He was drunk, sir."

She told herself that nothing had changed in the room. The bulb still swung from the frayed cord; the light was as harsh as before. There was no reason for the hair on her nape to stand.

"What do you want with him."

"I've come to take him home."

"Child, it's not as simple as that. First, we have to take him to the judge. Violating curfew, disturbing the peace. And so on. Then we'll have a trial. Since it's Saturday, we have to wait till Monday to even begin. The judge will either fine him or send him to jail or both. It may take weeks, month—maybe years."

"Please sir, my mother's waiting."

"I suppose you can pay the fine."

"We don't have money," she said, flushing. "But we have rice."

The soldiers looked at each other. The sergeant said there was nothing to be done. As a matter of fact, the girl herself was violating curfew and he was tempted to arrest her, too. The soldier on the cot laughed.
"You want to see him?"

She nodded. The sergeant stood up and motioned for her to follow.

"We locked him in the toilet." he said.

It was an outhouse. The father rose from the cement floor when the door was opened. He bleated at the sight of his daughter.

"Go away," he said. "Go away. Tell your mother I'll be all right. Go on home."

His left eyes was swollen. A blue-grey lump glistened on his forehead. The girl swallowed again. She stretched out a hand to him but the sergeant pushed her away. He closed the door on the father's voice.

"Well, he stays there," the sergeant said, "at least until he's sentenced."

The girl stood before the table.

"Please, sir," she said, "I must take him home."

"Can't do. Not unless you pay the fine. Do you have money?" The girl bit her underlip.

"No? Maybe you can pay some other way. What do you think?" The sergeant turned to the other soldier. "Can she pay some other way?"

The man laughed. His eyes glittered.

"I should think so. She's old enough. And pleasant girls are strong."

"How about it?" the sergeant asked. "You owe your father that much."

The girl's mouth opened.

"Any self-respecting daughter would do much more. How about it? We'll give him a bed, make him comfortable while you're paying. At dawn, we'll give him to you. How about it?"

The other soldier yawned. The girl looked at the light bulb. If only the light had not been as harsh.

"How about it?" the sergeant repeated. "There are only four of us here. You're lucky."

Sometime in the night, the toilet door was opened and the father was taken out. He was given a cot in the barracks. Gratefully, he stretched his limbs, his sore muscles creaking. Sleep came to him, but he was awakened almost immediately. He had turned over and had nearly fallen off the cot. It must have frightened him, for his heart beat furiously for several minutes. His fear was transformed into a
woman's cry. After listening for a few seconds, the father decided it was a bat shrilling in the dark. He went back to sleep and was awakened again, this time by a dog's barking. He lay with his eyes open, looking at the shadows of the strange room. From somewhere in the building came a man's low laugh.

105 It was morning when he rose from the bed. The sun was on the brink of rising. A soldier came and led him to the office. It was empty, the blankets on the cot neatly folded. The soldier pushed him towards the door.

106 "I can leave?" the father asked.

107 The soldier smile and nodded. He patted the father on the shoulder. A smile cracked the man's dry lips. He bounded through the open door. The cool of the morning eased the creases on his face. Under a kamachile tree, his daughter waited, a scarf tied about her head.

108 "What are you doing here?" the father shouted.

109 "Waiting," she said, dropping her eyes. "Waiting for you."

110 He looked at her with suspicion, but she did not seem to have changed.

111 "Come quickly," she said. "Mother's waiting." She stepped away from him.

112 She turned too quickly and stumbled on a pebble. The scarf slipped off and when she bent to pick it up, her skirt rose, revealing a bruise at the back of her left thigh. The father looked away.


114 Thin wisps of smoke—dewdrops evaporating—curled from the ground. The air was cool and carried the scent of roasting corn. The father's head turn, his eyes scanning the fields. A softness lay in his chest. His daughter walked in front of him and he was seized by an impulse to tell her how he had first me her mother.

115 "Well, now" he said, clearing his throat, "I suppose we have to tell. Tell your mother."

116 "Let's not talk," she said.

117 He quickened his place, leaving his daughter behind. At that instant the sun touched a tree so violently that its branches crackled. The tree absorbed the light. Soaked through, it began to glisten, returning the suds’ warmth. Open-mouthed, the father looked at the tree. He was still looking at it when something hard and jagged smashed in the back of his skull.

118 "I have the right," the daughter said.

119 It was the boy who found them. He had left his younger brother in the fields and had wandered off, asking himself what had happened to his father and sister.
"Whoreson," he said, "they killed him."

"Yes."

"Why?"

"There was no one else to kill."

The boy looked at her curiously. Her skirt was splattered with blood and white matter.

"You tried to lift him," he said—tentatively, as though it were a suggestion.

The girl smiled. "I learned so much this night."

"Well, we have to hang on. Hang together."

"We can take him home now."

The boy took her hand. "Not yet," he said. "We have to hang on. Hang together."

He guided her to the path. "We'll tell mother. But first, we must take a bath. Whoreson. They must have struck him a hundred times. His head's nearly gone. A hundred times. Whoreson."

A whimper broke form the girl.

"Sssh," the boy said. "It's all right. We'll tell mother. She'll find someone else. But first, we must take a bath. In the canal."

They left the road and took a short-cut across the field. They saw their youngest brother playing near the canal and waved to him.

After a while, the boy said: "It's all right. Who'll complain against soldiers?"

They picked up the youngest and proceeded to the can, the older boy still busy with what could happen. The girl, he said, could be indentured now, as a servant to the landlord. "Mind you take care of yourself there," he said. "Mind that you do that. And someday, someday, maybe we can all go to town and live there."

In the house, the mother was teasing old Selo by pretending to carry on a conversation with him. Since the old man paid no attention but merely mumbled, she was forced to comment on a variety of subjects. She made coffee for him and sat beside him. Together, they gazed out of the window. A fly hovered, and the mother flicked at it with her hand. Old Selo said something.

"What?" The woman asked, laughing. "Of course, flies are lovely, with rainbow wings. But let them settle on you and they'll lay eggs. They breed maggots. Don't ask me why. Maybe because they're forced to breed on trash, garbage, all the sick things. Maggots."
Old Selo mumbled on. The mother saw the children crossing the fields. She smiled and waved to them. They were free—so her man must be coming home soon. Yes, there they were, the three of them, the boys and the girl. They were headed for the canal which was shimmering a distortion in a brown palm of land distorted by heat waves. Old Selo looked and mumbled. Thought it was summer, enough water remained in the canal to feed the seedbeds.
Meet the Writer

NINOTCHKA ROSCA (born in the Philippines in 1946) is a Filipina feminist, author, journalist and human rights activist who is active in GABRIELA Network USA, a member of the MARIPOSA ALLIANCE (Ma-Al), a multi-racial, multi-ethnic women's activist center for understanding the intersectionality of class, race and gender oppressions, toward a more comprehensive practice of women's liberation. As a novelist, Rosca was a recipient of the American Book Award in 1993 for her novel Twice Blessed.

Rosca is active in the Women's Anti-Imperialist League (WAIL) and is a contemporary Asian-American who is known for the short stories Bitter Country and Monsoon Country. Her short stories had been featured in the 1986 Best 100 Short Stories in the United States by Raymond Carver and the Missouri Review collection of their Best Published Stories in 25 Years, while another was included in the Ms Magazine's Best Fiction in 30 Years. She is also the author of the best-selling English language novels State of War and Twice Blessed. The latter won her the 1993 American Book Award for excellence in literature. Her most recent book is JMS: At Home In The World, co-written with the controversial Jose Maria Sison, who has been included in the U.S. list of "terrorists".

Rosca was a political prisoner under the dictatorial government of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. She was forced into exile to Hawaii, United States when threatened with a second arrest for her human rights activism by the Marcos regime. Rosca has been designated as one of the 12 Asian-American Women of Hope by the Bread and Roses Cultural Project.

Rosca had been a leader in Amnesty International and the PEN American Center. Rosca was also a founder and the first national chair of the GABNet, the largest and only US-Philippines women's solidarity mass organization. She is the international spokesperson of GABNet's Purple Rose Campaign against the trafficking of women, with an emphasis on Filipinas.

She was the Director of Communications and Development at the Santa Clara Center for Occupational Safety and Health and lived in San Jose, California.

She attended the University of the Philippines and lives in Queens borough of New York City. Her lecture schedules are managed by Speak Out Now. A huge fan of science fiction, Rosca reads four books a week (three "light," one "heavy"). She is divorced and has two children.

She is currently a correspondent for the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the most widely-read broadsheet in the Philippines. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninotchka_Rosca)
PIETA—SA MAY DALAN P. DEL ROSARIO

Corazon M. Almerino

Inahan ug anak,
daplin sa dalan,
gilabayan-labyan
sa galumbaanay’ng
mga tiil. Walay
puy-anan
ang inyong panan-aw.

Sa sunod nga gutling
mohagtok ang sinsilyo
dinha nianang kabo
kilid ninyo. Maayo
lang unta nga motaligsik
og mga sinsilyo
aron inyong saluron
sa inyong mga kamot
nga gikubalan
og pagpamunit
nianang mga salin
nga gidan-ok
sa basurahan.
Maayo lang unta
walay irong-buang
nga makasimhot
sa inyo unyang panihapon.

Ug sa inyong pagkatulog
karong gabii, dili unta
mobundak ang uwan,
kay kini ra bang dalan
dinha mobaha dayon
kining dalan dinhi
nadunot, gikutkot
sa mga tawong dili na
kahibalong mahinanok.
Meet the Writer

CORAZON ALMERINO has been a fellow to the following writers’s workshop: the Cornélio Faigao Memorial Writers Workshop; the Iligan National Writers’ Workshop, and the U.P. National Writers’ Workshop in Davao. She was granted a writer’s residency at Hedgebrook International Women Writer’s Residency in Washington State, and the Quint Pitanga International Artist fellowship in Brazil, by the Sacater Foundation. (Almerino, Corazon. Pangilin. Manila: National Commission for Culture and Arts, 2002.)
AYOS LANG ANG BUHAY SA MANILA

Bienvenido Lumbera

Ayos lang ang buhay sa Maynila.
Wala kang paki sa hindi mo pami,
at ika'y pababayaan
ng 'yong kapitbahay.
Singkipot ng inuupahang entresuwelo
ang mundo, tamang-tama:
may banyo, may kusina.

Ma'no kung mayroon man bendor
na nsagasaan ng dyip sa Espina?
Hindi mo alam (di naperyodiko kasi)
ng isang buntis ang naglunod sa Pasig kahapon.
Mabalitaan mo ma'y di mo naman kilala.
Basta ligtas ang eskinitang patungo sa inyo,
malalim man ang baha sa Sta. Cruz, ay ano?

Nakatanghod ang dalawang bata
sa pagkagat mo ng siopao
o paghigop sa sabaw ng mami.
Puwedeng di mo pansinin,
para nung weyter sulok
na nagtitiris ng tagihawat.
Salbahe' ng mga bata 'yan--
malimit naaaksidente ka na'y
ikaw pa'ng dudukutan.

Para sa 'yo, ang pakikisama'y
para nung gripo sa banyo--
tantiyado mo kung kailan
hangin lang ang iahagok,
at kung anong oras naman
may tutulong tubig
pag binuksan.
Meet the Writer

BIENVENIDO LUMBERA (11 April 1932-) is a noted poet, literary critic, scholar and librettist. He was proclaimed National Artist for Literature in April 2006. He was also the recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communications in 1993.

Lumbera was born on April 11, 1932 in Lipa, Batangas. At one year of age, his father died from a fall from a fruit tree. At the age of five his mother died of cancer. He was raised by his grandmother Eusebia Teru who, according to Lumbera, exercised a definitive influence on his life. When his grandmother died, he lived with his childless godparents Enrique and Amanda Lumbera.

Lumbera spent his high school years in Mabini Academy and went on to earn a degree in journalism at the University of Santo Tomas where he graduated in 1954. He took up masteral and doctoral studies in Indiana University, where he graduated with a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature in 1967. His doctoral dissertation *Tagalog Poetry, 1570-1898: Tradition and Influences on its Development* was eventually published by Ateneo University Press in 1986.

Lumbera introduced a new aesthetic to traditional Tagalog literature with what is known as Bagay Poetry. Lumbera taught literature and creative writing at Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, University of the Philippines, and at the University of Santo Tomas. He was also appointed visiting professor in Osaka University from 1985 to 1988. He was also the first Asian scholar-in-residence at the University of Hawaii. With the declaration of Martial Law, he was arrested in January 1974. In December of that year, he was released from jail upon petitions of his former student Cynthia Nograles, whom he later married. IN 1977 he became editor of Diliman Review, which was openly against the Marcos regime.

In 1993 he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication. He was also awarded many literary awards, including the National Book Awards and the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards. ([http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php?title=Bienvenido_Lumbera](http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php?title=Bienvenido_Lumbera))
LETTER TO PEDRO, U.S. CITIZEN, ALSO CALLED PETE

Rene Estella Amper

Pete, old friend,
there isn’t really much change
in our hometown since you left.

This morning I couldn’t find anymore
the grave of Simeona, the cat we buried
at the foot of Miguel’s mango tree,
when we were in grade four,
after she was hit by a truck while crossing
the street. The bulldozer has messed it up
while making the feeder road into the mountains
to reach the hearts of the farmers.
The farmers come down every Sunday
to sell their agony and their sweat for
a few pesos, lose in the cockpit or get
drunk on the way home.

A steel bridge named after the congressman’s wife
now spans the gray river where Tasyo, the old
goat, had split the skin of our young lizards
to make us a man many years ago.

The long blue hills where we
used to shoot birds with slingshot or spend
the summer afternoons we loved so much doing
nothing in the tall grass have been bought
by the mayor’s son. Now there’s a barbed wire
fence about them; the birds have gone away.

The mayor owns a big sugar plantation, three
new cars, and a mansion with the gate overhung
with sampaguita. Inside the gate
are guys who carry a rifle and a pistol.

We still go to Konga’s store for rice
and sardines and sugar and nails for the coffin.

Still only a handful go to Mass on Sundays.
In the church the men talk, sleep; the children play.
The priest is sad.

Last night the storm came and blew away
the cornflowers. The cornfields are full of cries.

Your cousin, Julia, has just become a whore.
She liked good clothes, good food, big money.
That’s why she became a whore.
Now our hometown has seven whores.
Pete, old friend,
every time we have good reason to get drunk
and be carried home in a wheelbarrow
we always remember you. Oh, we miss
both Pete and Pedro.

Remember us to your American wife,
you lucky bastard. Islaw, your cock-eyed
uncle, now calls himself Stanley
after he began wearing the clothes you sent
him last Christmas.

P.S. Tasyo, the old goat,
Sends your lizard his warmest congratulations.
Meet the Writer

RENE ESTELLA AMPER was born on October 18, 1940 in Boljoon, Cebu. As physician he has served as head of the Boljoon rural health unit; as poet, he has participated as an Asia Foundation Writing Fellow at the Silliman U. Summer Writers' Workshop in 1968 and 1969. He has also shared the 2nd Palanca prize in poetry in 1989 with Fatima Lim for a collection called All Else Is Grass. His works have been published in 12 Poems (1969) and Collected Poems (1990). He has been mayor of Boljoon, and is incumbent vice-president. (http://panitikan.com.ph/authors/a/reamper.htm)
ANG PAGLILITIS NI MANG SERAPIO
Paul Arvisu Dumol

Isang silid


Unang papasok ang HUKOM, ang mga taong TAGAPAGTANONG, at si SERAPIO na nakapagitna sa dalawang BANTAY. Patakbo silang papasok, lahat humihiyaw at humahalkahak din. Tatakbo ang HUKOM, ang mga TAGAPAGTANONG, si SERAPIO sa gitna ng silid. Bigla silang tatahimik (bagamat patuloy pa rin ang halakhak ng ibang tauhan), titindig nang walang kibo sa gitna, sa harap ng podium ng HUKOM. May dalang baston ang UNANG TAGAPAGTANONG. Tatakbo ang ibang tauhan sa paligid ng grupo ng HUKOM, TAGAPAGTANONG, SERAPIO at BANTAY. Hawak-hawak ng tatlong PULUBI ang isang mahabang estandarte. Ang nakasulat sa estandarte: ANG PAGLILITIS NI MANG SERAPIO. Bigla na silang susugod sa kanilang mga silya't bangko, mauupo at mananahimik.


Sandaling tigil. Bubuksan ng IKALAWANG TAGAPAGTANONG ang kaniyang kwaderno.

Unang Tagapagtanong: (Sa Ikalawang Tagapagtanong) O, sige na.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Sige. (Lalakad sila sa harap ng kanilang mesa)


Unang Tagapagtanong: Magandang gabi, ginoo.

Serapio: Magandang gabi rin ho. (Sandaling titigil.) Mga ginoo...

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: SILENCIO!
Unang Tagapagtanong: Huwag kang magsalita habang kami’y nagsasalita.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Bastos ang nagsasalita habang may nagsasalita pa.

Unang Tagapagtanong: (Sa mga manonood) Patawarin ho ninyo siya. Talagang ganyan ho ang walaLang kapangyarihang tulad niya: mangmang, at yan nga ang suliranin ng mga may kapangyarihang, tulad namin.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Tumindig ka nang matuwid!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ba’t ka ba galaw nang galaw?

Serapio: Gusto ko lang malaman kung ano ang krimen ko. (Sandaling tigil.)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Hindi mo ba alam?

Serapio: Hindi ho.

Unang Tagapagtanong: A, problema mo na ’yon. (Sa mga manonood.) Pag-aaruga ng bata ang krimen niya. (Biglang titindig ang tatlong saksi.)

Tatlong saksi: Pag-aaruga, pag-aaruga, pag-aaruga ng bata.


Hukom: Pormalidad na rin ho ang hatol ko.

Unang tagapagtanong: Ang parusa niya ay nais panoorin nitong mga pulubi. Siya’y bubulagin. (Bubungisngis at tatawa ang mga pulubi.) Ginoong Serapio, mabuti ba’ng tulog mo?

Serapio: Oho.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Nakakain ka na ba?

Serapio: Oho.

Unang tagapagtanong: Magaling! Handang-handang ka sa paglilitis mo. Ilang araw mo nang suot ’yang kamisadentro mo?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Ikaw ba’y naghilamos na?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Naligo?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Nagpunas man lang?

Unang Tagapagtanong: (Sa Bantay.) Na-spray mo na ba siya?
Hukom: (Pupukpukin nang dalawang beses ang kanyang podium.) Ituloy ang paglilitis! (Sa mga manonood.) Sa siyam na taon sa federaciong ito bilang hukom, wala pa akong nakikilalang tagapagtanong na kasindaldal nitong dalawa. (Pupukpukin nang dalawang beses ang kanyang podium.) Ituloy ang paglilitis?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Bueno! Ginoong Serapio, sabihin mo sa amin. (Babatuhin si Serapio ng ikalawang tagapagtanong ng yeso o anumang maliit na bagay.)

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Tumindig ka ng matuwid!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Sabihin mo sa amin ang pangalan mo.

Ikalawang tagapagtanong: Pangalan!

Serapio: Serapio, ho.

Unang Tagapagtanong: (Sa Ikalawang Tagapagtanong) Serapio.

Ikalawang tagapagtanong: Serapio?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Serapio?

Serapio: Ho?

Ikalawang tagapagtanong: Serapio?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Serapio?

Serapio: Ano ho?

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Serapio ano?

Serapio: Serapio.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Serapio Serapio?

Serapio: A, hindi ho, Serapio lang.

Ikalawang tagapagtanong: (Habang sumusulat sa kwaderno.) Serapio lang.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ocupacion?

Ikalawang tagapagtanong: Ocupacion?

Serapio: Wala. Wala ho.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ano, wala kang ocupacion?

Serapio: Wala ho.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Hindi ba isa kang pulubi?

Serapio: Oho.
**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ocupacion mo ‘yon. (Susulat ang Ikalawang Tagapagtanong sa kwaderno.) Classificacion.

**Ikalawang tagapagtanong:** Classificacion.

**Serapio:** Classificacion?

**Dalawang Tagapagtanong:** CLASSIFICACION!

**Ikalawang tagapagtanong:** Ano ang classification mo bilang pulubi? Nagmamakaawa o aliwan?

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Pakunwari o karaniwan?

**Ikalawang tagapagtanong:** Ikaw ba’y nagrerenta?

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ng sanggol o bata?

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Upang akitin nga

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ang luha ng madla?

**Dalawang Tagapagtanong:** ‘Yan ang uring nagmamakaawa.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** O tumutugtog ka ba—silindro o gitara, dram, o kahit na banda, o rondalla?

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Kasama ng sayaw o kundi nama’y kanta nang madla’y maaliw at bigyan ka ng kwarta?

**Dalawang Tagapagtanong:** ‘Yan ang uring aliwan.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Maaari naman ding nagkukunwari ka ika’y ipinaglihi sa isang palaka.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** O kung hindi naman ika’y isang palso ngunit isang palsaong palsipikado.

**Dalawang Tagapagtanong:** Pakunwaring bingi, bulag, pilay, pipi, madla’y madaya man ikaw nama’y yayaman. ‘Yan ang uring pakunwari.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Walang guni-guni ang nasa huling uri.
Unang Tagapagtanong: Mga tunay na pipi, bulag, pilay, bingi.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Walang guni-guni.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Wala ring salapi.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Talagang ganyan ang buhay ng nasa huling uri: ang uring karaniwan.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Alin ka sa apat? Nagmamakaawa o aliwan?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Pakunwari o karaniwan? (Sandaling tigil.)

Serapio: Ang huli ho. (Susulat ang Ikalawang Tagapagtanong sa kwaderno.)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ginoong Hukom, ano ang gagawin namin ngayon?

Hukom: Patibayan na ninyo ang krimen niya. (Biglang tindig ang tatlong saksi.)

Tatlong Saksi: (Sa mga manonood.) Patibayan na ang krimen niya. Patibayan na ang krimen niya.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Bueno. Ginoong Serapio, may asawa ka na ba?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Isang kabiyaik?

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Isang babaing bumahagi sa puso mo? (Sandaling tigil.)

Babaing nakasal sa harap ng altar, sa opisina ng gatpuno, o iba pang lugar. (Katahimikan.)

Unang Tagapagtanong: O ano, Ginoong Serapio, sagutin mo ang tanong.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Napakasimple.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ginoong Serapio, di ka dapat mahiya.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Sabihin mo ang totoo.

Unang Tagapagtanong: May asawa ka ba?

Serapio: Wala ho. (Sandaling tigil.)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Iibahin ko ang tanong. May asawa ka ba noon?
Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Asawa na ngayo’y
Nagsasaya
sa bahay ng Diyos
o bahay ng iba? (*Katahimikan.*)


Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: May asawa ka ba noon? (*Sandaling tigil.*)

Serapio: Oo.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Ayan!

Serapio: Ngunit siya’y patay na.

Unang Tagapagtanong: A, wala. Basta’t inamin mong may asawa ka na nga.

Hukom: (*Pupukpukan ng Hukom ang podium niya ng dalawang beses.*) Magaling! (Sa mga manonood.) Napakabilis ng aming mga paglilitis sapagkat lahat ng aming mga tagapagtanong ay matatalino at magagaling.

Mga Pulubi: (*Biglang titindig ang mga pulubi’t papalakpak.*) Magagaling! Magagaling! Magagaling! (*Yuyuko ang mga tagapagtanong.*)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ginoong Serapio, nagkaroon ka ba ng anak?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Buhat sa kasal na yaon?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Buhat sa inyong pagsasama?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Buhat sa inyong pag-aasawa? (*Katahimikan.*)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ginoong Serapio, tahimik ka na naman.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Wala kang sinasabi.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Wala kang imik.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Pasidhi nang pasidhi ang aming pananabik.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Nagkaroon ka ba ng anak? (*Katahimikan.*)

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Payat na payat,
tuyung-tuyo pa.
Walang alinlangang
wala siyang modta.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Nagkaroon ka ba ng anak? (*Lalapitan si Serapio ng Ikalawang Tagapagtanong.*)

Serapio: Ba’t ninyo tinatanong ‘yan?
Unang Tagapagtanong: Aba! Pilosopo!

Serapio: Ano ba ang krimen ko?

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: (Tatakbo ang dalawang tagapagtanong sa likod ng mesa.) Ginoong Serapio!

Serapio: Patawarin ho ninyo ako ngunit—

Unang Tagapagtanong: Wala ka bang utak?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Isip?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Katiting na katalinuhan? Tandaan mo kung sino ka!

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Isang pulubi.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Hamak.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Kulisap!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Sagutin mo ang tanong! Nagkaroon ka ba ng anak? (Sandaling tigil.)

Serapio: Oho.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Ayos!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ba’t di mo kaagad inamin na may anak ka nga?

Serapio: Ano ho ba ang krimen ko?


Unang Tagapagtanong: Ang pangalan ng anak mo ay Sol, hindi ba?

Serapio: Oho. Paano ninyo nalaman?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Marami kaming alam tungkol sa’yo. (Sandaling tigil.)


Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Ano? Ano? Ano? Ano? Ano?
**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ano ‘yang sinasabi mo?

**Serapio:** Wala. Wala ho.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Huwag ka nang umarte-arte pa.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Basta’t inamin mong may anak ka.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Dadrama-drama ka pa riyan.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Nais pang talunin ang radio. *(May mga papel na ibinigay ang Unang Tagapagtanong sa Hukom.)*

**Hukom:** Ano? Tapos na ba ang paglilitis? *(Papalakpak nang dalawang beses ang Ikalawang Tagapagtanong.)*

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Oho. Inamin na niya na anak niya ‘yung “Sol” na ‘yun. *(Ibibigay ng isang bantay sa Ikalawang Tagapagtanong ang isang kahon.)*


**Unang Tagapagtanong:** *(Kay Serapio.*) Ano? Handa ka na ba?

**Serapio:** Para sa ano?

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Sa pagbulag.

**Serapio:** Ha?

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Sa pagbulag. Madali lang. Sanay na itong guwardiya.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Alam niya kung anong parte ng mata ang dapat unang turukin.

**Serapio:** Pagbulag?

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Huwag kang matakot.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Hindi ka matetetano.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Sterilized itong icepick.
Unang Tagapagtanong: Dalhin nga ninyo siya rito. (*Hihilahin ng mga bantay si Serapio.*)

Serapio: Ba’t ninyo ako bubulagin?

Unang Tagapagtanong: ‘Yan ang pamantayang parusa. (*Tatangayin ng Ikalawang Tagapagtanong ang mga instrumento ng parusa, ang malaking aklat, at ang kwaderno. Malalaglag ang mga ito sa sahig.*)

Serapio: Para sa ano?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Para sa krimen mo.

Serapio: Krimen?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Huwag kang gumalaw masyado. (*Bibigkasin nang sabay-sabay ang mga sumusunod na talumpati.*)

Serapio: Bitiwan n’yo ako! Bitiwan n’yo ako! Bitiwan n’yo ako! Nagsisinungaling kayo.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Huwag mo kaming pagbibintangan. (*Bibuhatin si Serapio ng mga Bantay at iihiga sa mesa. Hahawakan nila ang kanyang paa’t kamay. Sisigaw at papalakpak ang mga pulubi.*) Hawakan mo ang kamay niya! Hawakan mo ang kamay niya!

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Ang ulo niya! Hawakan n’yo ang ulo niya!

Serapio: Ano ba ang krimen ko? (*Sandaling tigil.*)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ang ano?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Ang ano?

Serapio: Ang krimen ko, ano ang krimen ko?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Relak lang, relak. (*Mananahimik si Serapio.*) O, ano ang nais mong malaman?

Serapio: Ano ho ang krimen ko?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ang krimen mo! ‘Yun lang pala.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Di mo sinabi agad. (*Pupulutin niya ang malaking aklat mula sa sahig.*)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Sigaw ka lang nang sigaw diyan. (*Titindig ang dalawang tagapagtanong sa plataporma, bubuksan ng Unang Tagapagtanong ang malaking aklat, at hahanap ng pahinang mababasa ang dalawang Tagapagtanong.*)

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Ang krimen ni Mang Serapio.
Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Ang buhay ng tao’y lansangan ng hirap; ang mundo’y daigdig ng kirot at dahas. Pagkakasala’y sakit ng ating pagkatao, pag-aaruga ng bata ang krimen ni Mang Serapio. Krimen mo, mang Serapio!

Unang Tagapagtanong: At wika pa sa aming aklat:

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Bawal mag-aruga ng bata o asawa, ang taunang kita’y nawawalan ng pera.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ginagasta mo ang pera ng federacion para sa isang bata.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Magpabulag ka na nang makauwi na tayo nang maaga.

Serapio: Ngunit wala naman akong batang inaaruga, a.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ano?

Serapio: Wala akong batang inaaruga. (Sandaling tigil.)

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Ginoong Serapio, huwag ka nang magsinungaling.

Serapio: Hindi ako nagsisinungaling.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Huwag mong lokohin itong Hukuman.

Serapio: Wala akong niloloko.

Hukom: Ang parusa para sa pagbubulaan sa Hukuman ay pagpipi.

Serapio: Sinasabi ko ang katotohanan. (Sandaling tigil.)

Unang Tagapagtanong: Kaaamin mo lang na may anak ka.


Unang Tagapagtanong: At itong anak mo’y isang babae.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Ikaw mismo ang nagsabi.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ang pangalan pa nga ay Sol.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Sinabi mo ’yan! Sinabi mo!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Hindi ba inaaruga mo siya?

Serapio: Si Sol ay patay na. (Sandaling tigil.)
**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ha?

**Hukom:** Patay na siya? Si Sol, patay na?

**Serapio:** Tatlong taon nang patay. Sinagasaan ng dyip. Patay na siya. Patay.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Tunay na malungkot ang iyong kuwento. Pinipiga mo ang aming puso.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Walang alinlangang mahusay ka sa sining ng pangbobola.

**Serapio:** Patay na siya!

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Magsalaysay ka sana ng kuwentong higit na kapani-paniwala kaysa riyan.

**Serapio:** Totoo ang sinasabi ko! *(Sandaling tigil.)*

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Totoo ha? May tatlong saksi kami ginoo, tatlong saksi na nanubok sa’yo, araw, gabi.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Dalawang linggo silang nagbantay.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Mga saksi sila sa krimen mo.

**Serapio:** Nagsisinungaling sila! Wala akong batang inaaruga.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Titignan natin.

**Ikalawang Tagapagtanong:** Lalabas din ang katotohanan.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Kung sila ang nagsisinungaling, sila ang paparusahan, ngunit kung ikaw ang sinungaling— *(Sa mga Pulubi.)* Pumaritosa harap ang tatlong saksi. *(Titindig ang tatlong Saksi.)*

**Hukom:** *(Sa tatlong Saksi.)* Kayo na naman?

**Unang Saksi:** Oho.

**Hukom:** Kayo na lang palagi ang nagpapabulag sa iba.

**Ikalawang Saksi:** Talagang ganyan ho ang buhay.

**Ikatlong Saksi:** Tagapagtanggol lang ho kami ng kalinisan nitong *federacion.*

**Unang Saksi:** Mga taga-patnubay ng kabutihan nitong lipunan.

**Hukom:** Kayo ba ang unang nagsumbong ng kanyang krimen?

**Unang Saksi:** Oho.
Hukom: (Sa mga manonood.) Puwes, ayon ho sa batas ng aming federacion, kung mapapatunayan nila ang krimen ng nasasakdal, kanila ang lahat ng kasangkapan ni Ginoong Serapio at diyes porsyento ng kanyang kinkita.

(Lalakad ang tatlong saksi sa plataporma. Dadaluhung kaagad ni Serapio ang Ikalawang Saksi.)

Serapio: Buwaya!

Unang Tagapagtanong: (Sa mga Bantay.) hawakan ninyo siya! (Hahawakan ng mga Bantay si Serapio at hihilahin sa sulok ng acting area sa gawing kaliwa ng lugar ng mga Pulubi. Titindig ang mga saksi sa plataporma.) Bawal ditto ang kumilos nang ganyan. Igalang mo itong hukuman ginoo. (Sandling tigil.)

(Sa Saksi.) Ngayon, mga ginoo nitong marangal na federacion, sabihin ninyo sa amin ang inyong nakita kagabi.

Tatlong Saksi: Nakita namin siya,
papauwing may dalang
mamantikang supot
sa kilikili niya,
at susulyap-sulyap
sa kana't kaliwa, takot wari ko
na matagpuan siya.

Dalawang Tagapagtanong: Takot sa wari ko na matagpuan siya.

Tatlong Saksi: Sinundan naming siya
hanggang sa bahay niya,
nagsitago kami’t
narinig namin siya.
“Heto na, Sol,
kumain ka na’t
isuot mamaya
ang damit mong pula.”

Dalawang tagapagtanong: “Heto na, Sol, kumain ka na’t isuot mamaya ang damit mong pula.”

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ginoong Serapio, pinagbibintangan kita ng krimen ng pag-aaruga ng bata. Bubulagin ka ngayon din!

Serapio: ‘Yun ba ang inyong katibayan?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Oo, masaya na kami.

Serapio: Kulang pa ‘yang katibayan n’yo.

Unang Tagapagtanong: At ano ang kakulangan?

Serapio: Si Sol, ang aking “buhay” na anak. Mga tanga ang espiya ninyo!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Huwag kang magsalita nang ganyan sa harap namin.
Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Kami’y mga opisyal nitong Hukuman.

Serapio: Akala ninyo ay nahuli na ninyo ako, ano? Akala ninyo! (Sa tatlong saksi.) May isa ba sa inyong nakakita sa “buhay” na anak ko? Wala!

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Wala ba sa inyong nakakita sa anak niya?

Unang saksi: Narinig naman naming siyang nagsalita sa anak niya, gabi-gabi, sa buong linggong nanubok kami. (Bibigkasin nang sabayang sumusunod na talumpati. Lalapitan at kakausapin ni Serapio isa-isa ang mga manonood.) At kaya namin alam na alam ang mga sinabi niya ay sapagkat—

Serapio: Nagsisinungaling silang lahat!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ginoong Serapio!

Unang Saksi: Sapagkat gab-i-gabi sa isang takdang oras au naririnig namin siyang paulit-ulit na nagsasabing, “Heto na, Sol, kumain ka na’t isuot mamaya ang damit mong pula,” at inulit niya ito gabi-gabi.

Serapio: Nagsisinungaling sila! Nagsisinungaling sila nang maging kanila lahat ang mga kasangkapan ko!

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Ngunit nakita ba ninyo ang anak niya?

Tatlong Saksi: Hindi.

Serapio: Ha!

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Kung nagsisinungaling kayo mapipipi kayo, mapipipi kayo!

Unang Saksi: (Kay Serapio.) Narinig ka naming nagsalita sa anak mo!

Serapio: Kung talagang buhay ang anak ko, dalhin n’yo siya rito! Dudustain pa ninyo ang alaala niya. Kailangan ba kayong makialam sa buhay ng may buhay?

Unang Tagapagtanong: Husto na ‘yan, ginoo!

Serapio: Dalhin n’yo rito ang anak ko, kung buhay pa siya! At bulagin n’yo ako.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Kami’y nagpadala na, ginoo, kanina pa, ng dalawang kasapi nitong federacion sa iyong barang-barong upang agawin ang anak mo sa karaniwang oras ng pag-ului mo. Nakabalik na sila. (Sa mga bantay.) Nasaan sila? (Titindig ang dalawang Pilay.)

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: O ano? Nasaan ang bata?

Unang Pilay: Wala.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Anong wala? Hindi ba kayo pumunta sa bahay niya?
Unang Pilay: Oho.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Hindi ninyo nahuli ang anak?

Ikalawang Pilay: Wala hong bata roon.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Kung nagsisinungaling ka— (Hahampasin ang dalawang Pilay ng kanyang baston. Susukot ang mga Pilay.)

Unang Pilay: Hindi ho.

Ikalawang Pilay: Wala ho kaming nakita. Wala ho.

Unang Pilay: Kundi isang baul.

Ikalawang Pilay: Itong baul ho, o. (Kaladkarin nila ang baul. Katahimikan.)

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Saan ninyo ito nakita?

Unang Pilay: Sa barung-barong niya.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Sa barung-barong niya.

Ikalawang Pilay: Sa isang sulok, ho.

Unang Pilay: Nakatago sa ilalim ng mga lumang sako.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Lumang sako. At hindi n’yo pa ito nabubuksan?

Unang Pilay: Hindi pa ho.

Ikalawang Pilay: Nakakandado ho.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Nakakandado. (Sandaling tigil.) Buksan ninyo ang baul. (Pupukpukin ng Pilay ng martilyo nang dalawang beses ang kandado ng baul.)

Serapio: Wala ‘yang laman! Wala ‘yang laman! Isang lumang baul na nakita ko lang sa basurahan.

Unang Tagapagtanong: Ba’t mo tinatago Ginoong Serapio?

Serapio: Wala. Ginagamit ko sa bahay bilang upuan.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: At bakit nakakandado?

Serapio: nakakandado na ‘yan nang makita ko.


Serapio: Nakakandado na ‘yan nang nakita ko!
**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Kung ganon, Ginoong Serapio, hindi mo daramdamin ang pagbukas naming rito. *(Sa Pilay.)* Buksan ang baul. *(Dalawang hampas ng martilyo.)*

**Serapio:** Hindi! Huwag. *(Katahimikan.)*

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ginoong Serapio, pinagpapawisan ka.

**Serapio:** Wala 'yang laman.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Bakit mo alam, Ginoong Serapio? Nagsinungaling ka kanina. Nabuksan mo na itong baul.

**Serapio:** Hindi!

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Hala! Buksan mo! *(Talong hampas ng martilyo.)*

**Serapio:** Huwag!

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Bakit, Ginoong Serapio?

**Serapio:** Akin 'yang baul.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Inamin mo rin.

**Serapio:** Huwag ninyong buksan 'yan.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Bakit? May itinatago ka ba sa amin?

**Serapio:** Bale wala sa inyo ang laman niyan.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Titignan natin. Ituloy ang pagbukas. *(Apat na hampas ng martilyo.)*

**Serapio:** Hindi n’yo dapat pakialaman ‘yan! Kailangan ba kayong makialam sa buhay ng may buhay?

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** G. Serapio—

**Serapio:** Kailangan ba kayong makialam sa amin?

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Serapio!

**Serapio:** Hindi n’yo dapat pakialaman ‘yan!

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Sasabihin ko sa’yo kung ano ang malalahad pagbukas namin nito! Katibayan ng krimen mo!

**Serapio:** Wala kayong matutuklasan diyan. *(Uulitin niya ang linyang ito habangnagsasalita ang Unang Tagapagtanong.)*

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ano ang tinatago mo ryan? Ang mga damit ng anak mo? Ang mga laruan niya? Ituloy ang pagbukas! *(Patuloy ang mga hampas ng martilyo habang nagsasalita ang Unang Tagapatanong at si Serapio.)*
Serapio: HUWAG!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Wala kang kapangyarihan sa Hukuman ito, ginoo!

Serapio: Ngunit, AKIN ‘yang baul!

Unang Tagapagtanong: E, ano? E, ano?

Serapio: Huwag ninyong buksan ‘yan!

Unang Tagapagtanong: Pigilin mo kami! Pigilin mo kami!

Serapio: Papatayin ko kayo! Papatayin ko kayo!

Unang Tagapagtanong: (Sa mga Bantay.) Hawakan ninyo siya!

Serapio: Ibubunyag ko kayo sa pulis! (Hihinto ang pagmamartilyo.) Ibubunyag ko kayo sa pulis! Ibubunyag ko kayo at ang inyong kalupitan! Ibubunyag ko ang inyong pandaraya sa madla! Ibubunyag ko ang inyong pagmamalupit sa aming lahat; ibubunyag ko ang inyong sadyang pagpapabaya sa mga matatandang kasapi! Ibubunyag ko itong federacion sa pulis! (Katahimikan.)

Hukom: (Hahampasin ng Hukom ang kanyang podium.) Walang makakatulong sa’yo, Ginoong Serpio, wala! (Kakaladkarin si Serapio ng mga Bantay. Lulupag si Serapio.) Ni ang pulis, ang pahayagan, kahit sino man sa mundong ito. Ang mga hiyaw mo’y di maririnig; ang bawat kilos mo’y matibika, walang papansin sa’yo. Dumaing ka pa, at bukas makalawa, matatagpuan ang iyong magang katawan sa mga itim na bulaklak ng Pasig. (Sa mga pulubi.) Tandaan ninyo ‘yan! May kuwarenta pesos kayong dapat ibigay sa federacion araw-araw. At ibibigay niyo ang perang iyan sa amin. At kapag hindi, kung kayo’y nakakakita, pipitasin namin ang inyong mga mata; kung kayo’y nakakapagsalita, puputulin namin ang inyong mga dila; at kung kayo’y nakakalakad, babasagin namin ang inyong mga buto; at kung di pa rin ninyo susundin ang batas na ito, ang bawat daliri ninyo’y isa-isang tatanggaling. Malungkot nga ang buhay sa federacion ito, ngunit kasapi na kayo hanggang kamatayan. Kamatayan lamang ang makapaliligtas sa’yo kapag sumali ka sa federacion ito. Buksan ang baul!

(Patuloy na naman ang pagmamartilyo habang nagsasalita si Serapio. Dapat lunurin ng mga hampas ng martilyo ang karamihan ng mga salita ng talumpati ni Serapio.)

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Manika? *(Tatakbo si Serapio at aagawan at hahagkan ang manika.)*

**Serapio:** Sol! Sol!

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Si Sol! *(Magtatawanan ang mga pulubi.)* *(Patuloy ang tawanan ng mga pulubi habang nagsasalita si Serapio. Dapat lunurin ng tanawin ang mga linya ni Serapio.)*


**Unang Tagapagtanong:** *(Matinis ang boses niya.)* Tatay ka ng trapo? *(Tatawa ng malakas ang mga pulubi. Matinis ang tawanan nila.)*

**Serapio:** Bitiwan mo siya. Bitiwan mo siya.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Ginagasta mo ang pera ng federacion para rito?

**Serapio:** Pabayaan mo ako! Huwag mo akong pakialaman!

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Isang pamahid sa tae ng kabayo! *(Matinis na tawanan muli.)*

**Serapio:** Ang anak ko ay maganda! At buhay. Buhay. Ang anak ko ay buhay at ang kagandahan ng araw.

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Kapok! *(Hahagutin ni Serapio ang manika. Matinis na tawanan muli.)*

**Serapio:** Bitiwan mo siya! *(Tatakbo ang TAGAPAGTANONG sa kanyang mesa’t ihahagis ang manika sa mga Pulubi.)*

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Kunin mo siya!

*(Sisigaw ang mga Pulubi’t sasaluhin ang manika sa iba’t ibang sulok ng silid habang nagsisigaw at nagagamit ang manika. Mahahagis ang manika sa sahig, ngunit bago mapulot ni Serapio ang manika, sisigaw ang Unang Tagapagtanong.)*

**Unang Tagapagtanong:** Bulagin natin siya! Bulagin!


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Unang Tagapagtanong: Guwardiya! Ilabas mo nga siya. (Kakaladkarin ng mga guwardiya si Serapio sa labas ng silid. Aayusin ng mga Tagapagtanong ang kanilang mga kasangkapan.)

Hukom: Paminsan-minsan na lang itong mga paglilitis.

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Oo nga eh. Di tulad ng dati.

Hukom: Kelan pa ang susunod?

Ikalawang Tagapagtanong: Marso pa.

Hukom: Isa pang buwan. (Lalabas ang Hukom at Ikalawang Tagapagtanong. Katahnik.)


(1968)
Meet the Writer

PAUL ARVISU DUMOL is a Philippine playwright and an educator.

He is the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Asia and the Pacific, Philippines until 2007. He lectures on philosophy and the aesthetics of film. He also teaches film scriptwriting to Humanities students. He has a Ph. D. in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto, as well as a Licentiate in Medieval Studies from the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies (Toronto). His play Ang Paglilitis ni Mang Serapio (The Trial of Mang Serapio, 1968) is considered by some as the first Filipino modernist play. He is also the youngest Palanca awardee. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Dumol)
The sun was up. Iyo Diyakoy and his two sons, Garitoy and Isyong, who have been clearing and weeding their land since dawn, were returning to their hut to have breakfast.

From afar, they could see five Constables leaving their hut, carrying rifles and laughing their hearts out while walking.

—Tay, —Garitoy who was ahead, said –Are the Constables looking for us?

—Why? What have we done?

—Tay, —Isyong butted in –let's hide in the cogon first. Those Constables may be looking for people to carry their bundles.

—that's right, let's crouch here. Let's wait till they disappear. The three squeezed themselves among the thick cogon weeds.

And the Constables walked farther and farther and farther away until mountains covered them from view.

What a terrifying sight!

Iya Santa, the wife of Iyo Diyakoy, was tied to a post. Atang, the wife of Garitoy, was without her saya. She lay motionless on the bed, with her feet and hands tied. Basil, the wife of Isyong, also lay still on the floor. She, too, had been stripped of her saya and both her feet and hands were tied. Andat, the daughter of Iyo Diyakoy, was found in another room, flat on the floor with her arms and legs spread out. She was naked, covered with blood, and hogtied. The babies of both Atang and Basil were found wailing inside a basket. The mouths of the women were gagged.

That was what Iyo Diyakoy, Garitoy and Isyong saw when they entered their hut...

—Bathala! What happened to you?

—Oh heavens!

—My LORD!

They asked questions all at the same time while they freed the women.

The ones who were found lying down were not able to talk but were sobbing.
Iya Santa who was crying loudly and could hardly talk, was the first to speak:

—Ay, Pasilan! Five Constables broke into our house. They tied me to a post, they covered the children with a basket, they raped Atang, Bail, and Andat. They were all over Andat... They gagged us.\(^1\)

—Scoundrels! –screamed Iyo Diyakoy.

Both shaking with rage and without saying anything, Garitoy and Isyong took their linantip,\(^2\) and rushed out to chase the Constables.

Later, loud cracking sounds of guns could be heard; Garitoy and Isyong lay flat on the ground bathed in their own blood.

**III.**

It was late afternoon.

The yard of Iyo Diyakoy was filled with people. His relative and neighbors flocked to his place.

The corpses of Garitoy and Isyong were laid out. In a voice full of grief, Iyo Diyakoy spoke: Relatives and friends! What are we waiting for? If we complain to the Mayor, he won't listen to us because we are but poor farmers. Then the Constables will take revenge on us, just like what happened to the others. What are we waiting for?

Do you want the evil deed this morning to be done to your wives and children too?

Everyone answered:

—We will fight! We prefer to die!

Right then and there, after the two were buried, the *Pulahan*\(^3\) organization was established.

**IV.**

The town's peace was disturbed.

Constables and Police scoured the mountains in search of *Pulahanes*.

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\(^1\) A similar incident happened in Toledo or Asturyas, during the term of the late Provincial Head Climaco: Three or four women were rapes by Constables in front of their husbands who were tied to a post. those husbands were the first *Pulahan* (Reds) in Cebu. (Note from the author.)

\(^2\) Linantip – a kind of bolo.

\(^3\) *Pulahan* – literally, red. Refers to the association of peasants who rebelled against the government at the turn of the century.
The innocent, the scared, the ones who remained in their huts and did not join Iyo Diyakoy were the ones arrested. The jails were filled with the poor whose only crime was the poverty that forced them to live in the mountains.⁴

⁴ In Cebu, this also happened; many were released because of Fiscal Osmeña’s petition to set free the innocent.
Many girls who lived in the farms and mountains were raped, regardless of age or condition.\(^5\)

But the *Pulahanes* grew even stronger. Many men who wanted to escape the atrocities of the Constabulary joined Iyo Diyakoy.

To avoid further suffering, the Provincial Governor ordered the town mayor of T.....to meet with Iyo Diyakoy, and to advise him to make a petition for pardon.

The Head of the *Pulahanes* responded:

—Mr. Mayor, tell the Provincial Governor that we are innocent, and we don't need to make a petition. We are fighting the Government; we are fighting those who abused us. We are not revolutionaries, nor are we bandits. We are not revolutionaries, nor are we bandits. We are not revolutionaries for we have no flag of our own; we recognize and respect the American Flag.\(^6\) Neither are we bandits, for though we come down to the towns to forcibly secure rice and money, this we are forced to do because of hunger. But the day the law can no longer be bent or stretched and justice is for everyone, then will we be able to return to our huts and go back to work in our farms. That is all we ask for. Justice! But when our relatives are raped; our chickens, pigs, corn, and hemp stolen; the husbands who defend their wives' honor gunned down...we would rather die in the forest with our eyes looking up to God...

**V.**

Betrayed by a Constable who had joined the Pulahanes, Iyo Diyakoy was arrested.

He was tried for the crime of *bandolerismo* (banditry) and the Fiscal asked that the penalty of death be given.

After the Judge had passed the terrible sentence, Iyo Diyakoy stood up and with a calm face spoke:

—That's good, Honorable Judge. I agree to be hanged. But permit me to ask you one question: why do you not punish those who raped my daughter, for this was the reason I became a *Pulahan*? Is this what you call Justice?

—Silence! –the judge shouted harshly.

Fast as a tiger, Iyo Diyakoy leaped over to the seat of the Judge: he grabbed the large bottle of ink and smashed this on the forehead of the one who had sentenced him to death.

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\(^5\) In Cebu, once again, one of those who lived in the mountains told us that in the barangays where the Constabulary stayed, virgins had become rare. Everyone was stained. (Note from the editors of the Cebuano periodical *Ang Suga* where this story was first published.)

\(^6\) These words are similar to the declaration of Kintin and Adoy Tabal, heads of the *Pulahan* in Cebu, in the petition they made to Governor Osmeña. the excesses of the Constabulary have since been punished by Captain Boren, head of the Constabulary here in Cebu, who has become one of the most admired men. (Note from the Editor of *Ang Suga.*)
42 The police helped one another beat up Iyo Diyakoy vomited blood right on top of
the body, of the dying Judge.

43 Two were buried that day: the Judge and the Head of the Pulahanes.

(1908)

Translated by Teresita G. Maceda
Meet the Writer

VICENTE YAP SOTTO (1877-1950) was a Filipino politician and former Senator of the Philippines.

Sotto was born in Cebu City on April 18, 1877 to Marcelino Sotto and Pascuala Yap. He finished his secondary education at the University of San Carlos (formerly Colegio de San Carlos), Cebu City. He obtained the degree of Bachelor of Laws and Judicial Science and passed the bar examinations in 1907. He is the grandfather of former senator Vicente "Tito" Sotto III, and actor Vic Sotto.

Sotto is regarded as the Father of Cebuano Language and Letters.

Sotto's play "Paghigugma sa Yutang Natawhan" (Love of Native Land), dramatized the Cebuano people’s heroic struggle against Spanish feudal rule in the modern realist mode. He also wrote the first published Cebuano short story ("Maming", in the maiden issue of Ang Suga).

He wrote, directed, and produced the first Cebuano play, Elena, a play in three acts. It was first performed at the Teatro Junquera on May 18, 1902. The play established Sotto's reputation as a playwright.

The dedication of the play by the playwright reads, "To My Motherland, that you may have remembrance of the glorious Revolution that redeemed you from enslavement. I dedicate this humble play to you." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicente_Sotto)
UNSAON PAGKAON SA IMPYERNO

Cindy Velasquez

Sukara ang kahadlok sa init nga kaha
Aron imong isula sa dukot nga panggoverno

Ibutang sa imong plato samtang
Naay mga yawa sa imong atubangan

Kinamota ug usapa hangtod
mabusog ka uban sa mga bala

Hay... dili na uso ang tinidor ug
Kutsara, mao na, kaon na lang diha.

Kon ikaw mapul-an sa imong sud-an,
Uy, ang kahadlok pwede baya silian

Ania pa man sad ang hilaw nga paglaom
Ug isawsaw lang sa bahaw nga kalinaw

Ug kon ikaw mapaso, intawn
Ayaw kalimot og pag-ampo

(2007)
Meet the Writer

CINDY VELASQUEZ is a member of Bathalan-ong Halad sa Dagang and Women in Literary Arts. She joined the Cornelio Faigao Workshop in 2008. She was a fellow in the 9th IYAS Creative Writing Workshop. She won the Jimmy Y. Balacuit Literary Award 1st Prize for poetry during the 16th National Iligan Writers Workshop. Currently, she teaches Humanities & Literature at the University of San Carlos. (http://www.poemhunter.com/cindy-velasquez/biography/)

2 Lowly nipa huts on stilts crowded the coast of a fishing village named Higad. The white beach lining the blue sea served well as a kind of canvas on which the fishermen’s shabby domiciles stood. Some houses were wind-swept and lonely; others looked newly built. Canoes could be seen tied to the rocks on the shore, suggesting the fishermen were home. The whole neighborhood smelt of dried fish on many kinds, including squid and shark. The tide was low.

3 What made the village quite eye-catching was the presence of an elegant house in the middle of it. On its left side was a smaller building where fishermen sold their catch and where they met to thresh out some problems affecting them. A concrete pavement led to both structures to which bamboo footbridges formed the roots of a tree are linked to its trunk.

4 In this sumptuous, architecturally-remarkable dwelling lived PAH Jannaral, the middleman, and Buh Gandayla, his pious wife.

5 Pah Jannaral was the man in the village the fishermen admired and looked up to. His name was synonymous with hard work and success in life. He was, to top it all, the quintessence of every fisherman’s dream because he was able to change his lot and his family’s through what he called patience and perseverance.

6 Pah Jannaral used to be a poor fisherman like all the rest. But by a stroke of fourtune, as he often said, he was able to lift his family out of a squalor and now headed the village, bought the fishermen’s catch in bulk, sold a great deal of them in the market, and preserved and shipped the rest to other towns and cities.

7 “Pah Jannaral must be very lucky. Look, his two children go to an exclusive school. But our children can’t. I wonder how we can do the same thing,” said Buh Jainab, wife to Pah Hamsa, the middleman’s confidant or right-hand man.

8 “You’re dreaming big dreams again. All we have to do is be patient. And who knows? We might follow in his footsteps someday. Pah Jannaral told me once that all one needs to do is to work hard in order to live comfortably,” Pah Hamsa told his wife.

9 “Work hard? Isn’t that exactly what we’ve been doing all these years? But look, we’re no better off! We are still what we used to be fifteen years ago.” But Jainab glared at Pah Hamsa. The she remembered something and said, “Enough of this argument. Aren’t you supposed to meet the fishermen a little after noon? You’re supposed to buy their catch,” she reminded her husband.

10 “That’s right. I almost forgot. I’ve got to go now,” Pah Hamsa said and walked hurriedly toward the middleman’s house, the footbridge creaking under his weight.

11 Pah Hamsa was very close to Pah Jannaral. He had been working for him several years. As right-hand man, he enjoyed Pah Jannaral’s full trust. His ideas and
insights usually influenced the middleman’s decisions. And he returned the middleman’s trust by being loyal to him and by being honest and sincere in dealing with his fellow fishermen. He had projected the name of Pah Jannaral to the village quite well, and the fishermen looked up to both of them as their protectors and saviors.

12 One late afternoon, Pah Hamsa had to run all the way to the middleman’s house, his movements shaking the footbridge. He had to report something he thought Pah Jannaral should know before he took action.

13 “I have a problem...well, it’s not really a problem. You know, a young man approached me this morning. He said his father is dead and that his mother is now married to a rich but cruel Chinese businessman. He’s just twenty-three years old, strong and quite mature for his age. I mean, that’s what I’ve gathered from a short conversation with him. He wanted something to do but couldn’t find employment. I was thinking...” Pah Hamsa informed Pah Jannaral, who interrupted him.

14 “Do you want him to work for us?” Pah Jannaral, the middleman asked.

15 “Yes. Although I just met him this morning, I think we can trust him. You see, my eldest son Hamir is attending college next year. I want him to concentrate on his studies. So I need somebody to take his place,” Pah Hamsa said.

16 “Okay. No problem. You let him work for us. It’s up to you to tell him what to do and how much he is to be paid,” Pah Jannaral said.

17 “Do you want to see him personally?” Pah Hamsa asked the middleman.

18 “No need. I leave it up to you to decide what to do,” Pah Jannaral said.

19 Pah Hamsa was about to take his leave when Buh Gandayla, the middleman’s wife, emerged from the dining room. She invited Pah Hamsa and his family for a thanksgiving the following day. This was Buh Gandayla’s pledge to extend her gratitude to the Almighty for the good fortune she and her husband had been enjoying.

20 She was a very religious woman, and he loathed everything evil. She told Pah Jannaral once that she would prefer poverty to luxury if the latter was acquired through unlawful means. Pah Jannaral loved his wife, fifteen years his junior, and never married another one even if he could do so.

21 “Try to be with us tomorrow morning. The imam is coming here for the thanksgiving. Our folks in Higad will be included in the prayers. We should not forget the Almighty for his blessings,” she piously said, eyeing the well-furnished living room with great satisfaction.

22 “We’ll be here. Thank you very much,” Pah Hamsa said.

23 He left quickly, for he still had to familiarize Utuh Mansul, his new assistant, with what he would do. He invited Utuh Mansul to join his family for the thanksgiving. He refused to do so, however, and concentrated instead on what he was supposed to do. Pah Hamsa didn’t insist.
In just a short time, Utuh Mansul was able to work quite well with virtually all the fishermen. They liked the way he dealt with them, to the delight of Pah Hamsa. He easily earned Pah Hamsa’s trust. As Pah Hamsa was right-hand man to the middleman, so was Utuh Mansul to Pah Hamsa. This was why Pah Hamsa did not have to present Utuh Mansul to Pah Jannaral. He found Utuh Mansul an excellent assistant.

The weather was bad one night, and the fisherkmen did not take to the sea to fish. Utuh Mansul was so low in spirits that same night that his depression caught Pah Hamsa’s attention. So wrapped up in thought was he that he did not notice Pah Hamsa sit by his side on the wooden bench.

“Anything wrong?” Pah Hamsa asked. “You look so sad,” he said, patting Utuh Mansul’s shoulders. Utuh Mansul turned to Pah Hamsa and then looked away.

“I hope I’m not being nosey. I’ve come to regard you as my son, and I can’t stand seeing you so downcast like this,” Pah Hamsa went on.

“It’s my father, Pah Hamsa. I always remember him when the weather is bad,” Utuh Mansul said.

“But he is dead. He died thirteen years ago. You said so, right?” Pah Hamsa said.

“It’s how he died that always bothers me, Pah Hamsa. He was mercilessly murdered, hacked to death right in front of me. I was ten then,” Utuh Mansul revealed, his voice shaking. Pah Hamsa was shocked by this revelation because Utuh Mansul had not told him before how his father died. Seeing how deeply affected the young man was, he refrained from questioning him further.

“Why don’t you go to bed now? Remember, we still have to meet our fishermen tomorrow,” he suggested, hoping to divert Utuh Mansul’s mind from what was troubling him.

“Yes, I remember. I’ll wake up early tomorrow. That I promise,” Utuh Mansul assured Pah Hamsa. He then went to sleep on a dafed mat on the floor beside Pah Hamsa’s two sons, Abdel and Hamir.

That same evening, in the imposing residence of the middleman, the whole household was awakened. Buh Gandayla, his religious wife, had a nightmare, the worst so far in her lifetime.

“No, I can’t believe it! Evil, evil, evil. I hate you, Jannaral!” she yelled. The middleman quieted his wife by sahining her by the arm.

“What did you dream about? You seemed to hate me so much in your dream,” Pah Jannaral, the middleman, asked his wife in an injured tone. Still shocked by the nightmare, Buh Gandayla could not talk right away. She went on sobbing. To her mind, it was not only a dream; it was a revelation of hideous act.

One clear morning, Pah Hamsa and his family, including Utuh Mansul, were eating crabs, fish, seaweed, bivalves and boiled cassava on the floor, and exchanging pleasentries when their casual talk took on a new twist as they mentioned a tenant who had married the only daughter of a rich landowner in a barrio nearby.
Pah Hamsa’s tow boys, Hamir and Abdel, kidded each othe about getting rich in the same way.

37 Pah Hamsa chided the boys, saying it was not a good way to do so. “Hard work, boys,” Pah Hamsa admonished. “It’s the only good way to do it”

38 “Plus two big mole on the forehead,” Hamir and Abdel chorused.

39 “That’s right!” But Jainab, Pah Hamsa’s wife, said. “Your Pah Jannaral has them, and that’s why he’s rich! She stressed.

Utuh Mansul enjoyed listening to the give-and-take. But when BUh Janinab confirmed the middleman’s two big moles on his temple, he suddenly looked troubled. His mind buzzed with suspicious: “Two big what? Moles.. two big moles. Could Pah Jannaral be the… No, it’s impossible!” Utuh Mansul said to himself. Pap Hamsa noticed Utuh Mansul’s change of mood, and intended to talk to the young man sometime later.

Utuh Mansul was preoccupied with the moles of fPah Jannaral, the middleman, and the murder of his father preyed more and more upon his mind. The one who killed his father had two big moles on his forehead. He could still remember vividly how the man snatched his father’s suitcase, which contained a good deal of money, the only money that his father had salvaged from the conflagration that gutted their big textile store in the heart of the town.

With his father gone and their capital stolen, he and his mother had to move to a faraway place where they live miserably. When he was twenty, his mother remarried, and her Chinese husband treated him harshly. He then decided to return to his birthplace and found himself in Higad, a fishing village where he met Pah Hmasa, who recommended him to Pah Jannaral, the middleman, for employment.

Pah Hamsa became curious about Utuh Mansul’s reaction to the middleman’s two big moles. He wondered what the big moles meant to Utuh Mansul. He wished the young man would confide in him voluntarily since he did not want to open old wounds and meddle in Utuh Mansul’s private life.

Several weeks later, Buh Gandayla, the middleman’s wife, awakened her husband and the whole household again because of another nightmare. It was a frightening as the first one. In her dream, she saw her husband break out of the thick smoke, running toward the dark, seemingly afraid of the crowd watching a burning block. And Buh Gandayla screamed when her husband vanished in the dark, for she hated it. She equated the dark with evil.

The middleman was shaken when his wife divulged her dreams to him, especially when she mentioned the big fire in the dream. He wished she would stop narrating what happened. He even appeared restless when Buh Gandayla decided to see a dream interpreter in the village the following day. She thought a bad spirit had caused all her nightmares. Besides, she was afraid the nightmares would affect her baby, which she expected to have on cleansing day.

A month after, Utuh Mansul, the young man the middleman had employed, was down with malaria. He could have seen the middleman’s two big moles had he not gotten sick, for Pah Hamsa’s family and Utuh Mansul were invited again for another
thanksgiving in the middleman’s house. After the thanksgiving, Buh Gandayla, the middleman’s house, asked Pah Hamsas to have her dreams interpreted.

47 Pah Hamsa suddenly thought of Utuh Mansul, though he knew of a fine interpreter in the village, who went deep-sea fishing and got stranded on a nearby island. He remembered how Utuh-Mansul had warned a fisherman not to fish one night when the latter dreamed of being enveloped by a thick cloud in the middle of the sea. The fisherman did not listen to Utuh Mansul, and boasted he did not believe in dreams, even if he did. He went off to fish just the same, and was robbed by armed men on another pump boat. He lost his catch and his pump boat’s engine.

48 After a week of medication in the health center, Utuh Mansul recovered from malaria. He and Pah Hamsa went back to work. Their boss, Pah Jannaral, the middleman, left for Zamboanga to buy spare parts and new pump boat engines. He would be back in a week’s time.

49 For a while, Pah Hamsa almost forgot all about Buh Gandayla’s dreams. But noticing again Utuh Mansul’s gloom, Pah Hamsa asked him to interpret the dreams of Buh Gandayla, hoping he could mitigate Utuh Mansul’s dejection. He then related all the nightmares of the middleman’s wife to Utuh Mansul.

50 Utuh Mansul was tongue-tied while Pah Hamsa was narrating Buh Gandayla’s dreams. He felt as if what took place when he was still ten years old was happening right then. How a well-built man took his father’s suitcase containing much cash and ran away with it after hacking his father on the head with a bolo used for filleting big fish in two. Utuh Mansul remembered vividly what the thief looked like. His father and the thief exchanged blows before the thief finally made his final, lethal attack on his father.

51 Dumbfounded by Pah Hamsa’s revelation of the dreams, Utuh Mansul came to his senses only when Pah Hama asked what the dreams meant.

52 “The middleman will be in great trouble!” Utuh Mansul said. “Something tragic will befall his wife!” he predicted further.

53 Utuh Mansul stared at Pah Hamsa. He bombarded him with many questions.

54 “Pah Hamsa, does the middleman really have two big moles on his forehead? You see, I haven’t seen him ever since I came her.” Pah Hamsa nodded, uneasy about Utuh Mansul’s mentioning the moles again.

55 And more questions flowed from Utuh Mansul’s mouth, his lips trembling.

56 “Is he tall and dark-complexioned? Was he a poor fisherman before he became the fishermen’s middleman in Higad? Is he about fifty-five years old now?”

57 “Yes,” replied Pah Hamsa.

58 After two weeks, Pah Jannaral, the middleman, was back from Zamboanga. He immediately called his fishermen to a meeting to discuss the rising costs of the spare parts and the new engines and how they would pay the middleman back.

59 As the middleman’s confidant, Pah Hamsa arrived at the meeting ahead of the rest. Utuh Mansul came in late. Pah Hamsa had asked him to inspect the new
engines bought by Pah Jannaral. After going over them, he proceeded to the meeting.

60 Pah Jannaral was, at the time, busy computing the cost of the things he bought on the blackboard, his back to the audience. He faced the fishermen shortly afterwards, his face seen for the first time by Utuh Mansul.

61 Despite the passage of thirteen years, the middleman still sported a crew cut, the same cut Utuh Mansul saw when his father was murdered. The middleman’s two big moles, which to the fishermen were the source of his fourtune, were still on his forehead. Utuh Mansul was absolutely certain: the middleman was the murderer of this father.

62 He went home quickly. He went straight to the kitchen where he found Buh Jainab, Pah Hamsa’s wife and her children Hamir and Abdel. He stood by the door for a moment before joining them in what they were doing.

63 In a controlled tone, he said: “I’ll miss all this soon. I’ll miss everybody, our togetherness.”

64 “Miss?” Hamir asked, surprised. “But why?” Where are you going?”

65 “I don’t know. I really don’t know. Maybe nowhere. I have to leave, you see,” Utuh Mansul explained.

66 “But that’s impossible” Abdel countered. “It’s cleansing day tomorrow. We’ve got to be together! Isn’t it so, Mother?” Abdel asked Buh Jainab. She only nodded to Abdel and turned to Utuh Mansul, her eyes misty. Utuh Mansul left them abruptly, apparently touched.

67 Sensing something wrong, Buh Jainab informed her husband Pah Hamsa regarding Utuh Mansul’s announcement of leaving.

68 “Did he tell you why?” Pah Hamsa, the middleman’s right-hand man, asked his wife.

69 “He didn’t explain. He just said he was leaving, that’s all. I myself couldn’t believe it,” Buh Jainab said, trying to recall whether she had treated Utuh Mansul unkindly. Pah Hamsa did the same, but he couldn’t recall having scolded or embarrassed Utuh Mansul at any time. On the eve of cleansing day, he talked to Utuh Mansul.

70 “I don’t know. I just feel I must leave. I don’t want to. You see, it pains me to do this. But I think I’ll be compelled to do so just the same. I love all of you—you, the kids, and Buh Jainab, whom I consider my own mother. But…” Utuh Mansul bowed, his head in his hands, unable to continue talking.

71 There was a squall that same night. The weather suddenly turned bad, although it was fair and sunny the whole day. Competing with the deafening thunder and lightning was the voice of Buh Gandayla, the wife of Pah Jannaral, the middleman. She was yelling again. It was her third nightmare in a row. She kicked, moaned, and shouted at the same time. In her dream, she saw newly-honed bolo brandished in the dark, seemingly following her husband.

72 Cleansing day.
Men, women, and children woke up early. The fire in stoves lit up and roused the sleepy village, followed by the crackling of coconut shells used by mothers as fuel; the punding of the pestles on th morart as the fathers pulverized rice for baking; the sound of oil crackling in the frying pan; the tinkling of glasses and the clatter of plates; the hissing of water from buckets; and the occasional screaming of mothrs at naughty children, who were giggling and chasing each other, silenced only by the calling of the muezzin for an early morning prayer.

At nine o’clock in the morning, most of the folks of Higad had already flocked to the shore to observe the yearly cleansing rituals. Pah Jannaral, the middleman, and his family left their home a little after nine, his wife still drowsy because of lack of sleep, brought about by her nightmare. Some fishermen and their kin went to the beach ever earlir. They could be seen in groups, each having an imam to lead the prayers.

Actual cleansing began. The native huddled in groups thigh-deep in the sea near the shore. The imam splashed them with sea water, accompanined by proper recitals meant to rid them of bad spirits and to protect them from danger and untowared incidents. Each member of the group had a pebble in his hand, which he would throw away after the cleansing.

When cleansing in the sea was over, the natives went back to the shore whre the imam peformed another thanksgiving ritual before they ate their provinsions on the shore. Cleansing rites ended.

Buh Gandayla, the wife of the middleman, decided to go home earlier than the rest. She was unable to eat with great relish. She was very sleepy. She expected her baby any time that week. And she felt she would have it that very day. The pain in her stomach was intesnsifying.

On the way home, Buh Gandayla complained that the lower lid of ther left eye was pulsating. Actually, she could interpret the sighn as a bad one, but she expected Pah Jannaral to dispel her fears. Pah Jannaral, on the other hand, knowing that the contraction of a lower lid was an omen, did not pay attention to her anymore, not wanting her to worry some more. Besides, it was cleansing day. Dangers had supposedly been driven off. They arrived home with Buh Gandayla already writhing in pain.

It was 11:30 in the morning. The main door of their house was ajar. They must have forgotten to close it when they went to the beach for cleansing. Usually, trustful as they were, they would leave thir house open even when they were not home.

The middleman pushed open the door and entered ahead of his wife. But before they were even able to settle on their new red sofa, Utuh Mansul suddenly barged in from the kitchen. His eyes bulging, he glowered at Pah Jannaral.

“You killed my father thirteen years ago. Murderer! I’ll tell your wife now what you did several years ago, so that she’d know the kind of husband you are, you who got rich out or what you call hard work. Buh Gandayla, this man, your husband, killed my father!” Utuh Mansul screamed over and over, seemingly out of his mind.
“My dreams! My dreams! They’re all true!” Buh Gandayla shouted, clasping her belly, which suddenly made her double up with pain.

“No! This fellow doesn’t know what he’s talking about! He’s a liar, do you hear? A liar!” Pah Jannaral, the middleman, yelled. He then rushed forward, hoping to stop Utuh Mansul from whatever he had intended to do with the long, well-honed bolo he was now brandishing.

But before the middleman could move any farther, Utuh Mansul slashed the middleman’s neck with his sharp blade. Blood gushed out of the middleman’s neck onto the wall, daubing it with globs of red. His skull hit the floor with a thud; the sofa cracked under his lifeless body as it fell.

Buh Gandayla went hysterical at the sight of this horror. She ran out of her house, and went down the stairs. Screaming as she ran, she clasped her belly as if to keep the baby inside her from falling. She tripped over a hole on the concrete footbridge and collapsed. Utuh Mansul rushed to her side, his rage now gone. He helped the middleman’s wife lie on her back.

In a short while, the fishermen and their families arrived. They were all shocked to see Utuh Mansul’s shirt spotted with blood and the middleman’s wife bleeding on the bridge. Minutes later, the cry of a newborn baby was heard. It was Buh Gandayla’s, the middleman’s last child. Hearing the baby cry, Buh Gandayla raised her head a little, struggling to look at the bundle of helplessness, and feel back. She died on the bridge.

Pah Hamsa, the middleman’s confidant, was the last fisherman to arrive, and he elowed his way through to the pressing crows to see what happened. Utuh Mansul ran to him and kissed his hands.

“Pah Jannaral was my father’s murder. I killed him,” he said matter-of-factly.

The bolo in his hand dripping with the middleman’s blood, Utuh Mansul left the shocked, incredulous neighborhood. He continued walking until he reached the crossroads. To his right was the way to the municipal hall; to his left, a long, unpaved road to the hinterland.

Utuh Mansul turned right.
Meet the Writer

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