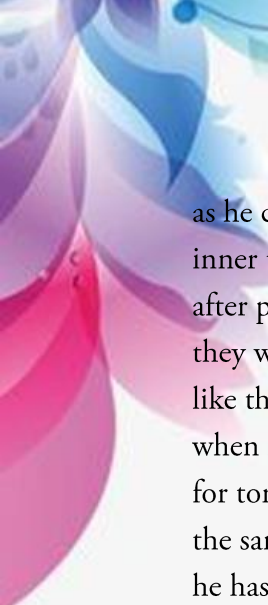


A Day in the Life of Angkol Tasyo

Kian Mc Cloed T. Alar

the splattering of rain in the roof
drowned the rooster's crows
and the seasonal smell of petrichor
permeated Angkol Tasyo's nose
as the dawn breaks
he rose from the rigid rattan bed
gargles in a second, after a minute
disfigured sunny side-ups were served
drove his princesses to school
in an old and cranky habal-habal
that outlived his dear queen
the only woman he loved in his lifetime
to the kingdom he builds
he then fared
a kingdom with no royalties -
just scaffoldings yet to be scraped
later, the whirring of the machines
and the pounding of hammers
clashed in deafening unison
and there he was in the corner
toils in a tattered t-shirt, tongue-tied
sweat glistened like crystals,
while he braved the scorching heat
and also smoked cigars in intermittent beat

eyebrows furrowed and heads pulsated
as they gobbled their meager lunch
the new overseer was snob and stingy
it was like Nene's uncle but in a plump body
at exactly four, he invades another land
to scoop and pack, scoop and pack
the brownest sugar one could ever find
an hour for a hundred and fifty is not so bad
especially if 'bale' is okay for Ante Milag
a pan de koko and juice is a must
when he trudgingly walks home
these were his daughters favorites
that every day he all tags along
the twinkles in their innocent, doe eyes
and the priceless smiles in their faces
as they munch noisily the food he brought
puts off his exhaustion and lethargic mood
in a father's love split second
that's why he is ready again to meet the pigs
he forgot to feed earlier because of haste
all fleshy and healthy, set to be killed in July
as Aya will bid her elementary days goodbye
a bowl of sinigang will suffice for dinner
then they will tune in for Batang Quiapo
while watching, the two will fall asleep
and Angkol Tasyo will carry them to bed
darkness prevails when the lights went off
darkness also prevails in his thoughts



as he contemplated about life and all
inner turmoil commence and will roll
after putting up a fight to battle them
they will be later shrugged off
like the alphabet he should have learned
when he was in primary school with Basyo
for tomorrow is another tough day
the same, old tune
he has been singing all along
the rooster will crow again
at the crack of dawn
but because he truly loves his daughters
he will continue to go on.