

TRANSCENDENCE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTANCY

THE ART OF SAYING NO

Learning to set boundaries and protect your peace in a demanding world.

FREEDOM VS. HATE

Exploring the fine line between expressing oneself and fostering division.

third
edition





PUBLISHED BY THE LEDGER

The Official Student Publication of the College of Business and Accountancy
Wesleyan University - Philippines, Cushman Campus, Mabini Extension,
Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija 3100

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Facebook Page: The Ledger - Official WU-P CBA Publication
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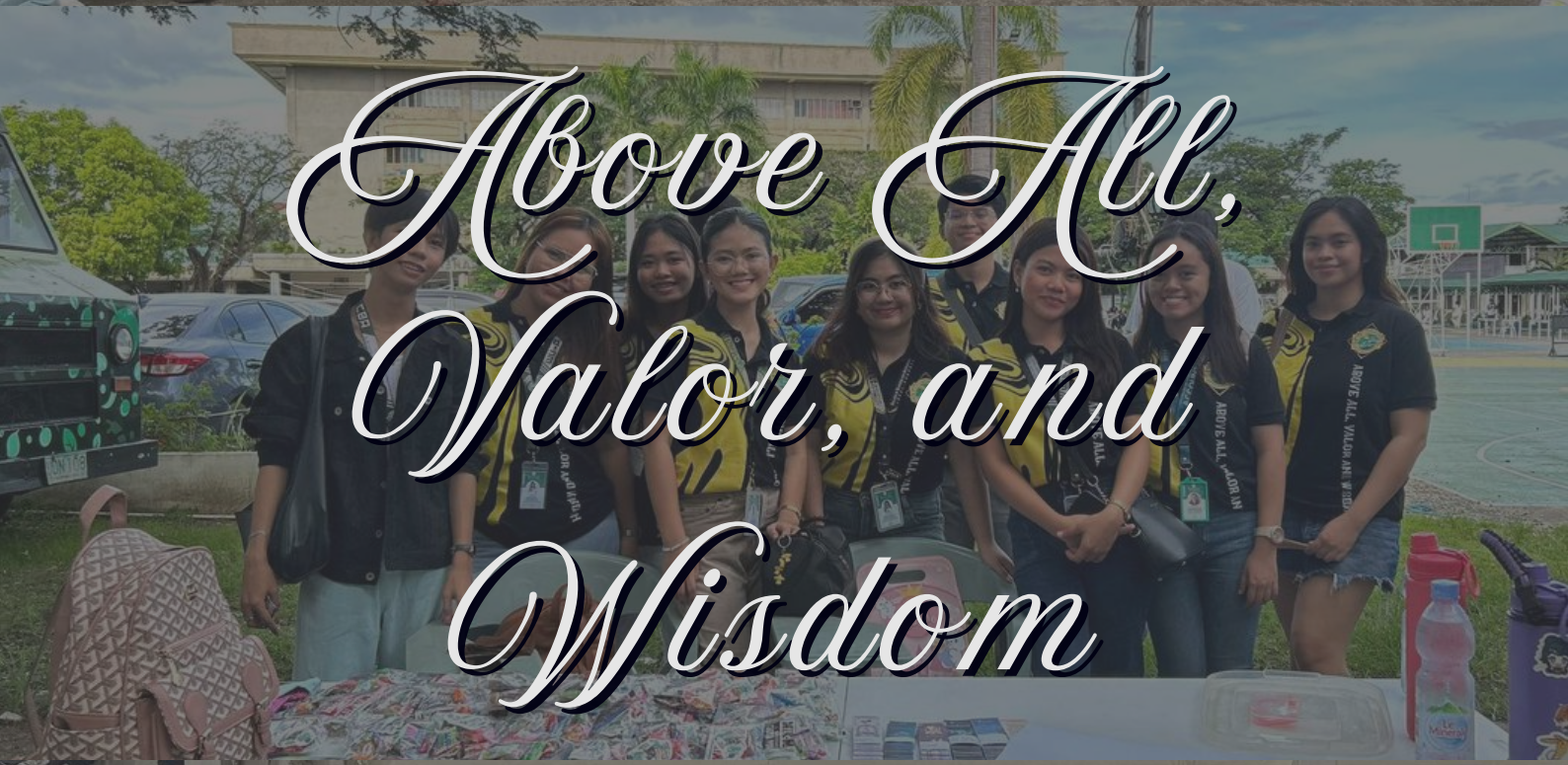


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EDITOR'S NOTE

There comes a point when comfort becomes a cage—soft, familiar, but quietly suffocating. This issue is about shattering that. The theme we explored here is expansion. Growth. Leaping. It's a gentle nudge out of the comfort zones we've gotten way too comfortable in. Our advisers sparked this idea, but it is different for me. Lately, I've been pushed past limits I didn't even know I had. It's been gnarly. Like, head-spinning, soul-wrestling, "what is happening" gnarly—but in the best kind of way.

Each member of this year's editorial board brings more than just their skill. They bring soul, and a whole lot of it. Every article written, every visual crafted, every tireless edit made in the background is their own grit, heart, and imagination that fuel this team. It's not just journalism—it's storytelling with art, art with purpose, and purpose with truth told.

So, take a moment. Get to know the people behind the pages, the ones shaping your stories, one deadline at a time. Because behind every powerful publication is the board—bold enough to transcend... and just wild enough to make it unforgettable.

My hope? That readers find something here that turns a silent whisper inside them into a full-on melodic echo. That something clicks. That they realize the person they are now isn't even their final form.

As for what's next—expect mystery. Expect truth. Expect reflections that sting and soothe. We're just getting started.

Betts
Editor-in-Chief





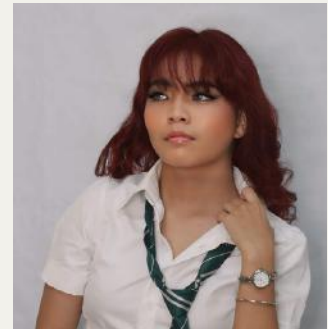
EDITOR'S NOTE

'I wish I could write a book someday.'

That's my lifelong dream. I guess I love stories. I love writing. It has always been my escapade and my life's ultimate dare at the same time. I was never good with speaking my heart out, but I learned how to follow the ripples of my thoughts, and they led me straight to the solace of a pen and paper. But, for a period of time, my love for it faded. And years after, The Ledger, this team that I never expected I would ever be a part of, came right to the door and reignited that flare. From my sophomore year, my first year as writer, and now, my last chance of working under the name of the team, has always been and will always be a pleasure. This magazine edition of The Ledger hopefully will be more than a statement of how amazingly talented each and every writer, creative, photojournalist, and broadcaster on this team is. They are stellar and brilliant; I hope the whole CBA Community knows it.

To the reader, I hope you know that you have everything in this world to show what you are capable of. Show your creativity and magic in ways that you know. Don't let others limit you. With the biggest dream in you, find your way to make it possible. Keep reaching for the stars. This is The Ledger's Associate Editor, Aika, signing off.

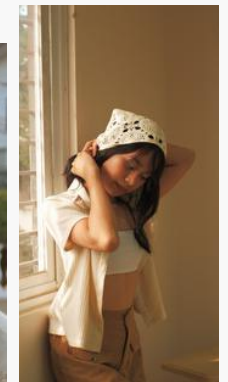
Aika
Associate Editor



This year's magazine, Transcendence, is a celebration of our shared journey, one marked by growth, resilience, and the courage to rise above challenges.

As CBA students, we are no strangers to pressure, deadlines, and expectations. Yet time and again, we've proven that excellence isn't just measured by academic performance. It is defined by heart, grit, and the determination to become better than we were yesterday. That is what Transcendence represents: our ability to evolve, lead with purpose, and rise beyond limitations. Every page in this edition reflects the pulse of our college, our achievements, untold stories, and the distinct spirit that sets CBA apart. It is both a tribute and a time capsule, a reminder of how far we've come and how much further we are destined to go. As Associate Editor, it has been an honor to help bring this magazine to life. I hope the stories within these pages inspire you, challenge you, and remind you of the power we hold as future leaders. Let this be more than a read. Let it be a reflection of who we are.

Shane
Associate Editor



IN THIS ISSUE

As the official publication of the College of Business and Accountancy, we proudly present to you this magazine. It stands as the evidence of the CBA's dedication to rising above limits and redefining excellence. At its heart is our theme, Transcendence, a commitment to rising above challenges, daring to aim higher, and choosing growth even when it's hard. In this edition, you'll find stories that go beyond the usual academic narrative. The faces you see on these pages represent more than just students; they represent perseverance, teamwork, and a fierce drive to thrive. From powering through the pressures of third year college to navigating the realities of student life, each journey offers something real and relatable.

We also dive into the conversations that matter to us, from the spike in living costs and trending Tiktok topics to the ways we stay engaged as a community. It's a glimpse into how we're growing beyond constraints, adapting, and making space for our voices in a world that keeps moving. We also would like to capture in this issue the wins, the work, and the quiet strength behind our progress that shaped the CBA community. So as you read through, we hope you don't just see achievements, but also the courage, heart, and spirit it takes to rise. Because in rising together, we transcend.



EMBODYING
TRANSCENDENCE
IN EVERY STEP

Forged in the Fire:

CINDY LUGTU'S FIGHT FOR BALANCE AND PURPOSE

by Denice Nicole Dimantaga

In the chaotic whirlwind of college life, where deadlines loom, with the demands of student leadership—one student stood out not just for academic excellence, but for her grit and heart. Meet **Cindy C. Lugtu**, a third-year Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Marketing student, the Mayor of the Junior Marketing Association for the federation year 2024–2025, who recently bagged two of the most coveted titles at the Gawad Parangal 2025: Business Student of the Year and Most Outstanding Student Leader of the Year.

"I didn't expect it at all," she recalls. "They suddenly asked me to prepare a speech, and that's when I found out I got both awards. My jaw dropped!" But behind the applause and shiny trophies lies a journey laced with exhaustion, doubt, and grit.

THE WEIGHT OF EXCELLENCE

Third year is infamous for being the toughest. Cindy realized she couldn't keep the same grades while managing leadership duties. *"There's that pressure to be a role model,"* she says. But she pushed herself anyway. She'd wake up early to squeeze in review sessions and go to sleep with her to-do list still echoing in her mind. *"I chose to be tired over staying in my comfort zone—and that choice shaped me."*

THE QUIET BATTLES OF LEADERSHIP


While her title sounds like something from a polished résumé, Cindy's leadership journey wasn't always glamorous. *"There were days I seriously thought about giving up,"* she confesses. Her biggest struggle wasn't the events or the meetings—it was motivating her team. *"I had this vision for the organization—where everyone embraced their role and found fulfillment. But that wasn't always the case."* Still, she persisted. *"We had conversations, and slowly, things began to fall back into place."* Her secret? **Delegation and trust.** *"You can't do everything yourself,"* she says. *"When you delegate, you give others room to grow, too."* And when things became too much? *"I pause. I treat myself to a solo date, read a book, or sleep. But the one thing that truly recharges me is my faith. When everything feels heavy, I rest in God. That's where I find peace that no break or nap can give."*

ANCHORED BY HER PEOPLE

Cindy is quick to credit those who supported her. Her friends, whom she calls her *"co-Business Students of the Year."* Her professors, advisers, family, and partner, who stood by her through her busiest days. *"They saw me at my best and worst—and never stopped rooting for me."*

FIRE-TESTED AND FUTURE-READY

So what kept her going through all the chaos? *"Passion fades,"* she says honestly. *"What keeps me going is remembering why I started, who I'm doing this for, and the values I live by."* It's a maturity that's hard-earned and deeply felt. Looking back, Cindy now views her third year as a season of transformation: *"I was thrown into the fire and realized I was being forged, not burned."* And to those who are about to step into their challenging season?



"All I can say is one way or another, pagdadaan niyo talaga yung hirap ng third-year kasi kahit naman kami dati, we used to wonder how our seniors made it through, too—but look at us now, look at me, I got through it. It will be very challenging and can be somehow humbling but I believe third year is where the heart of your course lies. Don't procrastinate. Listen to your professors. Learn when to pause and prioritize yourself. And don't forget to laugh and share the best memes. You'll need them."

PALARONG WESLEYAN



Highlighting the biggest plot twist of CBA's overall placer

By: Christian Caling

The CBA Dragons entered the annual Palarong Wesleyan, which commenced on October 15-19, 2024, as the reigning champions of last year's event. Every dragon that competed for this year's title defense have truly sacrificed their blood, sweat, and tears. It was an extreme roller coaster ride for this season—other college departments showed their grit to beat the Home of Excellence. Yet from beginning up to the very end, the Dragons left no crumbs and showed the heart of a true champion.

The College of Business and Accountancy opened the Palarong Wesleyan 2024 trailing behind the CON Lions by 7 points, earning second place on the partial and unofficial tally at the end of Day 1. The soul of the Dragons awakened on Day 2, climbing the ladder up to first place and entering the third day. Everyone was at the edge of their seat as they enjoyed the rally for this year's championship title defense as the CBA Dragons successfully secured their number one spot, closing Day 3.

However, the fate changed when the CON Lions made a big step to the top, earning their spot with a total of 354 points, giving them a 33-point advantage over the CBA Dragons entering the 5th and last day of the heated battle. Regardless, the flare of hope did not stop from glowing as they all remained resilient, eager, and determined to gain the sweet win for the CBA Dragons. Still, the College of Accountancy fell short of regaining its top position from the CON Lions. The Dragons managed to secure the rank of 1st Runner-up and earned a total of 390 points from the end of this year's cup.



Palarong Wesleyan 2024 has been a tough one and definitely not for the faint of heart. Yet, above all things that happened, it was an opportunity for everyone to show what they are truly capable of. Showed no mercy to its opponent, but at the end of the day, sportsmanship still led the way for the Dragons to remain headstrong and to be courageous enough to fight back for their throne. But sometimes, even the best need to rest. Keep soaring high, Dragons!

2024

FREEDOM VS. HATE

BY: VINCE HAWLENCE P. SANTIAGO

In democratic societies, freedom of speech is a fundamental right that allows people to share their thoughts and opinions openly. But in today's digital world, where messages can spread globally in seconds, the question becomes: where do we draw the line between free speech and hate speech?

As the senatorial elections approach, I've seen people openly share their opinions about different candidates. Everyone uses their own standards when choosing a leader, and those differences often spark passionate discussions. Despite the disagreements, many still respect each other's right to speak. That moment made me realize how free speech builds understanding, even when views clash. It empowers us to challenge injustice, demand change, and speak out against unfair systems. Without it, we would slow progress and let the most powerful voices dominate the conversation.

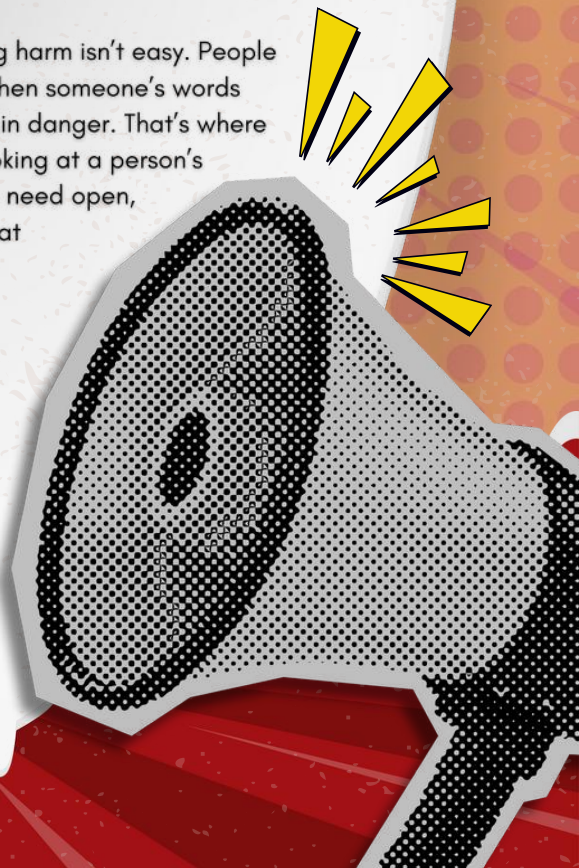
However, hate speech is a different story. It doesn't just express an opinion—it attacks, threatens, or discriminates against people because of their race, religion, gender, or other identities. Instead of encouraging healthy discussion, it creates division and causes real harm. I've even seen it happen during conversations about senatorial candidates. Some people don't just disagree, they insult or belittle others for having different political views. That's when free speech crosses the line and starts to hurt rather than help our society.

Social media adds another layer of complexity to this issue. On one hand, it gives people a space to share ideas and start important conversations. On the other hand, it makes it easy for harmful content to spread in seconds. We should use free speech to encourage dialogue and critical thinking but when people use it to promote violence, discrimination, or oppression, it clearly crosses the line. Many governments have put laws in place to stop hate speech, but how they enforce those laws varies. Some people worry that these rules limit their freedom to speak, while others believe that ignoring hate speech puts democracy itself at risk.

Finding the balance between protecting free speech and preventing harm isn't easy. People have the right to speak their minds, but that right has limits especially when someone's words incite violence, spread false information, or put vulnerable communities in danger. That's where laws and ethical standards come in. They help set the boundaries by looking at a person's intent, the impact of their words, and the consequences that follow. We need open, honest discussions in a healthy society but we shouldn't allow speech that dehumanizes or puts others at risk just for the sake of "free expression."

Where do we draw the line?

SPEECH



"MA, ANONG ULAM?"

How a Teenager Selling Hotdogs on the Streets Sparked
Viral Discussions on TikTok

By: Lady Anne Canlas

"Shout out sa mga kabataan diyan! Ma, anong ulam?"—a seemingly harmless phrase, yet sparked viral conversation online. Are you perhaps triggered? Annoyed? Feeling pity? That might not be emotion—maybe a symptom of being chronically online. But this goes far beyond straightforward content—it mirrors society's double standards: how we romanticize and claim to value hard work yet ridicule expressions of comfort and stability. It raises a deeper question—what is the "perfect" teenager supposed to look like in society's eyes?

Privilege—is it visible? In the case of Neneng B, working at such an age highlights how many privileges—like free time, financial stability, and access to various opportunities—teenagers often take for granted are out of their reach. In the larger picture, people usually fail to see all privileges, and they don't experience struggles in the same way. When someone asks, "Ma, anong ulam?"—they exercise a small yet overlooked privilege, experience its comfort, and benefit from it firsthand—something that deserves recognition, not mockery.

We are all entitled to different rights, but not everyone can afford to enjoy them. It's not one's fault if they lack privilege, just as it isn't one's fault they possess it or something to be ashamed of.

On the other hand, the fact that this issue sparked controversy proves how eager most of us are to react, depending on who's doing it. Societal norms shape us so profoundly that we believe in "what should be" instead of acting on "what should be done" to change a situation rooted in a systemic problem.—where this shouldn't be the case for Neneng B or everyone like her? It's easy to scream, "No to child labor!" but harder to ask: "Why is she working?" It's likely not by choice but by need.

We judge quickly yet think slowly of solutions and do too little to challenge the system that keeps it alive. "Iyan ang dapat tularan ng mga kabataan..." but who decided what the "perfect" teenager should be? When survival becomes content and hardship is idealized, maybe the real issue isn't Neneng B—maybe it's us. Perhaps she meant to inspire, but we made a spectacle of her. We created an idealized image of how children her age should behave, which was never fair. In trying to define the "perfect" teenager, we are slowly stripping them of their childhood. Instead of holding young people to a rigid standard, we should build a better standard for society. It is one where young people can express themselves freely and enjoy their rights fully and where child labor isn't something to romanticize but something we eliminate.

We have moved beyond the generation that blindly conforms—where people wear struggles like badges and bury emotions behind strong facades. People should feel grateful for the privilege and admire hard work—but no one should use either to invalidate the other.

It's time to dismantle harmful societal norms—vanish the old standard! We must build a just society grounded in a right-based system. Whether it's youth like Neneng B or students striving towards their endeavors through education, everyone—in general—has a place in a brighter and attainable future.

Next time you hear the phrase, "Ma, anong ulam?"—Instead of posting rebuttals online, take a moment to be grateful; that, too, is a privilege.

Quiapo

Hotdog Sandwich



SHOUTOUT!
sa mga
KABATAAN
DIYAN

Neneng B

From 'Okay na To' to 'Todo na To' Reclaiming the Spirit of Excellence

By: Lyca Lee C. Aquino

This certainly was that era when "Todo na 'to!" made the air around bear the touches of aspirations. This was a collective cry to go all in to dream great, do more, and be better. But, somehow, the fire died. It was replaced by a more sinister phrase: "Okay na 'to." At first glance, this phrase appears harmless and practical. Look closer, though; it reveals a society slowly settling for less, taking the easy path instead of the path to excellence, choosing survival over growth.

"Okay na 'to" is a mindset, not a phrase. One that teaches us to be comfortable in broken systems, with antiquated infrastructure and band-aid solutions. It deceives us into thinking there can be no better than this, so why even try? It robs our growth, death by death, of lowered standards.

It has been a long time coming. Too much frustration, like the constant red tape, corruption, and lack of support, leaves one with no option but to give up. "Todo na 'to" takes effort, and few people want to fight for something that feels rigged against them. But we ought to remember; nothing really has ever been easy. Every developed society has had to confront its own version of "okay na 'to", to which it would never give in.

We need to rekindle that old fire. In classrooms, let's promote curiosity and critical thinking. Workplaces should be infused with a culture of initiative. In our communities, we should demand more accountability from those in power and ourselves.

"Okay na 'to" is not okay when it becomes the ceiling of our dreams. It's time to challenge all of it. Bring back the "Todo na 'to" culture—not as a phrase but as a way of life. Because when we aim higher, demand better, and believe we deserve more, we don't just improve systems; we transform futures.

TODO
NA TO



OKAY
NA TO



The Heartbeat of **CAMPUS LIFE**

WHAT MAKES MY UNIVERSITY UNIQUE

By Erica DT. Sajonia

- **Wesleyan University-Philippines (WU-P)** isn't just a school; it's a tradition of excellence.
- **Autonomous Status** (CHED Memo No. 07, S.2024)
 - Only private universities in Nueva Ecija have it.
 - 1 of 77 in the whole PH.
 - 1 of 7 in Central Luzon.
- **WU-P** is now an associate member of ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) starting July 1, 2024.
 - Not just dreaming world-class — becoming world-class.
- **WU-P** doesn't just collect titles — it "cares."
 - SHARE Program:
 - Since 1983, we have championed education for students with disabilities.
 - It started with five (5) deaf learners is now a strong community.
 - Proof that WUP's heart beats louder than any award.
- **Campus vibe:**
 - Students are not just studying — they're building legacies.
 - WUP = Excellence + Heart + Global
 - Not just keeping up — setting the pace.

THE *Evolution of Me:* HOW COLLEGE HAS SHAPED MY PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE

by Shera Soreño

If you could talk to the younger me, she'd tell you—eyes sparkling with excitement—how much college excites her. She envisioned how wonderful it must be to enter a university with endless possibilities. She imagined joining multiple organizations, meeting new people, and living a fun-filled life—just like the movies she grew up watching. She often told others how tired she was of being a high schooler, wishing she could fast forward to finally calling herself a university student.

She thought university life meant freedom, independence, and finally becoming the version of herself she always dreamed of. She was convinced once she entered college, everything would fall into place, and she would be different—more confident, more capable, more... her.

But she didn't realize that college wouldn't just change her—it would challenge her. In her first year, she barely even knew what credit and debit meant. She only knew that "debit" card her mom used to shop and withdraw money. The realization hit her hard—college wasn't all fun and excitement. It was more complex, less glamorous, and, at times, as frustrating as trying to understand financial statements.

As days passed, she slowly realized that university life wasn't just about fun and freedom. It would also be late-night breakdowns, self-doubt, and moments of loneliness.

College is a crash course in life. It strips away the comfort you have during your high school familiarity and throws you into a world where you're suddenly responsible for yourself.

The girl who once saw success grew into someone more self-aware, learning that life isn't about following a clear path but learning from twists and turns.

As I continued my college journey, I learned that growth isn't always straightforward. Countless sleepless nights sometimes ended in a failed quiz, and that's okay; plus, there was never time to be sad about it; instead, you have to pick yourself up, study again, and keep moving forward. I discovered that struggles were not the end of the story but the beginning of a deeper, more resilient version of herself.

Beyond academics, college has also redefined my view of people. I met individuals from diverse backgrounds with stories, struggles, and dreams. Being with them made me realize there's no single formula for life; we all move at our own pace, chasing different versions of success. Moreover, surrounding yourself with the right people is essential—they help unlock your full potential and make your college life bearable.

College wasn't as easy or fun as she once imagined. It meant balancing academics, responsibilities, and the pressure to determine what came next. It would involve stepping out of your comfort zone, questioning old beliefs, and realizing that growth isn't always comfortable.

Yet, amid all that, there's always something beautiful to discover: that change isn't becoming someone completely different. You uncover the person you are determined to become.

And if I could talk to myself from years before, I'd tell her: College won't be what you imagined—but it will be what you need.





Sa Piling ng mga Bituin:

A Hero's Heart Away from Home

By: Mark Cedrick Manuel

Sa tuwing may eroplanong kumakalas sa himpapawid, isang Pilipino ang bumibitaw sa lahat ng kinagisnan. Tahimik ang pamamaalam, kahit ang puso ay sumisigaw: "para sa kanila". Hindi niya ba naririnig ang sariling tibok ng puso na tila gusto siyang pigilan? Hindi niya ba nararamdaman ang lamig ng hangin na para bang gustong hadlangan ang kanyang mga paa? Nararamdaman niya. Ramdam na ramdam niya ang bawat paghila ng damdamin pabalik sa tahananang kanyang iiwanan. Pero sa bawat hakbang, pinipili niya ang pangarap ng kanyang mga mahal sa buhay kaysa sa sariling kapakanan.

Habang hinihila niya ang mabigat na maleta, hindi niya madala ang pinakamasakit, ang mga paalam na hindi naisambit, ang mga yakap na minadali, ang mga salitang "mag-iingat ka" na siniksik sa isang pilit na ngiti. Ang kanyang mata, tila nagsasara para itago ang sakit; ngunit ang puso niya, buong-buo ang dalangin: "Anak, kahit hindi ko makita ang iyong unang sayaw, kahit hindi ko madamayang ang iyong unang pagkadapa, lahat ng ito ay para sa'yo.", "Mahal, kahit hindi ko marinig ang iyong mga kwento gabi-gabi, kahit hindi ko mahawakan ang iyong kamay tuwing pumapalo ang bagyo, lahat ng hirap ko, lahat ng pagod ko, ay pagmamahal ko."

Dakila. Hindi dahil sa palakpakan o parangal. Kundi dahil sa araw-araw niyang pagpili na magtrabaho, maghintay, magtiis, at magmamahal kahit malayo. At sa mundong madalas sukatin ang tagumpay sa titulo, siya ang paalala na mayroong dangal sa simpleng sakripisyo. Ngunit sa bawat tawag na puno ng "Okay lang ako," may mga pangakong hindi kailanman binibitawan; pangakong uuwi siya, pangakong babawi siya, pangakong kahit hindi siya laging naroroon, ang pagmamahal niya'y hindi kailanman lumalayo. At sa bawat bituin na kanyang tinititigan, marahan n'yang inuusal "Ilang pasko pa kaya ang mamimiss ko? Ilang birthdays pa ang papalampasin ko? Ilang 'sana andito ka' pa ang maririnig ko sa telepono habang pilit kong nilulunok ang pag-iyak?" Hindi niya alam ang sagot. Hindi niya rin sigurado kung may katapusan ang pangungulila at ayaw niyang sambitin sa kanila ang mga katagang "Pagod na ako."

Dahil kahit pagod na, patuloy siyang lumalaban, sapagkat bawat padala ay hindi lang pera, kundi bahagi ng kanyang puso para sa kinabukasan ng pamilya. Hindi man siya naroroon sa mga espesyal na okasyon, ang bawat sakripisyo ay may pangarap. Pangarap na balang araw, magkakasama silang muli. Sa bawat bituin na tinititigan, ang kanyang puso ay puno ng pag-asa, ang sakripisyo ng isang bayani ay nasusukat hindi sa layo, kundi sa tibay ng pagmamahal at pangarap para sa pamilya.

WALANG EASY MONEY. LAHAT AY
PAGOD, PUYAT, AT SAKRIPISYO



FEAR AS A COMPASS

HOW DOING IT SCARED CAN LEAD TO TRIUMPH

BY: JILIANE GRACY S. MENDOZA

There was a time when I was just 18, full of fire, eager to explore a world that was wide and waiting for me. I was vibrant, chasing dreams that felt endless and untouchable. I was unstoppable. I believed in myself fiercely, with an unshakable conviction that nothing could take away the picture I carved in my mind of who I wanted to be years from now. But somewhere along the way, something changed. Slowly and quietly, my dreams started to blur. I know, I know... I lost the girl who once danced in the face of fear. The dreams that once fueled my every step became heavy burdens, whispering doubts I couldn't silence. Where did it all go wrong? Was it because I feared this dream was never really meant for me? Or was it simply that the world I dreamt of grew too big, cold, and far beyond my reach? I saw her once — a version of myself I barely recognized. She was sitting behind the tree, staring into nothingness with eyes full of questions. She was sitting behind the tree, staring into nothingness with eyes full of questions. She then sighed and stood up as if a decision had been made. Maybe she realized feeling scared when dreaming about the future is normal. So, even with trembling steps, she chose the path she had always wanted to take. She understood then that there are two types of regrets: regret for things we did and wish we hadn't and regret for things we didn't do and wish we had. Either way, regrets are inevitable. So why not live a life where she could whisper to the wind, "At least I tried?" These regrets can be an open door or a closed one—an open one where we fix our mistakes or a closed one where we learn and move forward. Some stories are well-written, and some are flawed. But every story, perfect or broken, is still worth telling. We live entirely, not by following a flawless script, but by stumbling and growing. By then, we will triumph in this life. Triumph isn't just achievement, success. It is the courage to keep moving, even when fear says, "Stop." Fear will show us that the very thing we fear is the path we must take to reach what's waiting for us on the other side. If we continue to live with fear, then do it scared. Embrace every emotion — the fear, the doubt, the uncertainty — and use it as a guide toward the path life calls us to walk. Fear doesn't stop us; it points us toward the challenges that shape us into the people we choose to become. In the end, we are the ones who hold our future.

"Yes, This Is the Final Boss: Survive Your Job Interview Like a Pro"

by *Alondra Jane P. Gregorio*

Let's be real – graduating with a killer resume is great, pero hindi 'yan sapat. The real battlefield? The interview room, where your paper turns into personality. It is your moment to prove you're more than bullet points and internship certificates. Hindi ka lang basta hinulma sa apat na sulok ng paaralan. Don't panic! Here are some hugot-friendly, meme-worthy, but practical tips to help you slay that interview and leave HR saying, "This one's different."

1. Research Like Your Career Depends on It – kasi it does.

Don't walk into an interview without knowing what the company does. Baka mamaya, mag-apply ka sa logistics pero akala mo food panda sila. Stalk its website, check its socials, and alamin ang latest chika. If you drop facts like, "I saw your sustainability project last quarter," HR will be low-key impressed.

2. Practice Makes Perfect Presentable

Yes, practice. No, don't memorize. You're not joining a declamation contest. Know your strengths, your kwento sa OJT, and your goals – but say them like a human being, not Google Translate. Record yourself. You'll know you need to chill if you sound like a robot or a teleserye villain. Dapat mas kabahan sila sa'yo.

3. Dress the Part, Feel the Part – kasi wala nang second chance sa first impression.

Hindi mo kailangan ng Gucci para magmukhang pro. Clean, neat, and amoy Downy is the way to go. If you dress like someone na alam ang ginagawa, you'll start to feel like it too. Sabi nga sa forum: "Confidence is silent. Insecurity is loud." So tahimik lang ang drip mo – let the shoes do the talking.

4. Body Language: Say it without saying it

Eye contact – not a staring contest. Sit straight – not stiff. Shake hands – not fingers. Small things like nodding while listening? That's showing respect, not just trying to stay awake. Master these at baka ma-promote ka mentally kahit di ka pa hired.

5. Ask Questions – wag lang "May libre lunch po ba?"

When they say "Do you have any questions?" wag mo sagutin ng "Wala na po." That's your time to shine! Ask about growth, the company culture, or kung ano bang traits ang hinahanap nila. Tip lang – huwag muna ang "Magkano sweldo?" unless bring up nila. Play it cool, future boss.

6. Reflect, Learn, Move On (not just sa ex)

Take notes whether you nailed it or na-fumble ka like it's your first recitation. What worked? What didn't? Next time, better na. Think of interviews as business case studies. Only this time, the subject is you. Plot twist: Ikaw lang din ang solusyon.

Interviews aren't just Q&A sessions – they're your chance to prove that you belong in the business world. It's not about being perfect but being prepared, authentic, and ready to grow. It's your time to shine to show them what you learn sa buong journey ng pag-aaral mo. Kaya, next time someone says, "Ready ka na ba for the real world?" you can say, "Interview pa lang 'yan. Kaya ko 'yan."

Ready ka na ba, bagong tagapagmana ng isang kompanya?

ACE YOUR INTERVIEW

Practical Tips for Aspiring
Business Professionals

women in BASKETBALL

by Scheherazade Soreño

In a society where basketball courts are often ruled by towering male athletes, there are young girls who choose to step into the game—fearless, passionate and determined to prove that women are limitless.

For Shania Nikole Reyes, a second year Accountancy Student and a womens' basketball player from the College of Business and Accountancy at Wesleyan University-Philippines, her love for basketball started early.

"I really love basketball," she shared.

"Kahit male-dominated siya, gustong-gusto ko pa rin sumali. Since high school pa lang, naglalaro na ako. The moment na nakita ko kung paano nilalaro ang basketball, gusto ko rin ginagawa 'yon. Kaya kahit halos lahat kalalakihan ang naglalaro, pinupursue ko pa rin kasi naenjoy ko talaga siya."

However, pursuing basketball as a woman hasn't been without its challenges. Reyes often encountered gender stereotypes and discrimination along the way. But instead of letting it into her head, she used it as a fuel to push herself even harder.

"When I joined the varsity team here in WUP, ako ang pinakamaliit sa team" she admitted with a laugh.

"Maliit kasi ako at medyo may kalakihan ang katawan ko, yan ang laging sinasabi sa akin. Pero hinahandle ko yung discrimination by showing them what I can do, both inside and outside court. Pinapakita ko na kaya ko lahat ng pinapagawa sa akin. Never ko pinakita na may kahinaan ako para makita ni coach na capable ako."

Her journey is a story of resilience, balancing the endless drills, grueling practices, pressure of academics while trying to maintain a social life. Shanaia proves that dedication and heart matters more than trying to fit into traditional molds.

To young girls who dream of playing basketball but feel hesitant and afraid because of societal expectations, Reyes offers an inspiring message:

"Huwag kayong matakot ipakita ang lahat ng natutunan ninyo at huwag kayong magpapaapekto sa sinasabi ng iba. Ipagmalaki ninyo ang hirap, pawis, at sakripisyong ibinuhos ninyo sa bawat practice. Patunayan ninyo na hindi lang tayo basta babae. Tayo ay malalakas, may pangarap, at kayang makipagsabayan. Sa huli, hindi lang salita ang kailangan ang tunay na pagbabago ay nasa gawa!"

More than just fighting for a place on the court, Shanaia dreams bigger, of a future where womens' basketball is appreciated, given equal respect, opportunity and exposure.

"Sana mas maraming liga, scholarships, at media coverage para sa kababaihan. Mas maraming babaeng coaches at leaders. At higit sa lahat, sana dumating ang panahon na hindi natin kailangan ipaliwanag kung bakit tayo belong sa basketball."

Every time someone like Shanaia steps onto the basketball court, she's not just playing a sport—she is rewriting the century-old rules for every girl who has ever been told she's not enough or capable. Because in the game of life and basketball, being a woman is never a limitation, it's a superpower.

Babae ka, 'di Babae lang!

THE *Path* OF TOMORROW AWAITS *You*

BY DENICE NICOLE M. DIMANTAGA

CHASING SUNRISES: CRAFTING YOUR PATH TO TOMORROW

Every morning brings a sunrise, a new beginning, and the promise of what lies ahead. This isn't just another day; it's a chance to rewrite your story, take charge, and move closer to the life you envision. The future doesn't unfold on its own—it's crafted by the choices you make today. James Clear aptly puts it in *Atomic Habits*: **"Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become."**

The road to tomorrow isn't just about reaching the destination; it's about the journey that builds you along the way. It's about discovering your purpose, fostering personal growth, and building resilience to face life's challenges.

Purpose

Where are you headed? Without purpose, you're like a ship adrift, carried by the currents. Purpose is your compass, giving meaning to your actions and helping you navigate life's complexities. It turns movement into progress and ambition into achievement.

Have you ever paused to ask yourself: What are your dreams? What kind of impact do you want to leave on the world? These questions are the starting points of your journey. When you define your vision, every step becomes intentional. Purpose fuels you to push through setbacks and stay focused on what truly matters. Even when the road seems uncertain, purpose illuminates the way.

Personal Growth

Growth doesn't happen by accident—it's the result of deliberate action. Start with clear, actionable goals. Use the SMART framework: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals. These act as a roadmap to turn dreams into reality.

Short-term goals are stepping stones to long-term success. Celebrate the small wins—they're proof you're making progress. Acknowledge each milestone because every achievement builds confidence and momentum.

Growth isn't just about ticking off goals. It's about lifelong learning. Read books that expand your perspective, take courses that enhance your skills, and earn micro credentials that set you apart. Every skill you acquire becomes a tool to tackle tomorrow's challenges.

Resilience

The path of tomorrow won't always be smooth. Challenges are inevitable, but they aren't roadblocks—they're stepping stones. Resilience allows you to keep going when the road gets tough.

Start by cultivating a resilient mindset. Practice mindfulness: stay present, manage stress, and focus on what you can control. Staying true to your core values—your non-negotiables—will guide you through uncertainty.

Failures are part of the journey, not the end. Each setback is a lesson, a chance to learn and grow. Self-discipline keeps you focused and committed even when things get hard. Visualization can also help—create a vision board filled with images and quotes that represent your goals.

Romanticize the Journey

It's easy to focus on the destination, but don't overlook the beauty of the journey. Every step shapes you into the person you're meant to be. Celebrate progress, no matter how small. Embrace the challenges—they're sculpting you into someone stronger, wiser, and more resilient. Your journey is your story, and it's just as meaningful as the destination. Relish the victories, the lessons learned, and the moments of clarity along the way.

The future isn't a distant dream—it's the sum of the actions you take today. With purpose to guide you, growth to empower you, and resilience to strengthen you, no challenge is insurmountable.

Step into the path of tomorrow with confidence and determination. Kayang-kaya mo 'yan, Ka-Ledger





Rice Crisis:

Why Are Prices Rising When We Are an Agricultural Country?

By Alondra Jane Gregorio

Nueva Ecija – the proud "Rice Granary of the Philippines" – it is both heartbreaking and upsetting to witness the paradox that we now live in: we are one of the world's top rice producers, and yet today, millions of Filipino families are struggling to afford a basic meal with rice on their tables. For years, leaders promised to lower rice prices to ₱20 per kilo and to make food more affordable for every Filipino. But what happened? Yes, rice did reach ₱20 – but only for a quarter of a kilo. Did they deliver the change they promised? Is this the development we worked hard to achieve? How did it come to this?

The truth is painful: our agricultural strength has been crumbling for years due to neglect, inefficiency, and misplaced priorities.

We are an agricultural country, but we continue to fail our farmers. Despite our fertile lands and hardworking people, the backbone of our food supply remains broken. Many farmers in Nueva Ecija still rely on outdated tools and manual labor, with little support from the government for modern farming methods. Typhoons and droughts wipe out their crops, and the government provides no real safety nets to protect them. Then came the Rice Tariffication Law, which was supposed to stabilize rice prices and help consumers. But it opened the floodgates for imported rice, which caused local farmers to fight an impossible battle against cheap foreign goods. They promise aid to farmers, but we all see the truth on the ground—how rarely they fulfill those promises. Weakened and defeated, they left their fields.

But the problem goes deeper than just failed laws. It's how we, as a nation, have treated our farmers. They are the backbone of our food security, yet they remain among the poorest. In Nueva Ecija, during harvest season, it's common to see farmers selling their palay for a fraction of what it's worth, only for their own families to pay triple that amount when they buy rice at the market.

Who benefits? Not the farmers and certainly not the everyday consumers. The traders, intermediaries, and profiteers continue to thrive in a system that never served the people who grow our food. It's a cruel irony: farmers sell their palay at heartbreakingly low prices, yet when their families line up in markets to buy rice, the system charges them amounts they can barely afford. Corruption, hoarding, and manipulation have become disturbingly common whenever rice prices rise, suggesting that some groups may benefit from keeping rice expensive—while ordinary families struggle to make ends meet. Despite subsidies, aid often fails to reach those in need due to systemic flaws. It shouldn't be the norm, mainly when provinces like Nueva Ecija can feed millions. To address the crisis, the country must prioritize genuine support for farmers through real agricultural investment, farmer protection, and transparent farm-to-table systems—beyond empty speeches and symbolic gestures.

Farming must be treated with the dignity it deserves – not as charity, but as the lifeline of our nation. Rice should never feel like a luxury in the Philippines.

Not here. Not anywhere.

If the so-called "**Rice Granary of the Philippines**" cannot guarantee rice for its children, what kind of future are we planting for the next generation?

Dorm Diaries

By: Denice Nicole Dimantaga

Ah, dorm life.

A fiction series of survival, spontaneity, and slightly questionable decisions.

"The Toilet Betrayal" - Andra, 19

"Late na ako sa klase, kaya nagmamadali akong gumamit ng CR. Pag-flush ko... ayaw. Pinindot ko ulit, binuhusan ng tabo, nagdasal. Waley pa rin. Sa sobrang hiya ko, tinakpan ko na lang ng tissue at nag-iwan ng note: 'Sorry, mechanical failure.'"

Verdict: Minsan hindi tao ang toxic sa dorm – toilet bowl mismo.

"Petsa de Peligro Chronicles" - Muse, 19

"Thursday! Ang natitira sa wallet ko: isang punit na resibo, isang daan, dalawang bente, dalawang piso at maraming pangarap.

Breakfast: Diet nalang

Lunch: Tikim-tikim sa mga kaibigan ("Uy, pa-kain ng isa... uy, pa-kagat ng fries mo.")

Dinner: Kape at dasal.

Napadaan ako sa sari-sari store, naghanap ng mabibili... isang SkyFlakes lang pala ang afford ko. Tanggap ko naman, ganito pala buhay ng poor disney princess."

Verdict: Konting tiis nalang uuwi naman na ako sa Friday. Well, kasalanan ko rin naman.. Monday palang daig ko pa nasa fiesta.

"Susi ko, Sawi ko" - Roscoe, 20

"Long week, Friday na. Ang saya ko pa pauwi ng dorm, dala ang pangarap na matulog ng 12 hours straight pagkauwi sa bahay. Mag e-empake nalang.

Pagdating sa pinto... boom, sarado. Wala akong susi. Naiwan ko sa loob, kasama ang self-respect ko.

Nagpanggap akong kalmado. Tinry ko buksan gamit ID – fail. Tinry ko tumalon sa bintana – bawal pala 3rd floor. Tinry ko magmakaawa sa roommate – nasa probinsya na pala siya.

Verdict: Kita-kits next week, maruruming damit!

"Air-Fry ko nalang ang Tinapay" - Snow, 22

"Gabi na, wala nang noodles, wala na ring sardinas. 'Yung biscuit nalang sa cabinet na malapit ng maexpire kinain ko. May choice pa ba ako?

Nag-isip ako: kung ipag-pray ko ba nang matindi, magiging tapsilog 'yan?

Spoiler alert: Hindi. Natulog nalang ako habang iniisip na baka bukas makakain na ako ng tunay na pagkain sa karinderya."

Verdict: Lesson learned.. hindi lahat ng tinapay na pinagdadasal, nagiging ulam. Minsan, nagiging luha.

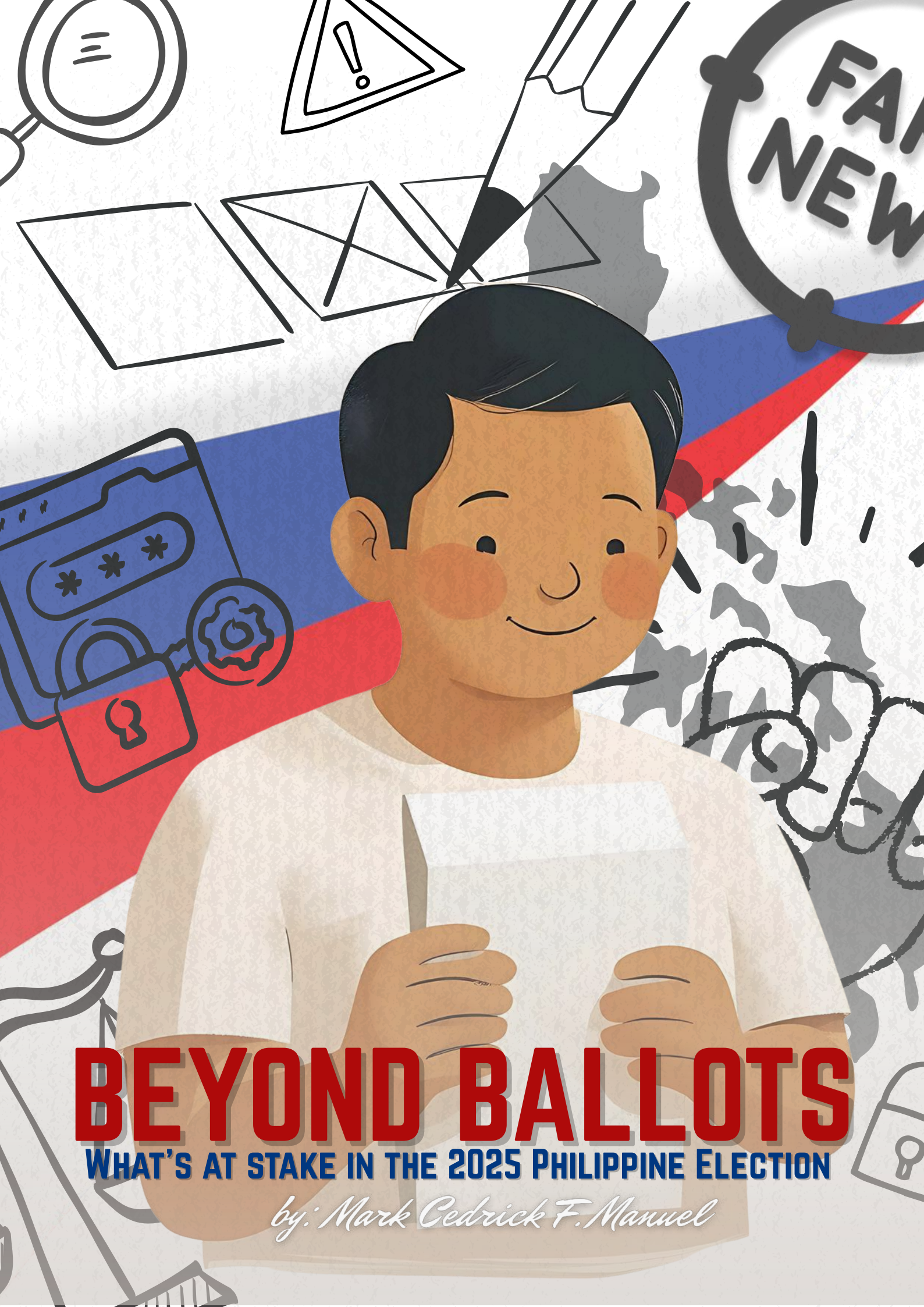






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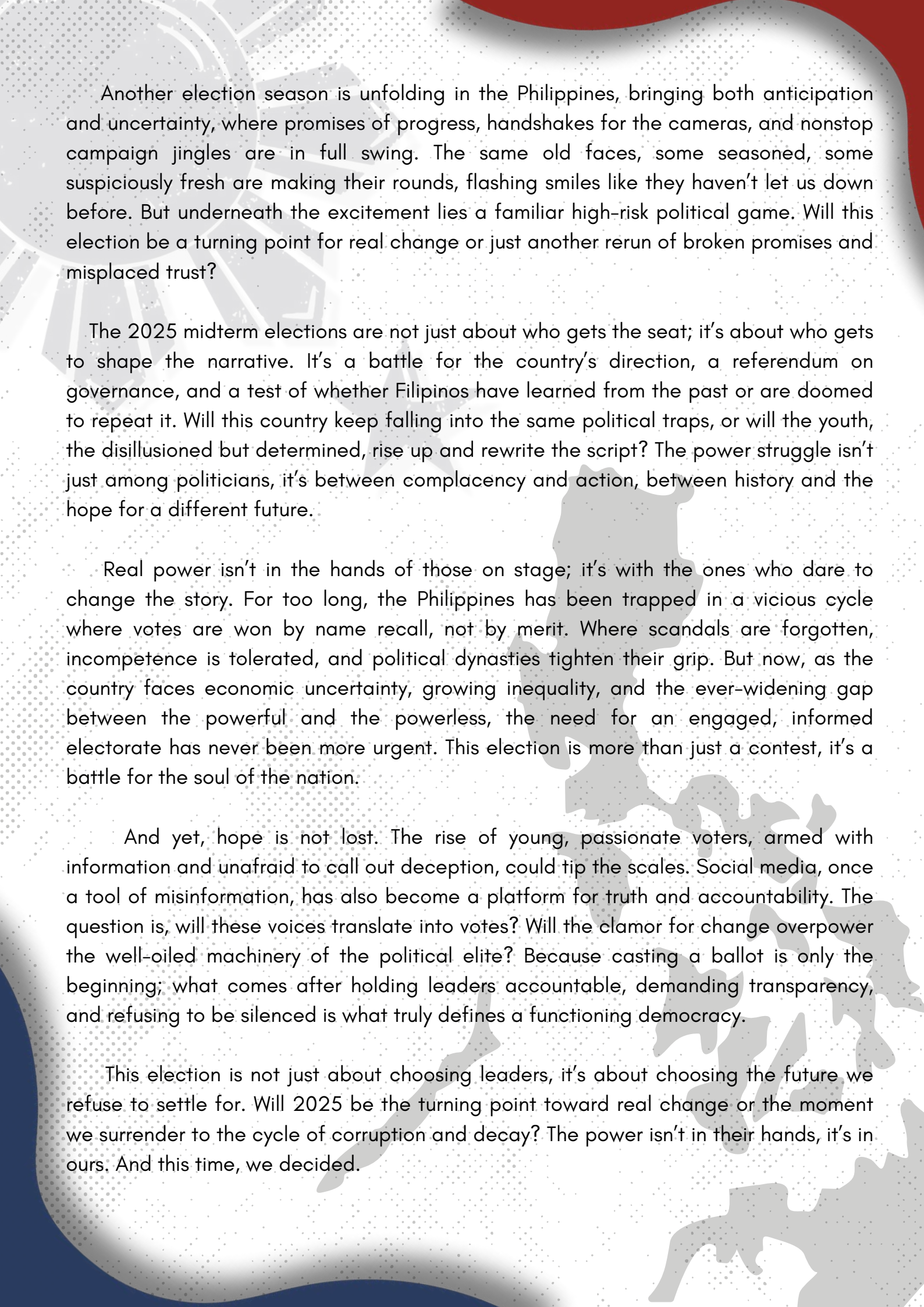
SHIP



BEYOND BALLOTS

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE 2025 PHILIPPINE ELECTION

by: Mark Cedrick F. Manuel



Another election season is unfolding in the Philippines, bringing both anticipation and uncertainty, where promises of progress, handshakes for the cameras, and nonstop campaign jingles are in full swing. The same old faces, some seasoned, some suspiciously fresh are making their rounds, flashing smiles like they haven't let us down before. But underneath the excitement lies a familiar high-risk political game. Will this election be a turning point for real change or just another rerun of broken promises and misplaced trust?

The 2025 midterm elections are not just about who gets the seat; it's about who gets to shape the narrative. It's a battle for the country's direction, a referendum on governance, and a test of whether Filipinos have learned from the past or are doomed to repeat it. Will this country keep falling into the same political traps, or will the youth, the disillusioned but determined, rise up and rewrite the script? The power struggle isn't just among politicians, it's between complacency and action, between history and the hope for a different future.

Real power isn't in the hands of those on stage; it's with the ones who dare to change the story. For too long, the Philippines has been trapped in a vicious cycle where votes are won by name recall, not by merit. Where scandals are forgotten, incompetence is tolerated, and political dynasties tighten their grip. But now, as the country faces economic uncertainty, growing inequality, and the ever-widening gap between the powerful and the powerless, the need for an engaged, informed electorate has never been more urgent. This election is more than just a contest, it's a battle for the soul of the nation.

And yet, hope is not lost. The rise of young, passionate voters, armed with information and unafraid to call out deception, could tip the scales. Social media, once a tool of misinformation, has also become a platform for truth and accountability. The question is, will these voices translate into votes? Will the clamor for change overpower the well-oiled machinery of the political elite? Because casting a ballot is only the beginning; what comes after holding leaders accountable, demanding transparency, and refusing to be silenced is what truly defines a functioning democracy.

This election is not just about choosing leaders, it's about choosing the future we refuse to settle for. Will 2025 be the turning point toward real change or the moment we surrender to the cycle of corruption and decay? The power isn't in their hands, it's in ours. And this time, we decided.



THE ART

OF SAYING NO

NO

NO



NO

HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES WITHOUT FEELING GUILTY

BY: AIKA ALEXISE AZARCON

"No."

How can one word make such a statement? It's scary to say that word sometimes. That two-letter word has got to be one of the hardest to let go of. It holds more power than any of us think it has.

"No, I'm sorry."

"No, I can't."

"No, I won't."

It all sounds like a rejection of another person's favor. Somehow, it is the root of a growing guilt. Whenever you say no, it perceives you can come off as mean, inconsiderate, strict, and everything else in between. As much as it's easier to say yes all the time, maybe it's healthier to know how to say no occasionally.

When people throw daggers, you can use this word as your shield. It can hurt you just as much as it can protect you. That's why we create boundaries for a reason. We must remind ourselves that we don't need to catch everything thrown our way.

Humans are fragile. We get tired because we are limited. When a glass gets overfilled with water, it can shatter because of the pressure and break into pieces. So, know when to say stop and when to say no to keep your heart safe from breaking apart.

Learn how to say no when you feel it's the right thing. Learn how to say no when there's too much pain to bear. Learn how to say no when you no longer feel that it's love. Learn how to say no when you feel exhausted. Learn how to say no when saying yes means putting yourself right at the edge and no one's ready to catch your fall.

You cannot always be there for others, but you can always show up for yourself. Set your boundaries. Never let anyone abuse the kindness you show. Even good people get hurt. See the world believing that goodness will never fade, regardless of whatever weight may be given to you. As long as you know you're worth and your borderline, you'll be okay.



You Are NOT A Checklist!

By: Denice Nicole Dimantaga



Sweet child, with ink-smudged fingers and eyes full of stories, I see you. I know the weight you carry; the way you press dreams between your palms, fearing they might slip through your fingers like fine grains of sand. You have lists: neatly written, color-coded, stacked high with all the things you think you should be. A doctor, a writer, a painter, someone. But listen closely: you are already someone. And that is enough.

I won't tell you to let go of your dreams. I know you, and I know you won't. But I will tell you this: dreams shift, bend, reshape themselves like rivers carving through stone. And that's okay. You will not always reach the places you once mapped out; but you will arrive where you are meant to be. Some dreams will unravel at the seams, and that is not failure; that is life whispering, "There is more for you."

Instead of chasing the next goal, chase yourself. Seek the girl who laughs too loudly in quiet rooms, the one who dances when nobody's watching. Find the courage to love what you love, even when the world doesn't understand. You will spend years trying to fit into spaces too small for you, dimming your own light to make others comfortable. But the truth, my dear, is that you were never meant to shrink; you were meant to expand, to take up space, to live unapologetically as yourself.

There will be moments when you feel lost; when you stand at the edge of yourself and wonder if you will ever be enough. And I promise you; you will be. Not because you have achieved everything on your list, but because you have learned to love the person who stares back at you in the mirror. You will fail. You will fall. But you will rise again: stronger, softer, wiser.

So breathe, little one. The world is vast, and you have time. Unfold at your own pace. Walk paths not for the sake of arrival, but for the joy of walking. You are not a checklist; you are a story still being written. And I promise you: it's a beautiful one.

- With love, Your Future Self

When I was Her

By: Alondra Jane P. Gregorio

I met my younger self for coffee this morning

We were both on time

She ordered a matcha latte. I said, I'll get the same

We both smiled. Nothing has changed

She sipped on her coffee, legs swinging with ease,
No weight on her shoulders, just laughter and full of dreams.

A girl who believed that every plan would fall into place,
that hard work alone could steady the tides.

I look at her—younger, reckless, fearless.

The girl I had to leave behind
to become the woman I am today.

She tilts her head, studying the years on my face,
searching for the girl she thought she'd always be.

She was very ambitious for her dreams

Lying her worth for academic validation, trying to please everyone around her
Making them believe that she is capable for all the things that life throws at her

She told me she feels like she doesn't belong

I hugged her and said, "That's God telling you're in the wrong place"

She said, she wishes she could fast forward time,

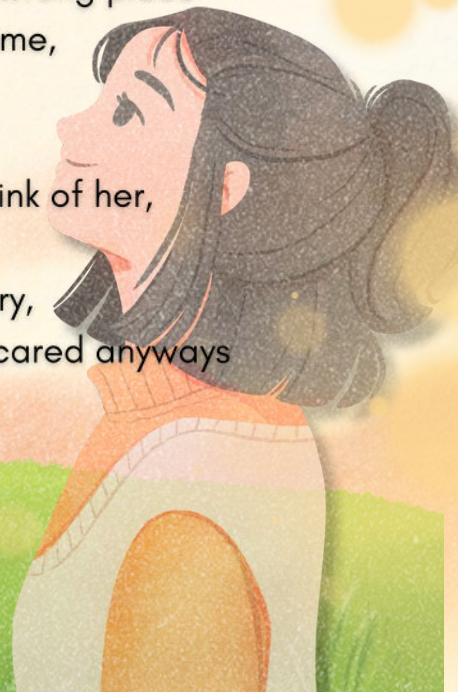
I said, I wish could slow it down.

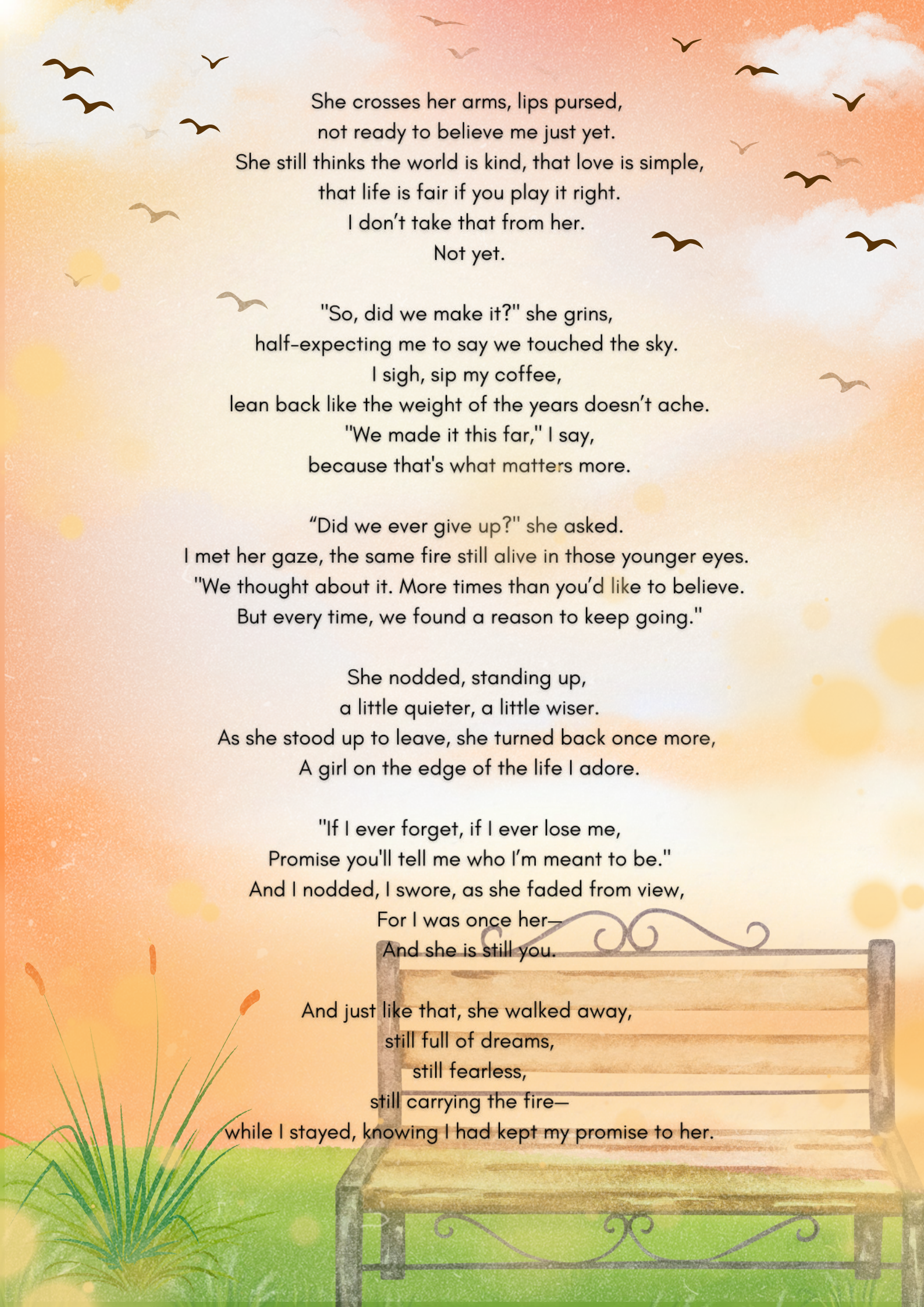
She said, she's worried about what people might think of her,

I said, none of those matters to me.

She wondered if it would always feel so scary,

I told her, she would learn to feel the fear and doing it scared anyways





She crosses her arms, lips pursed,
not ready to believe me just yet.
She still thinks the world is kind, that love is simple,
that life is fair if you play it right.
I don't take that from her.
Not yet.

"So, did we make it?" she grins,
half-expecting me to say we touched the sky.
I sigh, sip my coffee,
lean back like the weight of the years doesn't ache.
"We made it this far," I say,
because that's what matters more.

"Did we ever give up?" she asked.
I met her gaze, the same fire still alive in those younger eyes.
"We thought about it. More times than you'd like to believe.
But every time, we found a reason to keep going."

She nodded, standing up,
a little quieter, a little wiser.
As she stood up to leave, she turned back once more,
A girl on the edge of the life I adore.

"If I ever forget, if I ever lose me,
Promise you'll tell me who I'm meant to be."
And I nodded, I swore, as she faded from view,
For I was once her—
And she is still you.

And just like that, she walked away,
still full of dreams,
still fearless,
still carrying the fire—
while I stayed, knowing I had kept my promise to her.



A Love I Can't Imagine Losing

THE CONDITIONAL LOVE OF A
GRANDCHILD FOR HER GRANDMOTHER

BY: LADY ANNE CANLAS

Back when things fell perfectly into place,
I still recall the unspoken joy that lit your face.
Those arms that opened wider as I drew near,
And the gentle voice that spoke the warmest
cheer.

How many moments slipped away?
That now I crave the smell of *Ylang-ylang* on your
hands.
The scent that lingered—soft and sweet,
Like comfort wrapped in time's own strands.

How far has time carried me from then?
That I ache for tales you'd gently weave,
The ones that cradled me to sleep,
Each word is a thread, I still believe.

When doubt built walls I couldn't break,
You carved out paths for my own sake.
When my hands trembled, unsure and small,
Yours held mine—calming it all.



When the world felt cold and unkind,
Your love was the warmth I'd always find.
No need for words, no need for plea—
Your presence alone stood up for me.

But I catch sight of how lines are slowly etched on
your face.
And I hear feebleness seeping through your grace.
Your warmest touch brings forth a chill through my
skin.
"I wish I had a handful of time to redeem," I
whispered within..

The coldest nights were the warmest when I was
in your grasp.
You sang of love, of truth, of the past;
A promise carried on the tongue, woven in the air,
A love more than enough to meet despair.

Yet, I saw the hands of the clock in a hasty rhythm
pass by.
Time is surely a thief—I can't deny.
The deeper I think, the more tears break through.
Conditional or not, *Grandma, it's true—I can't
imagine losing you.*

Her Collected Voices:

A Various Pieces of Prose

By: Bettina Marie Mallari (vcsf.rumi)

WOUNDED BLEEDING HEART

She was peacefully euphoric by herself closing her eyes, feeling the rhythmic melodies.

*Yet, someone swiftly opened her doors.
He was bleeding from agony and ache.*

*His core was chaotically razed;
His heart was wounded, shattered into pieces.
Their visions were gazing upon each other slowly ambling 'til both are near;
near enough to feel the breeze of silence.*

*He was still bleeding from the shattered wounds.
she aided her, replete with fondness and warmth;
both hearts were now bleeding, strongly embracing the gashes,
endearingly getting cleansed.*

IMPLICIT TEARS

A swift fleeting tear, born from soul's depth, echoing volumes in its quiet descent with unspoken discourse.

SYMPHONY ENTWINED IN GRACE

*two souls entwined in poetic grace
both exchanging, a symphony of heartbeat
their amorous melodies flow along the way
for their love shall soar endlessly divine*

BYGONE TERRORS

She's not a lady who hangs onto the past; but rather she's just completely damaged by a bunch of nightmares.

The Hands That Feed Our Dream

BY: LYCA LEE C. AQUINO

They rise before the morning light;
Where we are snugly pulled in blankets tight.
With weary eyes and calloused hands,
They brave the world, its harsh demands.
For love and not glory leads their fight.

They walk through storms and scorching days,
The unseen strength is many ways.
A lunchbox worn, a tattered shoe,
Yet hearts so vast and firm and true;
They carry dreams through duty's maze.

They miss the meals they worked to buy;
Their own needs hush with a sigh.
And smile yet when we succeed,
Though wounds were theirs to make us freed,
And secret prayers were whispered high.

A child's diploma, roof, and meal,
A life rebuilt with grit and steel.
The roots beneath our one rise,
Those who taught us how to try,
Their love is more constant than the wheel.

So toast them—the unseen stars,
Who carried dreams inside old scars.
The hands that built anew the hopes,
Strong forever, true evermore.
Our breadwinners. Our avatars.



The Weight of Your Name

by Erica Sajonia

I envy you, Michelle. More than I'll ever admit aloud. And I know I shouldn't – you're my dearest friend. But the guilt of that envy clings to me like a shadow I can't peel away. You've always been ahead. Always shining. And me? I'm the silhouette trailing behind, grateful just to be near your light.

You feel like the sun – so bright, so alive. I can't look at you too long without feeling like I might burn. But like a moth to flame, I keep coming back. And like Icarus, I flew too close.

Your laugh is the melody of my day. Your words always seem to matter. The way you grabbed my hand once and pulled me toward the ice cream cart – like it was the most natural thing – I still remember the warmth of your palm. You were effortless. Beautiful. Magnetic.

And I always wondered – why me?

Girls trip over themselves to be near you. You could have anyone. But you chose me. Was it kindness? Was I your charity case – a quiet girl who blended into the walls until you painted me in your color? Maybe I should've questioned it. Maybe I did.

But then he came along.

You hold his hand now, not mine. You laugh with him in the spaces where I used to be. You still smile, but it's softer now – private. Meant for him. I sit at our usual spot, listening to the echo of your absence. I smile when I hear your stories. I nod. I pretend.

But the ache doesn't go away.

I watch you do your makeup – not out of envy, but reverence. The way you tilt your chin, the gentle swirl of blush, the glint in your eyes when you're satisfied with the look. You are art. You always have been.

Have you noticed the way I look at you?

My gaze lingers when you're not looking. My chest tightens when you laugh. I shouldn't feel this way, but I do. I do, and it terrifies me.

Because girls aren't supposed to love girls like this. We're taught to dream of white gowns and wedding bells, of boys with kind eyes and steady

hands. We're taught to giggle over crushes – boy crushes. We're taught to be normal.

But I'm not.

This ugly feeling. It's not that I'm jealous of what you have. It's jealousy of the one who had you.

Because I long for you.

Not the way best friends do. Not with innocent affection. But with something deeper, heavier, aching. I crave the weight of your gaze lingering on mine. I ache to be the one your fingers reach for without thinking. I want to be the one who gets to hold your heart – gently, reverently – as though it were the most sacred thing in the world.

But I am your best friend.

That's all it's ever been. That's all it will ever be.

And yet, today... you came to me.

"I broke up with him,

" you said. Simple. No tears. No drama. Just your voice, small and unsure.

"I'm sorry for leaving you. For making you feel like you didn't matter.

I should've said something. I should've asked why. But I just nodded, too afraid of what I might say if I opened my mouth.

Then you smiled – that smile – and my heart forgot how to beat properly.

When your hand brushed mine, I didn't pull away. I couldn't. I wanted to stay in that moment forever. Just you and me. Just us.

I'll never tell you the truth. Not today. Maybe not ever.

Because even if I'll never be the girl you love, I'll still be the girl who stays.

And for now, that will have to be enough

SEDIMENTS: VIRTUES HAVE BEEN SUBDUED?

A TAKE ON CURRENT POLITICAL HAPPENINGS

By: LADY ANNE U. CANLAS

How wicked the world could be?
Renowned to violence, condemned—Ungodly.
Defiant shall kneel, behead the contrary.
Lies be told; truth withhold—like sediments abiding deeply.

For once, I thought upon the void;
“Do thee live to find thou worth, or be worthy within thy life?”
If such worth is nothing to be found in the void itself,
Does succumbing in evil become our last resort?

Existing in an upturned world, entails idiocy.
Unraveling twists, sins gravely.
Speaking of truth becomes treachery.
Feigning ignorance is justice, thus honored bravery.

Oh treasured virtue, you were indeed—subdued.
Second you left, your men have been screwed.
Oh treasured virtue, we’ve become so adamant;
Foolishly ceded and buried thee, to be left there—as a sediment.

Ignorance reigns over a sheer touch of virtue - **WHY?** - are we afraid of change? We often find ourselves trapped between the choices of “belief” and “just”.





AFTERGLOW

By Jin Mi Grace Alejandro

I have always admired creation as a child, especially the blooming beauty of the flowers. However, among the graceful dancing of the petals, stands still a wilted piece of nature, seemingly holding its breath as the light stretched out for the last time.

I used to think of it as ugly, with the raw emotion I felt as a kid. But still, I couldn't look away. There was something in the stillness of the flower, something too honest, as if it had seen the blossom of everything. Now it wilts in surrender.

Maybe that's why it moved me more than the rest. It simply let go and did not fight impermanence.

I used to rush ahead of my grandmother, whom I was reminded by the wilting flower. Her back curved as the stem of the wilted flower, carrying the weight of the stories she experienced. My mother joyfully holds her arm at ease, their steps in rhythm with the time I never lived in. And as I stare at their backs, a bittersweet feeling settles into my soul.

Maybe there's gracefulness in becoming slower. From years of moving through life in a rush, to gently learning what's meant to unfold.

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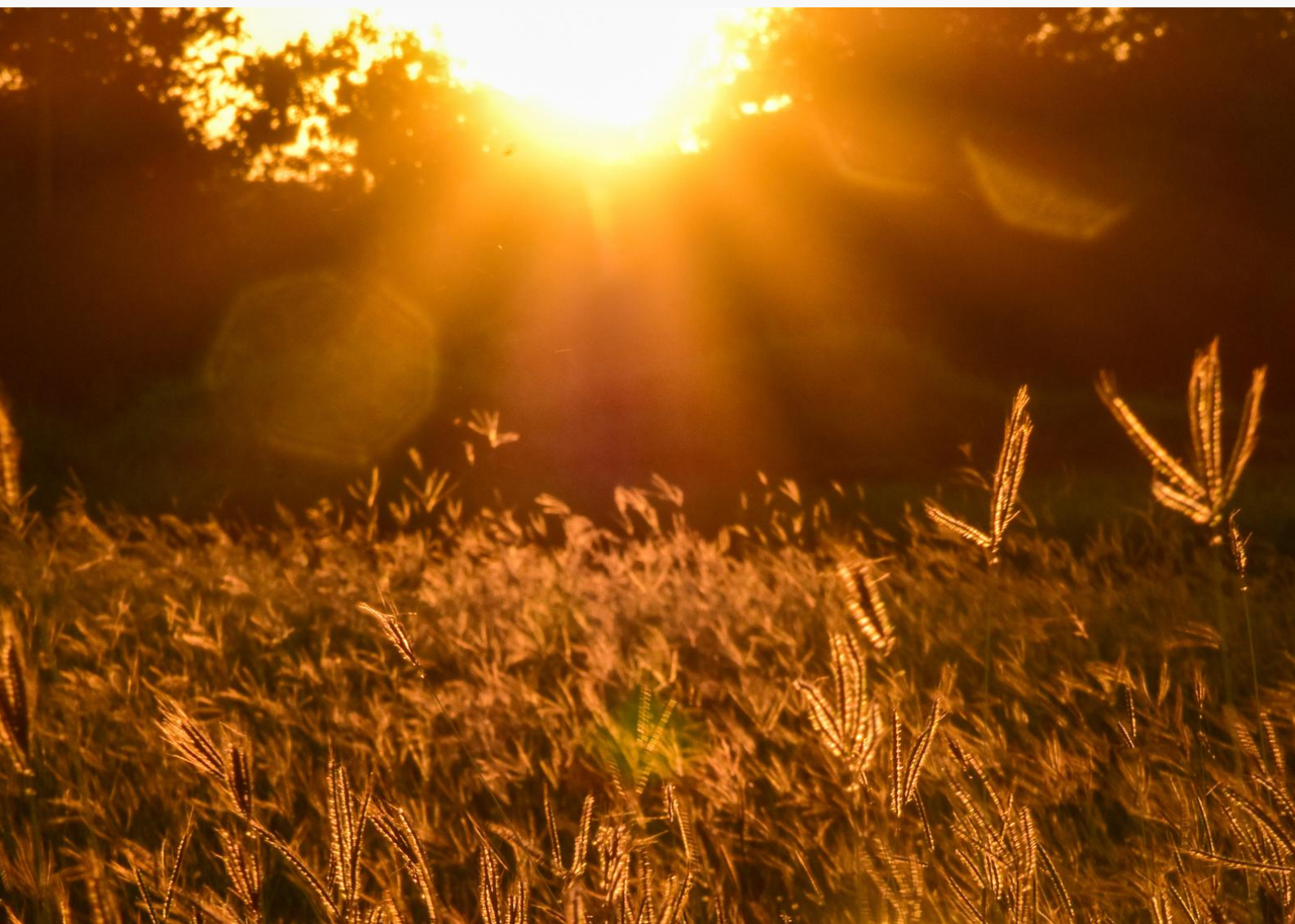
I stood there - imagining time folding in itself, my mother where my grandma stood, while I walk beside her. Both of us older, wiser, and definitely softer. Above it all, the sky turned gold - not in brilliance, but in hush. The warm golden sun eager to set while the grass swayed like waves - over the bloom and the wilt, above the young and the withered.

In the soft warmth of the sunset, I come to realize; Yes, there is beauty in the bloom and the color,

And still, maybe beauty doesn't end after the peak, nor after the brightness.

It lingers in presence, in memory,

In the afterglow.





LEARNING BY CANDLELIGHT

By Maria Clarenze Sison

By the faint glow of a single candle, three young siblings fight the darkness – not just of night, but of poverty and unequal opportunities – as they answer their school modules.

In a world where education should be a right, it remains a privilege many still have to chase with sheer determination.

Their hope burns brighter than any flame, proving that at even with so little, a heart full of dreams can light the way forward.



FLARES OF HOPE: BATTLING THE DARKNESS OF SICKNESS

By Kate Zhaina Nalupa

Even in the darkness depths of sickness, a small, resistant light remains – hope. It glows in patients' resiliency, in families' devotion, and in healers' compassion.

Although illness throws dark shadows, these small acts of courage and strength illuminate the path ahead.



By Shaira Nicole Doktor

We spend so much of our lives
waiting.
Waiting to feel ready.
Waiting for the perfect moment.
Waiting to be chosen.
Waiting until we're thinner, richer,
more confident, more loved.

But life doesn't wait.

While we hold back, clinging to
"someday," time quietly moves on.
And the dreams we shelve for the right
moment begin to gather dust.
What if "someday" never comes?
What if "maybe later" becomes
"maybe never"?

There is no perfect time – only now.
Start where you are. Choose yourself.
Because life is happening, with or
without your permission.



JOY BEYOND RICHES

By Maria Clarence Sison

In a world often measured by wealth, a mother and her child share a moment of pure happiness - no riches required, just love and togetherness.

Amid the hum of the streets and the rust of a simple cart, their laughter shines brighter than any treasure. A reminder that true joy is not found in what we own, but in who we share our lives with.



COURT OF DREAMS

By Jade Andrea Gonzales

Under the golden glow of gym lights, the court becomes a stage where dreams take flight—each pass, each leap a heartbeat of determination. With sweat, strategy, and unspoken synergy, students from the College of Business and Accountancy dance between tension and triumph in an intramural clash that feels nothing short of destiny.



MEET THE TEAM

Behind every voice in print is a bold mind-shaping silence. The name beneath the theme is not just a label; it's a pulsating piece.

This year's editorial board is a whole spectrum of:

An **inkwell** of writers, a **kaleidoscope** of photojournalists, a **palette** of designers, and the sharp **eyes of editors**—each one bringing vision, grit, and soul.

For Federation Year 2024–2025, we present the minds behind *The Ledger: diverse, curious, united* by truth.

Meet the team that dares to shape what matters.



Bettina Marie Mallari
Editor-in-Chief

"qui vivra verra" a forever mantra of mine since high school. P.S. kindly translate the stated quote on your own, lol hahaha.



Aika Alexise Azarcon
Associate Editor

Keep reaching for the stars.



Noreen Shane Dizon
Associate Editor

"No great thing is created suddenly." - Epictetus



Christian Carl Caling
Managing Editor for Writers

Just do your best.



Shanele Vicencio
Managing Editor for Creatives

Despite all of your responsibilities, don't forget that it's okay to act your own age.



Lyca Lee Aquino
News Editor

Do it scared.



Denice Nicole Dimantaga
Feature Editor

"In a world of basics, I blush in pink and unapologetically me."



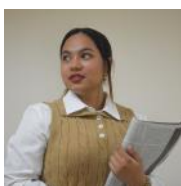
Alondra Jane Gregorio
Column Editor

"Jack of all trades – because one talent just isn't enough."



Scheherazade Soreño
Sports Editor

"Live where your heart finds love."



Janelle Ann Lacuban
Head Broadcaster

"I trust my journey, even when I don't see the full path yet."



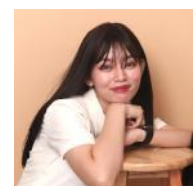
Kate Zhaina Nalupa
Head Photojournalist

"In every frame, a truth; in every click, a moment eternal."



Jerick Javier
Head Graphic Designer

"School is not really my thing—I'm more of a student of life."



Mariz Aliana Dayao
Head Cartoonist

Por Qué No Los Dos?

MEET THE TEAM



Jiliane Gracy Mendoza
News Writer

"If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough."



Vince Hawlence Santiago
Feature Writer

*"Strive for progress, not perfection."
- David*



Mark Cedrick Manuel
Editorial Writer

"I'm okay with unpeeled oranges."



Lady Anne Canlas
Literature Writer

"It's okay to cry, but you have to move on." - Shanks



Erica Sajonia
Sports Writer

"Not everyone will get it, and that's okay."



Shiela Marie Mata
Broadcaster

"Still in the process of making myself better and planning what my future is but I know one day I will live the life I always pray for."



Shaira Nicole Doktor
Photojournalist

"Choose healing over history."



Jade Andrea Gonzales
Photojournalist

"If you don't spend enough time getting to know yourself, you'll end up absorbing everyone else's definition of you"



Ma. Clarence Sison
Photojournalist

"I grow through what I go through."



Hicee Dela Cruz
Photojournalist

"If there's something worse than failure, it's regret."



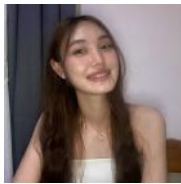
Jin Mi Grace Alejandro
Photojournalist

"Dragging this long and heavy yet trustworthy lens through life like it's my burden of excellence."



Hannah Faye Javate
Photojournalist

"Even the scars that were formed from my mistakes are my very own constellations."



Veronica Jasmine Soriano
Graphic Designer

"I choose faith over fear."



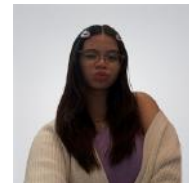
Margaret Cristobal
Graphic Designer

"I wanna be defined by the things that I love, not the things that I hate, not the things that I'm afraid of... I just think that, you are what you love." - Daylight, Taylor Swift



Loreigne Dela Cruz
Graphic Designer

"Rooted in presence, guided by purpose, moving with courage, and flowing with life's rhythm."



Feona Marie Carreon
Graphic Designer

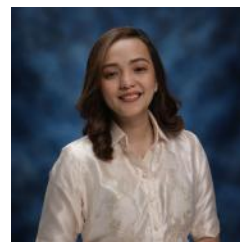
"My spirit is painted in shades of purple."



Prof. John Carlo Tan, MBA
Adviser

"Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself."

-Desiderata by Max Ehrmann 1927



Prof. Mary Berly Salvador, MBA
Adviser

"It's not easy to always be grateful in life, but life will be so much better if you are."

MEET THE MODELS

There's more to them than meets the eye—with glances as sharp as their focus and career goals as clear as their vision, they embody the true essence of excellence. Meet these young and driven individuals from various programs of the College of Business and Accountancy—an epitome of transcendence and the pursuit of success beyond expectations.





Mickey Castillo
2nd Year BSA



Noreen Shane Dizon
3rd Year BSMA



Keythlyn Faith Briones
2nd Year BSA



Shara Marie Santos
4th Year BSMA



Fredz Ashley Hora
3rd Year BSBA - MM



Kristian Neil Garcia
2nd Year BSREM



Steve Kurt Angeles
3rd Year BSA

