

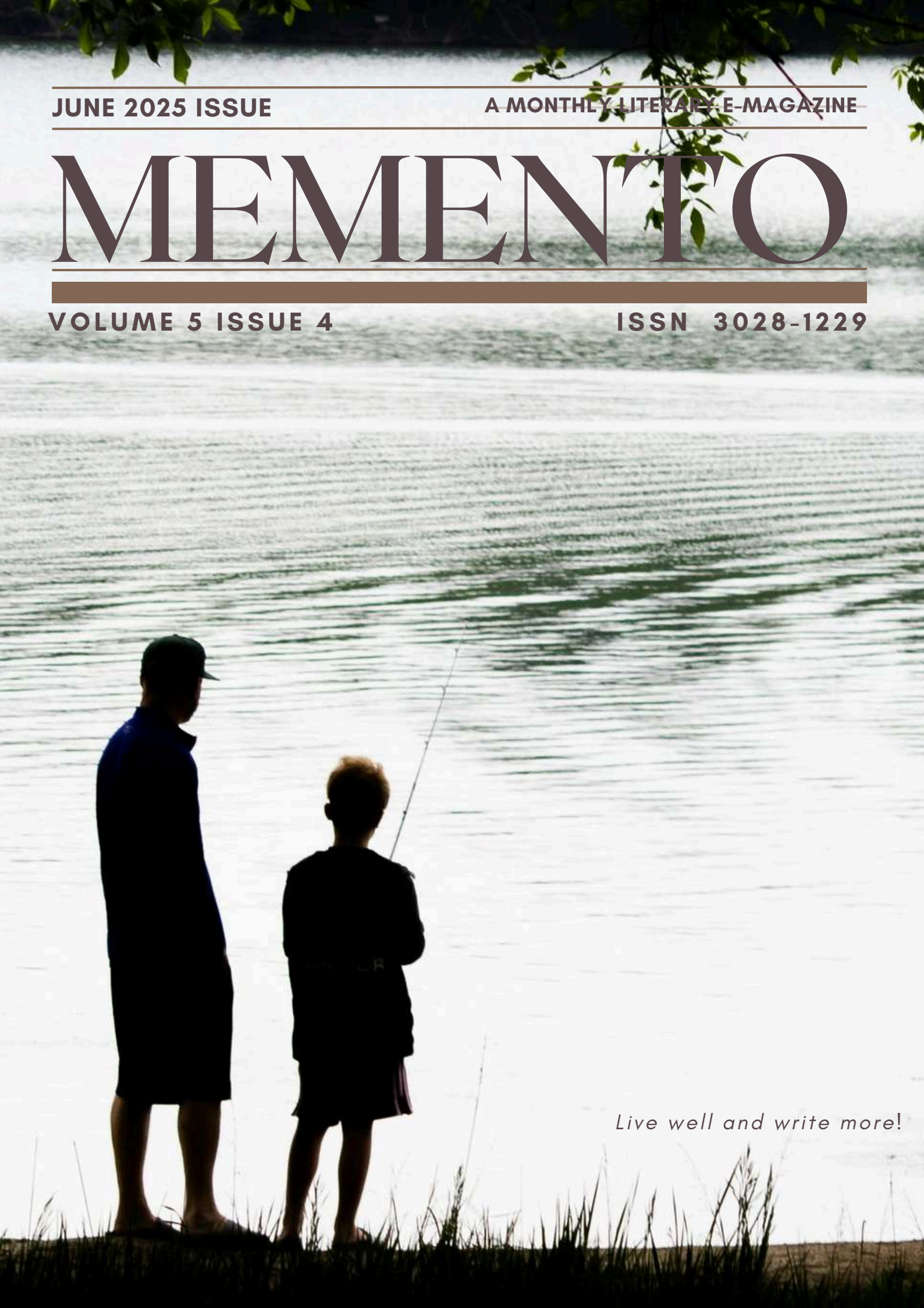
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Founder & Production Manager

Elaine Marie Factor

Editor & Curator

Aiko Hara

Proofreaders

Nichelle Dizon

Layout Artist

MCB

Illustrations

Graphics Elements by Canva

Photos by Unsplash

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SCRIBBLORY WRITING AND TUTORIAL SERVICES

508 Aragona St. Cittadella Executive Village,

Las Pinas City, Philippines

Contact no. 0977-233-3643

Email: scribblory@gmail.com

Website: www.scribblory.com

Contributing Writers

Clarisse Eugenio
Geraldson Tambuyat
Alfred Pagunsan Gadayan
R.A. Latumbo
MLVA
Ma. Lorelie Hernandez
Plumarupok
Danica D. Profeta
Donald Jan Chan
Clarice
Charly Lam
Maximo Tumbali
Patrick Tejada
Aleyceau
Jey B. Bee
Maria Cristina Mayores
Ma. Cristina Ubana-Fronda
Dennis Espada

Fiction Section:

Ulysses Tezano

Publishing Section:

Felz Etorne

Mentor:

Aiko Hara



MEMENTO

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Message from the Founder



Dear Scribblorists,

Last June 29, I had the pleasure of attending *Aklat Sining: A Pinoy Books and Art Expo* at Eastwood Central Plaza, where I manned Scribbllory's booth with our logistics head. The clouds were heavy and dim the entire day, occasionally bursting of rain. Since the booths were like small houses that were bare, with wooden doors and windows wide open, the cool weather felt like a blessing. Still, who would visit an open mall like Eastwood on a rainy day?

Nonetheless, we were happy to showcase all the books at Scribbllory Book Shop, especially our new titles written by men—fathers who not only found time to write but also committed resources to publish their work. So far, we have three titles penned by ‘fathers’:

- *To Be: How TB Led Me Back to God and My Life Purpose* by Marcelo Apidos
- *Life Begins Today: Inspirations and Reflections to Guide Your Way* by JC Libiran
- *Springboard to Heaven: The Jojo Sayson Adventure* by Jojo Sayson and James Riordan

That evening, I had a good chat with one of our authors who visited the booth.

She shared how vital a father's role is in shaping a child's character—that who he is and what he teaches have a profound impact on his children's values and beliefs.

I couldn't help but think of my own father. Growing up, I'd often wake up very early to find no one to play with, and in the afternoon, when my sisters and cousins were napping, I'd be alone with my bucket of toys. During those times, Papa would step in to play with me, often suggesting creative ways to make our games more fun. This and other “loving things” he did nurtured in me the hope that I could be as brave, creative, God-fearing, and wise as him. And although I eventually clearly saw his flaws as I matured, those memories he created with me and the values he had passed on have already been deeply ingrained in my being. With that, I can say that he has been a good father to me.

In this issue, we'll introduce you to more fathers—through the eyes of their “children.” While no father is perfect, each one has a unique and special story that deserves to be told.

Remember your father,
Elaine

An Author's Journey

Marcelo Apidos

*Marcelo Apidos is a loving husband to Maribel
and a proud father to Vito, Alba, Zara ad Ethan.
He is an entrepreneur and lives with his family in Tuguegarao City.*

“Sure, your story inspires me every time you share it with me, Dear!” my wife, Maribel, quipped in one of our early morning couple sharing. “But what if someone else’s life is changed for the better because they read your story?”

That was her polite way of asking about the manuscript I wrote about my experience with Tuberculosis many years back.

Her question actually made sense and hit a spot deep inside. I was getting used to talking about my experience and sharing the lessons I had learned with her, our family, and the members of our small spiritual community. But the ‘sharing’ was just limited to them. I was telling my story to the same people over and over.

I completed the manuscript of *To Be* in late 2020. It was my “project” in the goal-getting program called *Skyrocket* that I joined during that year. My plan was to print one copy of the manuscript as my output for *Skyrocket*, have the material re-edited, laid out, proofread, and then finally, publish it.

At the end of the program, I did print one copy, had it bounded, and proudly showed the product of my 60-day labor to my classmates and mentors.

The work with the book continued, and it went on as planned. I reached out to Coach Elaine, and we worked and completed the re-edits. Later, I passed it on to the late Rey De Guzman who worked on the layout. It was already at the proofreading and publishing stage when suddenly, the project hit a block. Truth be told, I chickened out.

The idea that I had to tell my life story to the world in printed form frightened me again. I felt scared to be judged and bashed! Thus, the manuscript lay there in my hard drive for over a year and a half, and the printout gathered dust in my bookshelf—until that conversation with my wife that morning.

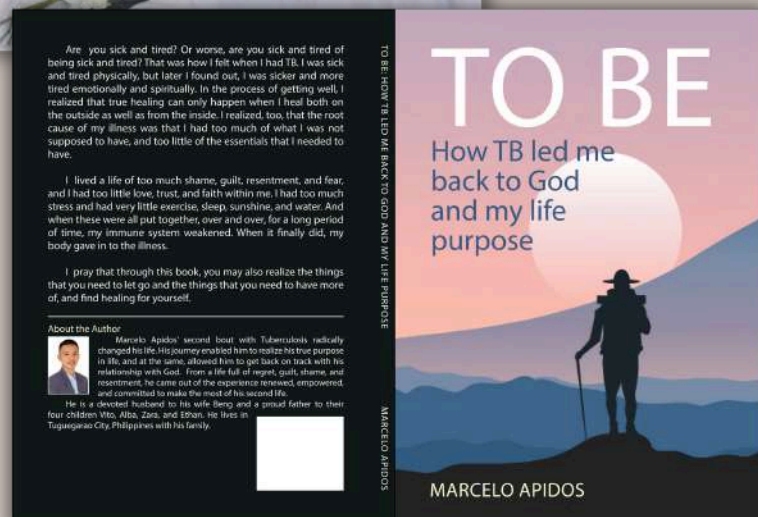
Maribel’s question made me look back at my original purpose for writing the book. Sure, it was my own way of documenting a chapter in my life and the lessons and realizations that came with it; it was my coming out story. But it was also written for a greater purpose.

I knew that I was also sharing my story for someone, and I had to do it now! And if I had to make an impact on someone, I needed to move out of my comfort zone towards the line of courage.

Fast forward, with a lot of prodding and support from my wife, my proofreader Felz, and a lot of people who worked in the background, I finally launched *To Be: How TB led me back to God and my life purpose* last month during my 42nd birthday. It was poignant and surreal but also liberating. Maybe, that is how it feels to finally deliver a baby after a long labor.

With the printing of the book, I close a chapter of my experience with TB, grateful to come out of the experience alive and write about it. It excites me, though, that the reading of *To Be* may be the opening part of someone else's story.

(This article was first published in Volume 1, Issue 2 of Memento.)



Silent Strength:

The Power of a
Father's Presence



SAILING WITH MY FATHER'S DREAM

by Clarisse Eugenio

I was looking for an important paper under my parents' bed, when I came across some memorable items: my certificates, my sister's graduation pictures, my brother's baby photos, and a picture of my mom from when she was in her twenties. It's ironic how we often find important documents tucked away under our parents' bed, usually in a brown envelope, sometimes even covered with a plastic bag. But one thing, in particular, caught my eye—my father's diploma.

Papang is one of those people whose presence can be intimidating, not because of his stature or deep voice, but because of his aura. There's a certain seriousness in him that makes even talking to him nerve-wracking. Maybe that's why none of my suitors dare to speak with him. Even we, his children, despite being in our twenties, hesitate to ask for his advice about important decisions in our lives. We just don't want to risk facing his attitude.

Papang was once a *barangay* treasurer, a farmer, and now he's what you might call a househusband who takes on side jobs. He's friendly, but the respect people have for him runs deep. It's a quiet respect, the kind that stems not from fear but from the dignity with which he carries himself.

As I looked at Papang's diploma, he arrived home from work. His pants were covered in paint, his hair dusted with paint residue, and his face showed the exhaustion of the day.

I let him rest for a while and placed the food I had cooked in front of him. I asked how his day had gone and what they had been working on earlier. As we talked, I gently steered the conversation toward his diploma because I wanted to see his reaction and learn more about his feelings about the course he once took.

Papang had finished a course in Maritime Engineering, and I was a little surprised by it, as I had always thought he didn't like that path. But when I asked how much he loved his course, I saw a spark in his eyes. I realized he had wanted to pursue it after all.

That topic kept us talking for over 30 minutes. It was one of those rare moments, where I felt like I was finally having a glimpse of a part of Papang I had never known—a man with dreams and ambitions, just like me.

As I was about to clear the table and take the plates away, I suddenly heard him say, "Now, my dream is for you to finish your dream, no matter how long it takes."

I turned around and left without saying a word. Throughout my life, this was the first time I heard something from Papang that made me cry like that. He never opened up about what he thought or felt before. He's like my grandfather in that way—you get a lot of stares and silent responses from him.

For the past few months, it has just been the two of us left in the house. My mother is in the city handling some important matters, and my siblings are off on their own paths. Among my siblings, I'm the only one who has cried in front of Papang, telling him how hard life has been lately and how exhausting school can be. Whenever I'm at my breaking point, saying over and over, "I can't do this anymore," he's always the one who says, "You're Clarisse. You're stronger than I am, braver than I am."

Papang knows how hard this year has been for me and how many times I'd fallen. Even though he sometimes tries to push me away, telling me to leave because he's used to people leaving him, I've stayed. I stayed even when he kept pushing me, even when he threw stones at me, even when he hurt me once. I stayed, even when I knew I shouldn't.

He's never perfect. I once hated him, screaming at him inside my head. Sometimes, you just want to switch fathers with anyone because you know you can't handle yours anymore. I know I'm not my father's ideal daughter.

Funny how that thing happens in a father-daughter relationship, where you both agree that you shouldn't be in each other's lives. I guess we just try to learn how to love it because they're our blood—they're our family.

I haven't had much luck with men and love, but I'm lucky to have Papang. I may be wary of men, but nothing could ever make me hate my father. He's not always tough, but he's not always gentle with his children. Papang is a laid-back person who believes that great things happen when you take action towards making them happen. If there's really an afterlife, I would always choose my father. No matter how high the mountains or how fierce the thunderstorms in life, I know he'll be there to guide me. I'm just a kid who loves him so much.

He's trying his best to be the best father for me. The smallest things a daughter wants to feel from her father are what Papang has been giving me. The strong personality that others always see in him is not what I see. I am my father's daughter. Even if the ship tries to sink, I will try to make it float. Whenever it loses its direction, I will try to steer it back to the right path because that is what makes Papang happy. I will sail towards my father's dream, our dream.

WHY PAPA IS ALWAYS GRUMPY

by Geraldson Jambuyat

To dwell at home means to drown in utter exasperation—at least, in my case. And yet, it is a drowning I would choose a thousandfold more if it means forever. Home. Forever at home.

We have a fairly decent livelihood—able to make ends meet, but not all the time. Occasionally, we struggle to balance our finances, but not all the time. Essentially, we are what economists call “the middle class.”

My parents work 24 hours a day with one day of “rest” in between. If an average Filipino complains about an eight-hour work shift, then my parents must be aliens. They both work at a food franchise under the same company. Mama sells an assortment of *siomai*, often paired with yellow rice or java rice. Papa, on the other hand, offers franks and burger for one of the well-known local businesses in the Philippines.

Whenever I stumble upon their workplace—oftentimes when I go to National Book Store—I would sit comfortably on one of those cheap copies of tulip chairs that sat around their outlets—red for Mama and blue for Papa. Clamoring tongs hit the metal stove, fragrant frying sizzling in the air. With newly bought books wrapped on my stomach, Mama would protest, “*Libro nanaman*,” behind indistinct voices that demand so much from them, far beyond their pay rate.

I overhear them sometimes, discussing rambunctious customers who flaunt their arrogance or talking about the endless list of things that require financial expenditure. That sound of frustration would be muffled over the relief of finally being home and drifts into slumber in preparation for the next sleepless day, and so on, so forth.

But ultimately, in those moments when I find leeway to turn inward and reflect, I wonder why Papa is almost always grumpy—yet, at the same time, never whines over the pile of unread books I stack at home. More often than not, he’s behind spontaneous conversations, seemingly in his own world out there in the corner, along with his constant rambling about the squalid state of the house. Paradoxical.

We faced those bemoaning with distaste. Perhaps, that is just one of the commonplaces among Filipinos in a Filipino household—the mothers who are hailed as the “alarm clock *ng tahanan*.” Except in ours, it was Papa. Papa, who would grab a hammer and a screwdriver to fix the broken cabinet or unclog the toilet—all of which despite his worn-out body. We hate to see him forcibly crouch to reach an eyesore that hides in the innermost cranny. His grunts would gnaw at my guilt and ask, “How could you just watch?” And still, I watched.

It was like that for a relatively long time, partly because I was too young to understand. Mama and Papa would come home from work with an awful look on their faces. The lines and wrinkles are much more apparent now. It frightens me. Those textures frighten me.

It is a universal truth that all ends eventually. And while that is an agreed-upon fact, I think when that time comes, I will never be ready. Never. The scent of siomai and burgers wouldn't be around anymore, and I would rather bathe in that smell than sampaguitas; I would rather wake up early to clean the house to take a weight off Mama and Papa's back.

They are getting older and older, day after day, and they are doing everything in their power the second they awaken. It feels as if I am on the edge of a precipice, as if just a step ahead is a cliff. And of that, I am scared as ever.

I am growing older, too. And with that comes understanding. Why Papa is grumpy: it is the language of a body that has had to endure too much, of a man trying to hold himself together without letting anyone see the cracks. And I hate him for even trying to shield us from that knowledge, but I love him so much more than any god could profess. I love them—because he is my Papa, and this is how I love him back. Even if he never notices. Even if he never says a word.

Because love—God, how obscure our understanding of love—sometimes, sounds like sweeping the floor before he wakes, or folding his shirt just right, or simply listening in the dark when he thinks no one hears.

And that, at last, I hope I can be annoyed every day if it means forever. Home.
Forever at home.

THE KEEPER OF NINE STARS

by Alfred Pagunsan Gadayan

My father was a security guard at Sipalay Copper Mines in Negros Occidental. That's how most people knew him—a man in a crisp white uniform, standing watch over the sprawling complex. But to us, his nine children, he was so much more. He was the quiet anchor in a sometimes tumultuous sea of nine lives, a man whose strength wasn't shouted but lived, and a silent guardian whose presence shaped us all.

Life wasn't easy. Nine children require a lot of resources, and my father's salary as a security guard was stretched thin. We lived a simple life; our home was modest but filled with love, laughter, and the ever-present aroma of my mother's cooking. I remember vividly the early mornings, the sound of my father's gentle footsteps as he prepared for work, and the quiet way he would kiss each of us goodbye before heading out into the pre-dawn darkness.

Those goodbyes—brief and unadorned—were powerful testaments to his quiet love.

He rarely spoke of his work at the mine, but we knew it was demanding. He worked long shifts, often under the blazing sun or the relentless downpour of the Negros Occidental rains. Yet, he always came home tired but ever-present. There were no complaints, no dramatic displays of exhaustion. It was just the quiet determination of a man providing for his family. That silent dedication was a constant lesson in responsibility and perseverance.

One memory stands out clearly: a torrential rain that lasted for days, causing flooding in our neighborhood. We were scared, the water lapping at our doorstep. My father, drenched to the bone, returned from his shift, his face etched with worry. He didn't panic; he didn't yell. Instead, he calmly organized us, helping us move our belongings to higher ground and ensuring that we were safe. His leadership wasn't authoritarian; it was gentle but firm, radiating a quiet confidence that calmed our fears.

He taught us the value of hard work, not through lectures but through his actions. He didn't demand obedience; he showed us respect and expected it in return. He showed us how to work together, each of us contributing our part to the household chores and responsibilities. He taught us to be self-reliant, fostering our independence without ever diminishing our sense of family unity.

His love wasn't showy; it was expressed through acts of service, through the food on the table, the roof over our heads, and the constant, unwavering presence that provided a sense of stability in our lives. He didn't offer grand pronouncements or eloquent speeches; his strength lay in the quiet strength of his character, his unyielding commitment, his steadfast love.

He also instilled in us a deep sense of community. We were a tight-knit family, supporting each other through thick and thin. The values of compassion, empathy, and working together were woven into the fabric of our lives, shaped by his silent example. He taught us the value of simple things—a shared meal, laughter around the dinner table, the comforting presence of family.

Today, as I reflect on my father's life and legacy, I see the profound impact he had on shaping who I am.

His quiet strength wasn't about grand gestures or boasting; it was about consistent, unwavering devotion. It was about showing up, day after day, even when it was difficult. His legacy isn't written in monumental achievements but in the nine lives he nurtured, the values he instilled, and the silent strength he embodied. He may have been a security guard at Sipalay Copper Mines, but to me, he was—and will always be—the keeper of nine stars, the silent guardian of our family's heart.

A FATHER'S SILENT LOVE

by R.A. Laturbo

I grew up in a home where the only person I could truly call “family” was my father. I was born out of wedlock. My mother left me when I was just two and a half years old, and from then on, it was just me and Papa.

At that time, he drank a lot. He was not the kind of father you’d see in perfect stories. Whenever he was drunk, I became the target of his anger. I was just a small, confused child trying to understand a broken world. And yet, even in the middle of the hurt, there was one thing I always noticed: he never left. Even when he was angry, even when things were hard, he stayed. He never abandoned me. And somehow, that quiet presence gave me something to hold on to.

Papa wasn’t affectionate with words, but he showed his love in small ways. I remember the toys he bought me: plastic trucks, toy guns, wind-up cars, and how he used to carry me and play with me at the park. We’d laugh while sliding or swinging under the afternoon sun. I still smile when I think of those moments.

At that time, I was his only child. But when he had a new partner and new children, things changed. His attention naturally shifted to them. I started to feel invisible.

By age nine, I told myself, it’s okay. I’m the eldest. I have to be strong. But deep inside, I longed for the same love and time I used to have.

One day, Papa saw that something was wrong. He sat me down and said: “Gan, don’t be jealous, okay? I love all of you the same. If I discipline you, it’s because I care. You’re the eldest. I’m trusting you to take care of your siblings. Even if they’re not your full brothers and sisters, they are still my children. Please love them like your own.”

Those words went deep. From that day on, I gave myself to looking after my siblings. Even when it hurt.

There was one time I had to step between two of them who were about to hurt each other with blades. “Get out of the way! You’re not even really our brother!” “Why do you always interfere? You don’t belong here!” Their words cut me more than any blade could. But I stood my ground. “Maybe I’m not your real brother. But when one of us makes a mistake, we all suffer. Do you understand that?”

That was the first time I let my emotions out. I cried, not from the physical wounds, but from the feeling that I didn’t truly belong.

Still, Papa never left. He talked to them. He made them see the value of family. He didn’t yell or get dramatic. He just stood there, firm, calm, and honest. That was his way. *(cont. to next page)*

I remember one night when things were especially heavy, he just sat next to me. He didn't say anything. He didn't need to. That silence said it all: I see you. I love you. I'm here.

Today, I carry with me both the pain and the strength of those years. My father wasn't perfect. He made mistakes. He had his flaws. But his presence, his quiet strength, shaped who I am.

He taught me to love even when it hurts. To stand firm even when I feel left out. To lead not with anger, but with patience and courage. That, to me, is the true power of a father's presence.

HOLY WHISPERS, LIVING FLAME

by M. L. V. A.

As of this writing, we celebrate Pentecost – the descent of the Holy Spirit, the birthday of the Church, and the divine outpouring that set the hearts of believers ablaze. It is a day of holy breath, of wind and fire, of whisper and flame – all carrying the Spirit of God to dwell within us.

Let us return to the beginning. The Holy Spirit has always been the breath of life:

- In Genesis 2:7 – “Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”
- In Genesis 2:22, Eve was formed from Adam's side – not without the Spirit's breath still moving, still creating.
- In 1 Samuel 16:13, “The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.”

- At the Annunciation in Luke 1:35, the angel said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”
- On Pentecost, Acts 2:2, “Suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind... and it filled the entire house.”
- In John 20:22, “He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

From the beginning of creation to the upper room, breath has been God's language of life. He breathes not only to create, but to empower, heal, and send. It is the divine whisper that carries eternity into fragile human frames. I have seen this breath – not only in Scripture, but in the holy ground of our family life.

My father, who suffered from COPD, struggled to breathe in his final years. Speaking, let alone standing before a crowd, seemed nearly impossible.

And yet, whenever he was called to testify about our Father in Heaven or to speak of Jesus, he did so without faltering—with strength, clarity, and conviction. It was as if Heaven lent him lungs. I believe with all my heart that it was the Holy Spirit who breathed through him, magnifying his strength, making him a vessel of grace.

And my mother, a woman of few words, gentle spirit, and deep wells of prayer. Many overlooked her quietness, not knowing it was the Spirit's gentleness made flesh. She stood unshaken through life's storms. Her stillness was strength. Her humility, a fortress. She carried the breath of God like a sanctuary – silent, but life-giving. Amidst all challenges, her silence and faith conquered the world through the power of His breath in her.

I was a frail little child, one illness after another, and burdens I couldn't understand. But I passed through each season almost effortlessly, as if something unseen was holding me up. I thought it was normal. I didn't know it was grace.

It was only through recollection and prayer – remembering how our parents lived, how they surrendered, how they called upon the Spirit – that I understood. It wasn't only me. It was also my siblings. We had been breathing in the same Spirit. It was their invitation to the Holy Spirit that sheltered us all.

I realized it was their call to the Holy Spirit that made me and my siblings live out this verse almost instinctively: Romans 12:12 – “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

This was not theory. It was our rhythm. It was breath. It was the Holy Spirit, poured into our days like oil and fire.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit – wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord – have led us. And through them came the fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). These gifts are not for display – they are the harvest of lives yielded to God's breath.

On this day of the Pentecost, may we remember that the Spirit who once descended like a mighty wind still whispers today – in every home, in every act of surrender, in every fragile breath that chooses faith. Let our lives burn quietly, steadily, with His flame.

A Conversation with the Father

Come, Holy Spirit.
Breathe on us again.
Into our lungs – Your strength.
Into our hearts – Your fire.
Into our homes – Your peace.
Let Your gifts live in us.
Let Your fruits grow through us.
Make our days a living Pentecost.
Whispered upon. Set ablaze. Sent forth.
Amen.

THE MAN WHO RAISED ME FROM A DISTANCE

by Ma. Lorelie Hernandez

When I was growing up, I didn't have a father who was physically by my side. Since I was born during a year where population boom was a thing and (then called) Overseas Contract Worker or OCW had opened for Filipinos. To give us a better life, my father worked abroad when I was three years old. I didn't understand why he had to leave, but all I felt was the physical absence of a father figure.

After two years, he came back for a vacation. I was on our apartment staircase when he passed by, but I did not recognize him. I had forgotten the face of the man who loved me from afar. This hurt him deeply and made him stop working abroad and physically stay with us.

He put up an ice business and a store at a public market with my mother, so he could still provide for us. I remember him as a quiet person who never said much, but he worked hard so our needs were met. He was never showy. His love was never loud, but he had this untiring yet contented look despite having to wake up early morning to work until late in the night. But life has different ways of testing our "man of steel".

When I was in grade 3 and the family's needs were getting bigger, he had to work abroad again. The sacrifices did not seem to end. I would see him every year for only a month, then it became two years, and then less and less.

I grew up with air mails that took a while to receive, phone calls that abruptly ended because there were no more coins to put in the phone booth, and of course, the "*balikbayan* boxes" he sent. With his physical absence, he never stopped being my father. His love was felt in the things he built for us and the quiet concern that can be felt through his phone calls and messages.

Eventually, I pursued the same path – I became an (now called) Overseas Filipino Worker or OFW. With everything he taught me, I brought with me resilience and quiet love. Loving from a distance. I was working in Saudi Arabia when I had my first real heartbreak. I kept it a secret, especially at home, and went on with my daily life, hurting. Out of the blue, my phone rang. It was my father. He didn't ask questions or give advice. All he asked was how I was doing, and he told me that I was not alone. Somehow, he knew what I was going through. Somehow, even across the distance and oceans, he felt my pain. I felt the love from a distance.

That phone call proved that my father had always been with me. Not physically, not traditionally, not the way we expect fathers to be. But in his distance and silence, he showed love. His love stayed even though he cannot.
(cont. to next page)

His presence was not by staying physically, but by intention and sacrifice. His love resonated though it was silent. He taught me the gift of quiet strength – the type that does not need to be seen or applauded for, just resilience and courage to move forward.

Today, as I journey through my life, I carry his lessons, his silent strength, and knowing that sometimes the loudest love does not make a sound.

SOWING SEEDS OF STRENGTH: A FATHER'S IMPACT

by Plumarupok

My father's presence was a silent strength that shaped my childhood. Growing up in our province in Isabela, I vividly remember our farm, teeming with life - rice, peanuts, watermelon, and corn stretching as far as the eye could see. My father, a farmer through and through, worked tirelessly to provide for our family. Despite the scorching heat, he'd venture into the fields, his worn denim overalls a testament to his hard work.

As a curious six-year-old, I'd often sneak into the farm, eager to explore the vast expanse of land. My father, though initially surprised, would never scold me. Instead, he'd pick fresh corn, grill it to perfection, and share it with me. Sometimes, he'd pluck a juicy watermelon from the vine, wash it in the nearby irrigation canal, and slice it up for us to enjoy. Those moments, simple yet profound, are etched in my memory forever.

Despite the challenges, my father's presence remained a constant source of comfort. We'd visit Antipolo Church, praying briefly before heading to the wet market to buy essentials. He'd smile, his eyes crinkling at the corners, as we stocked up on fish, meat, and vegetables.

One tradition stands out – the annual Jollibee outings after buying school supplies. He'd treat my siblings and me to a meal, insisting we enjoy it while he waited. After we'd finish, he'd take us to a nearby carinderia, where he'd savor simple dishes like papaitan or igado with a cup of rice. Those moments, though ordinary to some, spoke volumes about his selflessness.

Even after his passing due to cardiac arrest 19 years ago, his memories remain vivid. His legacy lives on through the lessons he taught me - to stay strong, brave, and strive for a better future.

The plants he nurtured in our backyard, the empty bottles and cans we'd collect to sell, all these small acts instilled in me a sense of resourcefulness.

As I celebrate Father's Day, his birthday, and his death anniversary with quiet prayers and reflection, I'm reminded of the power of his silent strength. His presence may be gone, but his impact remains, guiding me to live life to the fullest, with gratitude and contentment. As I pursue my writing journey, I'm driven by the values he instilled in me - faith, perseverance, and a deep appreciation for life's simple joys.

Beyond the Fields of Memories

A father's presence, silent yet strong,
Guided my steps, righting my wrong.
In Isabela's fields, where crops would sway,
He worked the land, come what may.

Memories of grilled corn, sweet and fine,
Watermelon's juice, a taste divine.
Though life took turns, and paths did change,
His love remained, a steady range.

In Manila's streets, a new path he'd tread,
A carpenter's hands, a father's steadfast head.
Jollibee treats, a shared delight,
His selflessness, a shining light.

Nineteen years gone, yet memories stay,
Of papaitan's taste, and a loving way.
He taught me strength, bravery, and might,
To strive for dreams, through day and night.

Today, I honor his legacy, true,
With prayers and thanks, my heart anew.
His silent strength, a guiding light,
Illuminates my path, through life's plight.

PAPA

by Danica D. Profeta

My father has been a steady presence in my life since I was small. When you look at the pictures hanging on our living room wall, you'd see one where he was carrying me when I was a tiny baby, with a cheerful smile on his face, like a proud lion holding his cub. And if you sift through our old photo albums, you'd see this one where I was in high school, and I was wearing a goofy expression on my face as he held my head like I was a puppet.

There are also pictures of him dominating the karaoke sessions in every family gathering he and Mama hosted, and that one with him wearing the large orange trumpet for New Year's Eve as a hat with his face that says he woke up on the wrong side of the bed. I also noticed the attention he gave in those photos he took of me while walking towards my seat and to the stage to receive my diploma in elementary school. It was embarrassing at that time to have that many pictures—but now when I look at them, I realize how he must've really cared about those stuff, even though he doesn't express it through words.

His presence didn't remain in those moments alone, but in my everyday life much more than I was aware of.

Papa was an industrious man. I remember him always going to work early morning, right after I had just woken up to go to school. Mama would often say the word "overtime," and that would mean Papa would come home the next night.

When I was in grade school, I didn't fully understand what his job was; I would just ask him what his occupation was whenever we were asked to write it down for our introduction in class. I would memorize the term "maintenance technician", and then later "die cut technician". I caught glimpses of his workplace when he brought us to their company Christmas party (I received a toy puzzle clock as a gift from there) and when I saw pictures of him and his co-workers beside huge rotary machines.

I also remember that one time he asked me for a photo of my favorite character (he knew I loved anime), and then one night, he came home with a huge board with Sha Gojyo's image. I was so thankful and surprised. He made that just for me, and it was better and sturdier than the ones you can purchase in stalls.

Papa also supported my love for rock and bought me Linkin Park's *Hybrid Theory* album, and books that were required in school and related to my other interests, like mythology and art. On weekends, when he wasn't fixing something in the house and reading the newspaper, Papa would unwind by watching sports or movies in TV or answering the crossword puzzle in the broadsheet. I would always ask his permission to get the comics section to read myself (because it was on the same page as the crossword) and the features section to read about random stuff. *(cont. to next page)*

Papa would also spend time with me and my nephew (who's five years younger than me) by playing games. We had rounds of *Hangaroo* and *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* on our old computer. We also played a lot of Snakes and Ladders, Scrabble, pick-up sticks, *dampa*, and marbles. We would also play dominoes, especially when there's a power outage.

Sometimes, he would dance around and tell jokes. But of course, there were also times he would scold us when we were being naughty, especially when we kids were quarrelling.

Papa was reliable in every sense of the word. There were a lot of times that, as a student who wasn't that skilled in handicrafts, I was thankful that I had a dad like him. He would help me with woodwork projects. The very first thing he created for me was a pair of sand blocks for our "Buwan ng Wika" presentation when I was in first grade. I was really proud of it because it was well-made, unlike the other ones my classmates used, which they bought from somewhere. Then, in about the fifth grade, we were assigned to assemble a figurine display. I was clumsy with the hammer and nails, so Papa volunteered to do it. He polished each part he noticed that was uneven, measured and marked them to be symmetrical in the bases, fixed them all together, and even varnished the whole thing.

Eventually, I grew more independent in my projects and homework. Then, when I entered college, our interactions lessened, as we became both busy.

He retired from work, and we were all adjusting to our new life in Cavite.

When I finished college, I applied to several companies through job search websites. When I finally got a call from one and was asked to take an exam, Papa accompanied me to the site in Bacoar. He waited patiently in the lobby until I passed both the exam and the final interview. I was so nervous, but his silent assurance served as a beacon of courage to me. It was my first time after all, and surprisingly, it all went smoothly. He also accompanied me in completing my requirements, and it was a relief to have someone to depend on those things. "Always have presence of mind." His advice was simple yet necessary—especially for someone like me, with a poor sense of direction—when I had to travel and do things alone.

Years went by, and Papa still didn't stop working. He put up a repair and sharpening shop in front of our house and continued earning by fixing appliances and sharpening saws, knives, and other tools. Even though he is already in his 60s and his kids are all adults now, he still wants to use his interest, skills, and knowledge to provide for his family.

Papa became the person who live out the motto "Action speaks louder than words". He was a dad who didn't just dedicate his life to his job; he was truly involved in our lives as he spent quality time with us when we were young, and up until now, he has shown his love and care for his kids and grandkids.

MY DAD'S SILENT STRENGTH

by Donald Jan Chan

There's a kind of strength that doesn't need to announce itself. It's not loud or flashy. It doesn't demand attention or recognition. It simply shows up – steady, reliable, and quietly powerful. That's the kind of strength I've come to understand through a father's presence.

Fathers don't always express love with words. Sometimes, they show it by being there – in small, consistent ways that leave a lasting mark. It's in the way he waits outside after practice, even when he's tired from work. It's in the quiet car rides, the packed lunches, the early mornings, the late-night check-ins. You might not notice these moments at the time, but when you look back, they're everywhere.

My father was never the loudest person in the room. He just observes and glues his sight on me and what I do. He doesn't give long speeches or grand advice. But his presence spoke volumes. His silent love wrapped me with protection and assurance. I remember the way he stood at the edge of every sports field, rain or shine, how his eyes glimmered with pride, and how he anticipated every gymnastic move that I made. I remember how he sat quietly nearby when I was having a rough day, never pushing, just letting me know I wasn't alone.

Those moments were never big – but they mattered. They always resonate within me and always remind me that I am indeed lucky to be his son.

There's a calm that comes from knowing someone is there for you, no matter what. It builds confidence in a quiet way. It teaches responsibility, not through lectures, but by example. My father never told me to be strong – he showed me what strength looked like. It looked like a sacrifice. It looked like patience. It looked like showing up, again and again, even when it was hard.

As I've grown older, I've come to appreciate those quiet sacrifices even more. It dawned on me that God blessed me with a father who made a lot of sacrifices. The things he gave up, like his career, the things he never complained about, no matter how painful and demanding, the way he put our family first without ever needing praise for it. That's the kind of strength that lasts – not built on big moments, but on a thousand small ones.

In a world that often measures strength in loudness and dominance, the quiet strength of a father's presence reminds us that true power doesn't always need to be seen. Sometimes, all we need is a father who stands behind us, holding everything together without asking for credit – one who loves, protects, believes, and gives grace through action.

WHEAT FLAVOR ONLY

by Clarice

A visit to the supermarket isn't complete without a stop at the baby food aisle. I don't have a baby, but I buy Cerelac. wheat flavor—always wheat. The others taste like regret. And yes, I'm a grown adult. But somehow, that powdery, slightly sweet mush still feels like comfort in a bowl. Maybe it's because when I was a toddler, my father used to feed it to me. No bib, no fanfare. Just his quiet presence, the slow rhythm of spoon to mouth, and the unspoken warmth of being seen. I didn't know what love was back then. But I knew what it felt like.

My father was a quiet man. Some thought he was aloof, even cold. But I knew better. We could all be in the house—me reading, my sisters chatting, Mama cooking, and my father watching boxing in the living room. Even in silence, we felt together.

He let me do facials on him when I was obsessed with blackheads and whiteheads, back when that kind of thing wasn't viral, just something weird daughters did. He cried during telenovelas but wiped his tears quickly and blamed the fan.

Sundays were sacred. After church, we'd head to Abong-Abong mountain with packed food and family friends. While the adults chatted under the trees, we kids ran around, our laughter carried by the breeze. He was never the loud one, never the center of attention. But he was there. Steady. Smiling. Content.

And Holy Week? That was gold. It was the only time he had several days off, and we had him to ourselves. We'd drive as a family to far-off cemeteries to visit graves of relatives we barely knew. My sisters and I listened as he told stories - some funny, some heartfelt, all ours. Those drives weren't just about remembering the dead. They were about being fully alive together.

In high school, he taught me how to drive—or tried to. I'd grip the wheel, thinking I was in control. The truth? He was steering the whole time, correcting gently, never scolding. That's how he loved, letting me believe I was leading while he quietly kept us on course. He showed love in quiet ways. He drove us to school each day and gave up comforts without complaints. When my mom's discipline grew sharp, he'd step in gently. "That's enough. I think they've learned their lesson."

He had always hoped for a son. So, when my youngest sister surprised everyone by being another girl, he didn't flinch. He opened his arms without hesitation. (cont. to next page)

Then he was gone. A stroke. Sudden. Cruel. I thought he'd outlive us all. He was steady like that. But his love shaped how I see our Father in Heaven. Strong, kind, protective. A quiet presence, steady and consistent, never failing.

And every now and then, I find myself in the baby food aisle, reaching for the same old box. Wheat flavor only. A small, silent way of remembering a love that was steady, nourishing, and always enough.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

by Charly Lam

This month's prompt stumped me for a bit as to what I could write on it, as my dad and I haven't really had a close relationship for a good majority of my life. But, after thinking about it, there are actually a bunch of things in my life he's shared or introduced me to that have become a big part of my interests until now!

The first thing I'd have to talk about is my favourite genre ever – horror. I have my dad to thank for getting me into this! As early as either the age of six or seven, my dad let me watch films such as *Child's Play*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Halloween* and *The Babadook*, to which I took them all in with wonder.

Yeah, that's not something you'd normally expect of a child of that age's initial reaction when they are presented with a gory horror movie, right? Don't question it; I have never bothered trying.

I quickly realised I was really interested in the slasher sub-genre of horror due to their goriness as well as the ingenuity that came with setting up these kills.

When I would be allowed to do so, I would borrow my parents' phones to look up Wikipedia entries of horror movies I had already watched or hadn't yet and read the plot's description eagerly. I also recall going on YouTube as well, to look at WatchMojo compilations of horror movie top 10s for some reason.

Going from that until now, basically anything that remotely resembles an interesting story that focuses on horror, I will instantly be drawn to it. Slasher film that displays a unique plot, but didn't get great ratings? Who cares? I WILL be checking it out. A whodunit murder mystery book? They're actually like 95% of the books I've been consuming for the past few years now, because they're mostly the only things literature-wise I've found interesting in stores recently.

Next would have to be our shared love (part of which was fueled by him) of video games! This was the main way we bonded and spent quality time together when I was a kid, as well as sometimes here and there currently (or in the past few) years. Some of our big favourites that we loved doing together were the old school Lego games on the XBOX 360, such as *Lego Batman 2*, *Lego Lord of the Rings*, and *Lego Marvel Superheroes*, as well as other titles like *Skylanders* and *Disney Infinity*.

I recall countless mornings and afternoons spent back in our old condominium in Salcedo, sitting beside each other cross-legged on the floor in front of our flat-screen TV, eyes determinedly fixated on the various worlds we were transported to with the click of a few buttons. (*cont. to next page*)

One day, we'd be battling blocky stormtroopers in Lego Star Wars, another day flying through clouds on Flynn's Dread-Yacht as dragons, giants, or elves in Skylanders – the possibilities were endless!

I learnt valuable lessons about patience as well as paying attention to detail, due to my dad always wanting us to make sure we never missed anything that could potentially lead to a bonus item or give us in-game currency before moving onto the next part of the mission we had in a game we were currently playing at the time.

The last thing that comes to mind would be my obsession over superheroes, DC and Marvel both. As a kid, I was exposed to a healthy amount of both worlds (which means you can never ask me which brand is better – I won't have an answer to give you). Back then, cinemas were more lenient in allowing kids to watch PG-13 things (despite not being 13), so I luckily got to watch a lot of 2010s superhero films in the theatre!

These ranged from the likes of *The Wolverine* (2013) to *Suicide Squad* (2016), and I remember just being in complete awe and all around having the best time watching these various characters on screen.

These may seem very small and insignificant aspects in the grand scheme of things, but I genuinely view these things as key parts to who I am – without my love for these, I wouldn't be who I am today – and I have my dad to thank for that.

THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF A TRUE FATHER

by Maximo Jumbali'

In every family, there ought to be a father who is strong, safe, happy, and stable. Without a father, a family has the image of a table standing with one leg missing. It stands but wobbles and lacks vigor and stability. Such is the vitality or power of a father in a family. Silent yet resonant, manifest, positive, inspiring, and influential, especially in regard to bringing up a family. A father working hand in hand with his wife finds the task easy, productive, and fulfilling. The whole family, composed of children and parents bound in the spirit of love, is solid and united.

Father is at the forefront. Mother stands beside him. Both are ready to protect and take care of their family, no matter what. But as in every war, there has to be a commander in chief, the father whose presence is in itself the power that keeps the family intact and vigorous.

Considering his role, the father deserves respect, love, and care from his family. But what about a father who, in all aspects, fails to be one? We hear about fathers who abuse and destroy their families instead of loving and safeguarding them. Such fathers not only weaken but also break their families apart. What prevails is the cacophony of quarrels and disagreements within the families. Sorely missing is the silent strength of a good and responsible father. So is his pervading presence that empowers his family.

What can be more worrisome or perturbing than the deafening silence of a broken family mired in fear, despair, and hopelessness by a vile father? The fear of speaking out against a malevolent father.

Good or bad, a father merits a certain amount of respect, so they say. But not all agree. A father who is a good provider is hailed a hero. A bad father is a villain. A family is better off without him.

Father's Day was born out of the need to pay respect to all the good fathers. Every one of them embodies the values that keep families mighty and enduring. A perfect mother can't substitute for a respectable father. Having both of them makes a family blessed, and indeed, ideal and sought-after.

But let it be said that the strength of a father lies not in his being coercive or obtrusive but rather in his being humane, civil, and understanding, for no amount of inhumanity or cruelty can bring about genuine love and transformation within the family. The presence of a father in a family creates an atmosphere of peace, order, comfort, assurance, sustenance, and joy.

MORE THAN JUST A FATHER FIGURE

by Patrick Sejada

Many Years Passed

I stated in a previous Father's Day article that my father's medical provider informed him of his prognosis two years before he passed away. Now, I'm not so sure. It could have been three or 12 months. What I am quite certain, though, is that it was on a Sunday when he informed us that he had accepted his fate. The details of that particular Sunday have long since been forgotten, but I do recall the force in his voice as he proclaimed he did accept the inevitable. *(cont. to next page)*

Looking back many times at that episode in his life, I have come to believe his bravado was just part of my father's brave face he had put on, likely to steel himself against his fear of the unknown. Throughout his life, he believed and knew he'd be the last man standing. That was until he was pushed right up to death's door. Even then, he could not project onto us quivering lips and buckling knees.

I am now just projecting my beliefs to fill in the gaps of how that Sunday breakfast transpired. I think there may have been a moment after he had announced this that he anticipated, or wished, I would hug him, or at the very least show any sign of sympathy. Instead, I reacted as I always did each time he said anything good or otherwise. I stared at him. He must have already known my silence was all he would hear (although I would like to think that at that moment, I wasn't quite the heartless person and that I probably must have at least said "oh").

This is the part in films where character arcs begin. Mine and my father's did not.

As Far Back as I Can't Remember

My mother's go-to story when she talked about my relationship with my father was of days winding down, us three spending our evenings singing. She recounts to me, my father, and my younger brother having fun with, I think, Pearly Shells, while my father strummed his ukulele. Our voices would drift over to my godfather's home next door. With a very low wall separating both his home and my grandparents', he must have heard us in high definition.

My godfather said he loved the idyll. He confided to my mother that he usually waited for our sing-alongs because our joy inspired him. He said no matter how bad the country was socially and economically, once he heard the three of us singing, he felt all was right in the world.

Four decades removed from that time, I have no memories of those evenings, but my impressions and feelings still hold true. Toddler me had fun.

Away and Further on Down

My mother always said she regretted the times she left me and my brother at my grandparents' home in Quezon City, but necessity dictated arrangements.

My father did his daily Tour of Luzon, shuttling in their VW bug through multiple cities from Novaliches to Las Piñas (the flow of traffic was much more bearable in the 70s), while my mother had her job as a chemistry professor at the University of the East. I always considered my grandparents' house home.

But, I did not dislike my parents' home; and although the only recollection I have of those trips to what was once one of the metro's outskirts was my mother pointing out La Mesa Dam, I still do have this impression in my mind's eye the landscape back then was wide open, not filled with subdivisions and commercial buildings, and I do not recall my parents complaining of traffic.

Adults usually say their childhood home appeared much larger when looked upon through a child's eyes. I agree. Then again, its lot area is quite large. I remember a yard big enough to run around in and a laundry area with our own hand pump in the backyard. I also remember pulling down on the hand pump and breakfasts. Other than that, I can only vaguely recall the house itself having a front porch and that we had two dogs. I can also recall one particular neighbor's name and my father talking with him more than I can remember him spending time indoors. Funny, yes; surprising, no.

In hindsight, and again I'm projecting my bias, him being social was his escape from the pressure of building his idea of a perfect family.

His waking hours were spent in his pursuit of a comfortable life. I believe it was a relentless pursuit borne of a need to have more than enough and, I suspect, a fear and shame of failing to take care of his family and his mother.

I never knew my grandfather from my father's side of the family - he'd been dead a decade, I think, when I was born - but what scant and very general information my mother provided me explained why my earliest memories did not include happy or at least tender moments with my father.

My father and his siblings spent their childhoods working (out of necessity, was my impression). Apparently, they were driven hard. The safe place they needed was not at home.

As I began making sense of our relationship, I realized why my father never spoke about this time and had no intention of recounting those memories. I suspect they would probably lead him to tears.

The deep wounds never healed. They just scabbed over.

No Way Back

For all his intelligence, his childhood experiences must have persuaded him that men must expunge "weaker" emotions. Unfortunately, empathy became a casualty.

We never had a good conversation that I remember. Maybe he regretted that. I also have a suspicion he blamed and maybe resented my grandmother on my mother's side for denying him that opportunity (assuming there was a desire to connect with me as a child). It was not my grandmother's fault she doted, but I think because she had seen that beneath the fake charm and persistence my father exhibited before he wed my mother, there hid quite a few very rough edges. She must have felt I'd have a happier childhood with her (my younger brother was also in my grandmother's sister's care). Agree or contradict mother's intuition, she was right.

Had my grandmother lived long enough for me to realize what she had done, I would have thanked her.

Of course, the protective shield would fall eventually.

Soon enough, my father's curse words slipped out of our car's window (again, the dark ages) and into my consciousness. I wasn't scared.

I just learned to be cautious around him. Unfortunately, again, he, almost always being fiery, was one of the earliest memories I have of my father. For me, there was no dichotomy of character. Those instances and a few more experiences with him formed the basis of my impression of who he was.

To this day, I still hold as true that my father was a ball of anger always ready to explode. It would be unfair to say this defined him, but his aggression negated the few prerequisites to have constructive exchanges of ideas, not that I had any ideas or plans of having a good conversation with him during my teen years. More discouraging, his voice was loud. He believed in shock and awe before anyone defined the concept.

I also find it funny now, thinking his voice became an actual presence in the room, especially if he wanted to prove a point, right or wrong. I never knew if any debate ended in anyone's favor other than his, but early on I realized if he could not respect points of view that went against his, what chance would a child's and eventually a teen's voice have against his booming.

High school, as expected, advanced the development of our relationship. No longer were his words exclusive to road rage. They followed him home upon discovering anyone's mess-up.

When he passed away, I finally started processing these episodes. Making sense of the past was much easier without him; I didn't have him butting in when I said anything contradicting what he believed, and this time, I could also look through his eyes. I admit some things I did merited harsher words than what my father served me, but overall, 80% of those puritanical sermons were just overkill.

I get that he was probably driving home angry and maybe even rehearsing a few choice lines he'd unleash on me, but he should have realized that in 30 years those words will have been long forgotten. What remains again are the impressions. I also realized I wasn't scared during the actual sit-down. It was the anticipation that made me nervous. I could've just as well gone head to head and risked disrespecting him, but it was much easier to just say nothing, ignore him, think of something else, and let his words die in my consciousness. Arguing just wasn't worth escalating the aggravation already spewed.

The Later Years

As expected, mistakes and sins have been committed. I have absolved my father where he should not be blamed. This, of course, does not mean he had no input in my actions. Since parents are also their offspring's teachers, no parent, most especially deadbeats, should be excused fully from the sins they commit.

Anyway, the gap that could have been bridged early on just continued to widen. My 20s presented another opportunity to start building. We never took it. Personally, I just wanted to keep the peace I earned after graduation.

We did connect professionally for a decade only because he was my employer. Oftentimes, our conversations dealt with sales figures, inventory, and selling, nothing done to improve on a personal level, though, which by then was no big deal anymore.

Our relationship settled into the proverbial still waters running deep. I had no plans of riling the undercurrent when fewer words exchanged was better.

Following to the Banks of the Jordan

When I left his employ, we were unaware that his body was beginning to cash in heavily. The symptoms ramped up, but everyone thought he'd overcome his illness. He never did like hospitals and consultations. Conceding power to someone else, most especially a person who told him he was vulnerable and not in control, must have frightened him more than he admitted.

The last consultation he had with a doctor must have had a hopeful beginning. He probably was expecting a treatment plan that would cure him permanently or at least keep him in good health long enough for him to live another decade or two.

I imagined the unexpected gut punch numbed him longer than he admitted. The day he informed us of his prognosis, I think the thought of the inevitable began to sink in. I remember him trying to force a smile, or was it a hiding of a sob? To his credit, though, he continued fighting hard.

His last months were a struggle for him and my mother. They still held hope, maybe even believing that the faith he suddenly rediscovered after his prognosis would lead to relatively good health if not a full recovery. I saw the transformation, though. He had reverted to his early 30s frame. I remember both he and my mother saying him losing weight had benefits.

At that time, I was already working as a medical transcriptionist (still am). I know the normal values of lab tests. His were not. I knew that these labs and my father's appearance foreshadowed what was to come. I did not want to dishearten both he and my mother, who believed positivity would help him reverse his condition. I remained silent. If hope was all they both had left, why should I take it? Still, I suspected my father knew the timetable given to him was proving to be accurate.

Last Nights

He may not have had a character arc, but I think he finally had a few epiphanies. Years before he was diagnosed with his illness, my mother always suggested he get to know his children, talk to us, and try to fully accept who we are.

Then, just a couple of months or maybe a few weeks before he passed, maybe he had an epiphany. I sensed what I now believe was his vulnerability. His physical frame underlined this, but it was more of a resignation and maybe regret that may have prompted him to finally try to reach out to us.

On many evenings at suppertime, my sister and I usually stayed behind at the table chatting. We noticed our father sitting across from us, watching and listening. These were not life matters. Joining us was definitely out of the question; he didn't know our pop culture references. Maybe he tried, but he never did. Our final failure to connect underscored the relationship we never built.

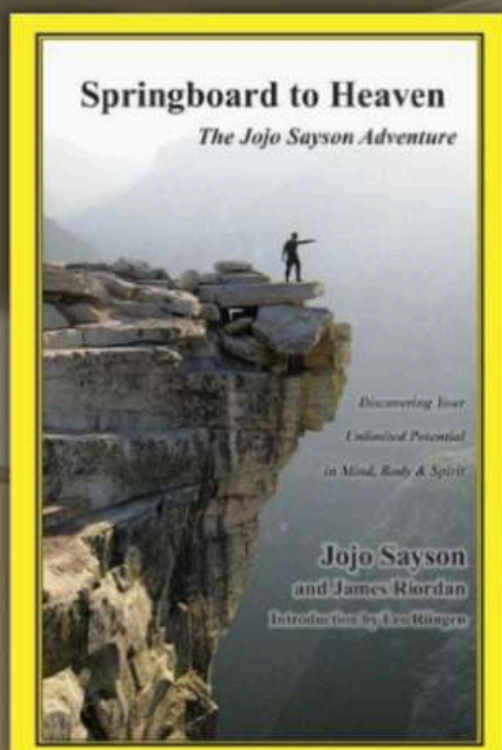
I never got to know if he felt lonely. There would never be another next time; but since this essay has all along been just me projecting my beliefs, I think he finally let go of his prejudice and accepted us. Maybe he wanted to hug us, or maybe he wanted a hug, or maybe he was just happy knowing we were happy. Those evenings were probably as good as it got for him with regard to our relationship. In those moments, he may have rediscovered good evenings and found peace.

Fifteen Years Later

Situations are different and perspectives have changed, but some sentiments remain.



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A BATTLE THAT HE WOULDN'T LET ME KNOW

by Aleyceau

Sweet Jollibee, a happy treat,
But empty stomachs—bittersweet.
The school bus hummed a happy tune,
While Dad walked miles beneath the moon.
His smile hid worries deep inside,
A father's love he couldn't hide.

He woke before the sun each day,
To work so hard, come what may.
The building site—a dusty place—
He built my future with tired grace.
The weight of debt, a heavy load,
To bring me joy along the road.

He missed my birthdays, graduations, too.
But every day, he called me—true.
"How was your day?"—a loving sound,
Though miles apart, he was around.
A father's love, a constant guide.
Always there, close by my side.

A college letter brought me down,
His gentle words calmed every frown.
Unspoken feelings, deep and true,
His love was shown in all he'd do.
His quiet strength, a steady hand,
Protecting me across the land.

Though poor we were in ways unseen,
His love shone bright—a joyful sheen.
A happy childhood, a precious gift,
Built on his love—a loving lift.
His memory bright, a guiding star,
Showing the love that shines so far.

I SEE YOU

by Jey B. Bee

I watched my father slowly grow,
Worn down by things he'd never show.

He is the wound his parents couldn't undo,
The ache of a child that's forever adieu.

The unknowing echo of what he feared
Showed as control throughout his years.

His tender bruises implored for aid,
But cloaked in pride, he played the sage.

He taught me men don't cry or bend,
And wore his pain like a second skin.

He spoke in silence, worked through pain—
What he withheld, he meant to explain.

Why did we miss the chance to say
We loved him, before he slipped away?

Did we hope our deeds would ring true—
That love was loud in all we do?

I see him now through older eyes;
Adulthood taught me where true honor lies.

JOSE

by Maria Cristina Mayores

He was a man of few words.
He was also as gentle as a rose.
You'll be swayed by his sweet tone—
Maybe because he's an *Ilonggo*.

I remember his stories about Pedro and Juan
In our small rented house when I was young.
The time he brought me to work when Mama was away,
And when he forgot my *baon*, I had nothing to eat all day.

He was a good provider.
His love for us never faltered.
His sacrifices I will never forget—
Papa, you're the best husband and father.

But some good things never last.
Everything happened so fast.
The strong one grew weak.
And we never thought he'd leave.

The pain of losing him was unbearable,
Because we're no longer a family of four.
But the green bones we found in his remains
Made us feel that he's still with us today.

Now that we've laid him to rest,
We hope he carry our best memories together.
For as long as we live, he'll remain alive in our hearts.
Papa, we love you—be our guiding star.

YASLA YOTA!

ni Ma. Cristina Ubana-Fronda

*Mula pagkabata noong dekada otsenta,
Isang mahiwagang tunog at salita
Ang naririnig mula sa aking tatay–
Pag-andar ng sasakyan, laging magkasabay.*

*“Yasla yota!”–sigaw ng aking tatay.
Nagkakagulo sa buong bahay;
Dali-dali kaming nag-ayos at gumayak.
Kahit anung suot, basta’t di nakayapak.*

*“Yasla yota!”–kahit pumupungas pa,
Walang ideya kung saan pupunta.
Basta’t marinig ang kanyang busina,
Ito’y senyales na maghanda ka na.*

*“Yasla yota!”–ano bang ibig sabihin?
Ito’y simpleng salita na binaligtad lang.
“Layas tayo!”–ang totoong kahulugan,
Isang paanyaya na gumala kung saan.*

*Bata pa lamang ay nasanay na.
Gumala at maglakbay, kahit saan pumunta.
Ang mahalaga ay masayang magkakasama.
Gumawa ng kagalakan at mga alaala.*

TATLONG TULA

SA NGALAN NG MGA AMA

ni Dennis Espada

Pagiging Ama

*May mga amang sadyang anak-anakan
ng kadiliman ng diyablong ama-amahan—
sumasamba raw sa Diyos pero ayaw lumuhod,
naniniwala kuno sa utos pero ayaw sumunod.*

*Mapagmataas sa buong barangay at parokya,
tagabantay ng ari-arian sa halip ng kaluluwa;
pagkalalaking hayók sa laman at mga bisyo,
dinidiyos ang sarili't mga bagay sa mundo!*

*May mga amang naging mga anak muna
ng ilaw ng Panginoon, Amang Maylikha—
haligi ng pamilya, pangulo ng pamamahay,
bokasyon sa loob ng tipanang habambuhay.*

*Nagdaramit ng kadalisan, hindi kalaswaan;
nangangalaga sa kinabukasan, hindi katiwalian;
nagpapakain ng Mabuting Balita, hindi tsismis;
nagmumulat sa pagkatao ng korap at ginahis!*

Kalatas ni Tatay Jose

*Mga anak ko, iisang búhay lang meron tayo,
kaya 'wag na 'wag makipaglaro sa diyablo—
panunukso, pagkahumaling at opresyon;
tagasulsol ng kaakuhan sa mga relasyon.*

*Pag-awayin ang mga tao ang layon ng tagahati,
ilubog pa sa kasalanan, papangitin ang mabuti
hanggang sa pasukin ng maruruming espiritu
ang sugapa sa pera, laman, pag-aari o titulo.*

*Wala silang sawà kasi wala silang katawan,
at sa tuwing kayakap natin ang kamunduhan
ay binubugbog tayo ng kaisipang masasamâ,
nang malimutan natin ang ating mga kaluluwa.*

*Hingin ang grasya upang sarili'y pabanalin,
patibong ng kalaba'y dapat nating sugpuin;
manalig sa Diyos, hiyas ang bawa't búhay
na muling ibabangon kung kaisa Niyang tunay!*

Father, How Can I?

1.

How can I accept
my trials and difficulties,
my pains and heartaches,
my disappointments and upset plans?

2.

How can I endure
my walks and breaths,
my hunger and thirst,
heat, storm, rain, and all tribulations?

3.

How can I appreciate
my bitterness and perplexities,
my whims and stupidities,
my agitations of being left behind?

4.

How can I surmount
my troubles and torments,
my failures and losses?
Without You, how can I?

5.

How can I transcend
unbelief and hopelessness,
my awkward lack of charity?
Without You, how can I?

6.

How can I hope for love
and have faith in it?
Or rise up and reach out,
to feel moved by the Spirit?

7.

Can I end pointless pleasures?
Can I begin kissing wounds?
Can I grow embracing thorns?
With You, I know I can!

8.

Can I bear my crosses?
Can I bear true witness?
Can I bear much fruit?
With You, I know I can!

MENTOR'S CORNER

(Writing pieces by Scribblory mentors)



MY BED OF WARMTH

This piece was first featured in the former version of Scribbly Writers Library

*by Aiko Hara, Fiction Writing
Facilitator/Administrator*

Losing a father like Papa was devastating. Papa is actually my grandfather who filled my father's shoes. My soul yearned for a father's touch, and Papa was the only bed of warmth that ever existed—until he was gone.

My mom, grandmother, uncle, and I were on the way to the hospital to visit Papa when my cousin—who was watching over him at that time—called and informed us that Papa showed no signs of life. The good thing was that we were just already near the hospital, hence we got off the car and came rushing into the ward where Papa was admitted. Unfortunately, we were too late when we arrived. We saw tears running from my cousin's eyes, and it was evident that we already lost Papa.

As we walked closer to him, we noticed that the hand therapy ball was out of his hand. His nails turned black. We all burst into tears, sobbing. He was still breathing heavily at that time, enduring the pain—until his breath became sluggish as he listened to our words of goodbye. It was as if he was just waiting for us to say goodbye before he eventually lost his breath—and we let him go.

The doctor tried to revive Papa, and that was the reason I went out of the ward. There I was, hunched, as my body was slowly sinking down the floor—hugging my knees while my heart was banging in my chest. I pleaded with God to save Papa, but later I accepted that he won't make it. And so I asked Him instead: "Why does Papa have to leave so soon?"

I anxiously wondered and shouted in my mind, *of all people, why him? Why Papa? I can't live without him!*

Since that day, I've felt alone and hopeless. There isn't a moment that goes by that I don't think about him and how the biggest trial in our family hit us.

What helped me through this experience was to remember all the memorable moments I had with him and convinced myself that Papa deserved to rest. I told myself that if Papa were alive, it would've been more devastating for us to see him endure the pain he was going through. I don't want that to happen.

Every time I think about him, I would re-enact some of the most memorable days I had with him—sitting on the edge of his bed, sliding my foot on my sock as he would start to wobble his feet to my side and say, "*Ikaw may pasok, ako wala.*" This may not sound memorable for others, but for me it is. In this little way, I could still feel his caress which was like an erratic movement of a butterfly as it flies and plays over my head.

FICTION STORY SECTION



ORION'S ARCHIVE: A SERIES (#16)

by Ulysses Sejano

Troy slides his weapon down and hooks my staff into the notch of an axe. He brings his weight down and drags me along like a doll. He steps pitter-patter as I struggle to keep the bear stick within my grasp. I stopped with one foot too far for my comfort, and my back was too stooped and bent.

Grandfather and Drago would scold me. The tip of my staff touches the floor, too low for a defense, and my balance is as stable as a sandcastle. My face is too forward, but so is his axe, and for that, Troy snaps my head back with a clean backhand across my jaw.

I stagger back, feeling a cut in my lip as my teeth bite into my flesh. Troy is a point guard, lithe and agile like a fox, but not at all built like a bull. I thank heaven for that, or I would be seeing stars. He swings again, lumbering against the weight. I sidestep again and watch the axehead smash the tiles as if it were made of cardboard. I try not to imagine how that could just as easily be my head.

Without wasting another second, I strike the back of the axehead with my staff, making sure to bury it deeper into the shattered floor. Troy's reedy arms stiffen, his muscles become taught as he attempts to heave and nudge his weapon free.

"Arrgh!" My manly squeak of courage echoes through the halls as I move my staff to strike at the thin of his wrists. Steel pounds into the joints.

My staff does not have studs to make it heavier, and I do not have the momentum and reach to break his bones. Yet honestly, I do not want to. There is no crunch or snap. At its worst, the blow would leave a nasty bruise tomorrow; it would barely be a sprain, and he'll be dribbling his ball in about a month.

The force of the blow is enough to make him let go of the axe and fall back a few steps. He is farther now. I wind back the staff, like a club, and strike with all the finesse of a baseball batter, and strike at his shins. Troy's legs wobble from the impact. He hisses in pain and points a finger at me, snarling like a rabid beast. If he can feel pain and hesitate, maybe there is a chance to convince him to walk away. I shorten the staff and plant myself between him and the Fire axe.

"Troy, Come on. It's over, man." I hold the stick in front of me—a guard, a deterrent. "Just surrender and we can..."

I do not get to finish. His right arm cocks back and arches into a wide haymaker. Heavy and forceful, with his long arms, he'd hit anybody and knock anyone out cold, but his technique is slow and clumsy.

His elbow has flared out, his step is too wide, and he leads with his face. On instinct, I step in before he could finish that arc and strike at the meat of his forearm—all that weight is stopped short before it could be brought forward.

I grab him by the wrist and lash out with a right backhand, slam my forearm to the side of his neck, and hook the butt of my stick to his nape. Before he could hope to pull back, I yanked him and kicked him right in the diaphragm, and slammed him into an open locker.

Now I hadn't known that was open. But not one to waste my luck, I slammed it shut and leaned into the door. Maybe it was the stress or the shock of having survived the fight, but I found myself listening to the slamming of his fist against the metal door, demanding to be let out.

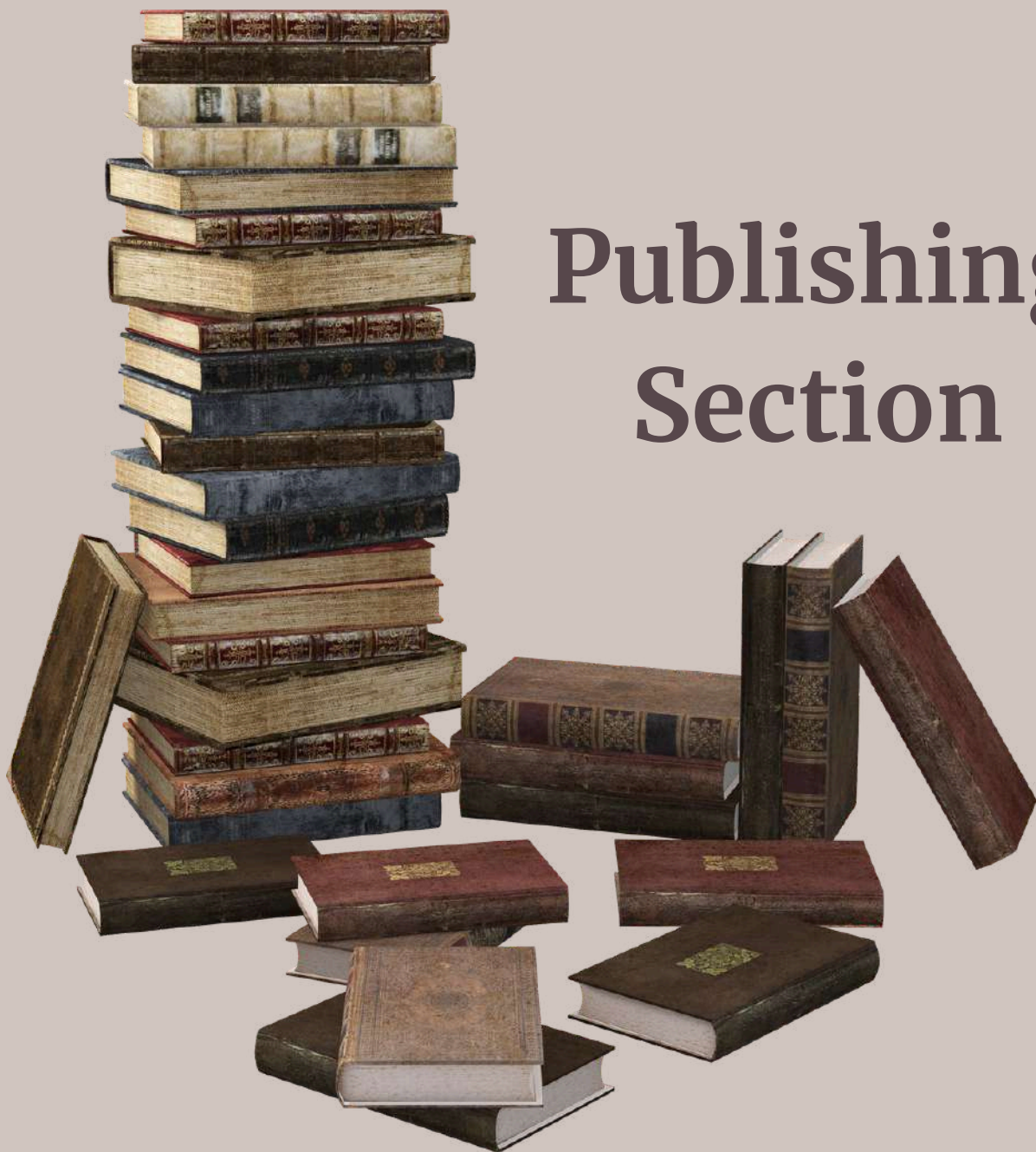
"Hmm . . . So that's how it feels like." I groan over the rattling of the locker. "I can see why you get into this."

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JUNE 2025

MEMENTO



Publishing Section

A PUBLISHER'S NIGHTMARE (A RECAP)

by Felz Etorne, Founder of Metacognia

Dear Authors,

would first like to give you an overview of how a physical book is designed and created, specifically the inside pages of the book. Not so many people realize how tedious the pages of the book they're staring at and browsing through are made. They require specific calculations and precise measurements before being created through software such as InDesign and exported as a PDF or ePub version.

The first thing we make sure of before we start with the book layout is it should be done first with the final round of proofreading. Meaning to say, there should be **ABSOLUTELY NO CHANGES** to be made with the contents of the manuscript once designing the book layout starts. At this stage, all the changes that have been made to the manuscript should already be signed off by the author. This is both true for the traditional and self-publishing setup.

Once the final draft of the manuscript has been approved by the author, the following details are gathered and finalized to start the process of book layout design:

- Book size
- A high-resolution file of the book cover (front and back) and spine

- Preferred font style and size (subject to change)
- Image or icon files to be included in the book
- Front matter (preliminary pages or prelims of a book such as blurbs, introduction, preface, etc. if not yet included in the manuscript)
- Back matter (concluding pages of a book such as acknowledgments, the author's details, references, etc.)
- Calculating the margin size on each side based on the preferred look of the pages
- Other special requirements based on the preference of the author

The next thing we need to do is to create sample templates for the chapter pages and other common pages and get the author's approval. This is where we show two or three sets of designs of those pages that the author can choose from. Once this is done, we can proceed with the actual layouting of the book. To be honest, this is the most boring but also the most tedious part.

The book layout artist works on a page and each element (i.e. italics, bold, etc.) in it one at a time. It's not as fast and as automated as working on a document on MS Word or Google Docs as anyone may have presumed. It's not possible to detail it here now, but I can show the whole process of designing the book layout in another article.

All specific designs required in a page will be done from scratch at first before it becomes automated and can be applied to similar pages. A lot of copying from the manuscript, pasting, and cutting is done throughout, so line editing from margin to margin should be done again to ensure no words or paragraphs are either missing or duplicated.

So you see, while the book layout artist is required to read the manuscript before the whole process begins for design theme purposes, one cannot do so while creating the book layout and is certainly not expected to correct any errors at this stage. I am probably the only one who does that because I happen to be both a proofreader and book layout designer, but it's rare and not common practice. Plus, I also can never do both tasks at the same time, so I really do compartmentalize each process while in the middle of each task.

Once everything is on the pages, the book layout artist is expected to do all necessary housekeeping of the entire book design and make logical sequence calculations of the number of pages, including the blank pages in between. Apart from that, designing the running heads and page numbers for each page or spread is a whole different set of tasks requiring their own corrections when needed. All these features and processes are unique to InDesign and cannot be done using any other common word document software.

After all the housekeeping procedures, this is only when the final number of pages will be known and finalized. It is important to note that any changes in the formatting, such as font style, font size, margin sizes, etc. will make the pages move and increase in number.

Hence, at this point, we must let the author reread, recheck, and finally, approve the final file where they can see the overall look of their book on PDF copy.

If possible, I recommend that they print the file even on regular bond papers just to give them the feel of how their actual book will look on paperback. It won't be the same because, of course, the mechanics of printing actual books are different. But it's also different when you work on and read the manuscript on your computer compared with reading it on paper with your naked eye. Sometimes, this is when you will notice minor mistakes that you cannot see while working digitally. I still do this if there's still enough time before the printing production and if it doesn't affect the launching date.

Assuming the author has approved everything, including the total number of pages, we will send the final file to the printer and calculate the quotation for printing. At this point, there's no turning back for the author, and one is supposed to understand that their approval means no changes can be made anymore. Once the author makes a down payment, the printer will make and send the mock copy or mock-up, sometimes also referred to as the final proof.

Now, this is when most misunderstandings happen. The purpose of the mock copy is to show the author what his/her tangible book will look like. In other words, this is the moment the author should have a taste and enjoy the experience of seeing and reading their book for the first time. If you're that author, savor this moment!

Make it your core memory! So this is certainly not the time for you to criticize your work, change your mind about your word choices, or do your fact-checking. It's already too late for any of those! This is the time for you to enjoy reading your own book!

Once you're pleased with your book, the next logical thing you should do is, of course, to approve the mock copy, so we can proceed with the printing production, right? Unfortunately, this is usually when my nightmare starts. This is, sometimes, when the author starts to overthink and attack either their work or their publishing team's work. For some reason, this is also when they would like to make a lot of changes.

To be fair, I have always asked them to still reread and recheck the mock copy, so they can spot some missed errors if there are still any. But considering the number of rounds their manuscript has been edited, copyedited, proofread, plus some revisions after each round, the probability of the changes to be made at the mock copy stage should be zero or next to none.

For clarity, let me also define here what "minor changes" mean. If there are any minor changes at all during the mock copy stage, it's more on the overall look of the text on the pages such as spacing, alignment, visual impact, etc. Practically, it's anything that wouldn't take more than a few hours to change and absolutely not make the pages move again. I always include a clause in my terms and conditions that I would already charge an additional fee if the changes to be made will take up to one whole day.

But this is not the point, and the issue most of the time is the deadline we're beating. Hence, the fourth on my list of nightmares as a publisher is ...

Making a lot of changes in the final proof copy or mock-up of the book.

And this is the most terrifying of them all because they affect both the costs and timeline of the entire production. Unfortunately, I have experienced this, and to date, this has been the most stressful thing that happened to me as a publisher. I had to use some sort of magic trick, so to speak, to make it work. And by the way, the mock-up can only be reproduced up to two copies, so the pressure was really on!

The good thing that came out of it was I learned how to set acceptable parameters and anticipate contingencies after my first terrible experience with an author. I have applied and will be applying them to the succeeding authors I work with as well so that I can deal with their needs accordingly and manage each other's expectations effectively.

At the end of the day, nothing beats the fulfillment of holding the actual book in my hands after months of working on it even when it's still just a mock-up. I have always lived for these moments in the past four years and ten book projects of self-published authors completed so far. In fact, it's the anniversary of Metacognia, my publishing business, last July 27th—and we're not stopping here. I have always believed in the magic and power of books, so I continue to help authors make their books come alive no matter how difficult the circumstances may have been.

So for you, dear authors, I am hoping to meet you and looking forward to working with you on the book you're brewing in your mind and cradling in your heart. You can do it! See you soon!

Cheers to your upcoming book project!

Sincerely,

Felz Etorne of Metacognia

This article offers a recap of A Publisher's Nightmare: Episode Four, originally featured in Memento Volume 4, Issue 5. We encourage readers to explore the complete series to gain deeper insights into the challenges faced in publishing—lessons that may prove valuable in your own publishing journey.

If you have questions or suggestions, you can reach me via email at metacognia2013@gmail.com, or reach out to me through the following social media handles: [@metacognia](#) on Instagram or Facebook.



WRITING TIPS



Writing Tip 24:

Do you observe punctuations when you read?

- ✓ "It's Valentine's Day," he said.
- ✗ "It's Valentine's Day", he said.
- ✗ "It's Valentine's Day." he said.
- ✗ "It's Valentine's Day.", he said.
- ✗ "It's Valentine's Day" he said.

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Writing Tip 25:

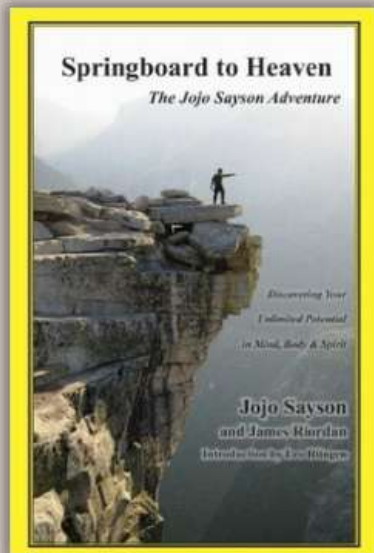
Often, a writing piece creates 'magic' when it has these three ingredients: meaning, impact, and words that capture those two.

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Need help with implementing these tips?
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Book Recommendation



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Springboard to Heaven: The Jojo Sayson Adventure

“The book is a story of struggle and survival of an eternal optimist! A product of struggling Asian neighborhood, he decided to take a different path. It is a story of a man who turned the bleakest, darkest moments of life to a learning moment and enjoyed it as a happy, bright sunshine. He knew his calling; his mission and through perseverance, hard work and unbreakable faith; and he made the impossible possible.

This is a real-life story that may be the fantasy dream of many young people in Asia. Jojo lived through it, he overcame all the obstacles in his path, which led him to become a great healer, a motivational speaker, and a research scientist in our quest for success in space! He has climbed many-a-mountains, but he is not resting comfortably in the Shangri-La. He has many more mountains to climb—here on this earth and the unknown galaxy and the outer space. He is getting his missions completed by research and hard work. He is sharing his rewards, both material and spiritual, with the young ones in his birth country, Philippines.

This book is a great read, inspiring and full of dynamic optimism. I highly recommend it to young and old audiences. Young ones can get inspired. The old and mature readers can admire this man—his mission, his everlasting, untiring positive enthusiasm—and above all, appreciate the fact that in this great country of ours, the USA, anyone with high dreams and hard work can succeed.”

- Brig. General (Ret.) Niru Pandeya, Flight Surgeon, Iowa Air National Guard

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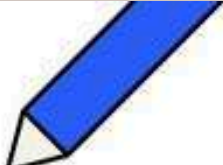




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nini.scribblory@gmail.com | aiko.scribblory@gmail.com

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