

SPRING 2026

salingpusa

VOL. 2 NO. 3



LINE GERMINATES ITS COURAGE

Four Filipino tattoo artists share their stories of growth

THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BENSON FLORES



NUEVA CASTILLA
OLUZON

**CARTA HIDROGRAPHICA
Y CHOROGRAPHICA
DE LAS YSLAS FILIPINAS
DEDICADA
AL REY NUESTRO SEÑOR**

*Por el Mariscal de Campo D. Francisco de Toledo
Comandante de las Yslas Filipinas
y de las Indias Orientales
y de las Yslas de Maluco y de las Yslas de
Molucas y de las Yslas de las Indias Orientales
y de las Yslas de las Indias Orientales
y de las Yslas de las Indias Orientales
y de las Yslas de las Indias Orientales*

En Madrid en la Oficina de la Real Academia de las Ciencias de San Fernando el 17 de Mayo de 1764 por el Autor

Este Mapa de las Yslas Filipinas es el primero que se ha publicado en Europa con la exactitud de las observaciones hechas por los navegantes de España y de Portugal, y con la exactitud de las mediciones hechas por los geógrafos de España y de Portugal. Este Mapa es el resultado de las observaciones hechas por los navegantes de España y de Portugal, y de las mediciones hechas por los geógrafos de España y de Portugal. Este Mapa es el resultado de las observaciones hechas por los navegantes de España y de Portugal, y de las mediciones hechas por los geógrafos de España y de Portugal.

ISLA DE MINDANAO

In this Issue

The first documented Filipino Canadian: 01 the life and legacy of Benson Flores
Under the skin 03

Poetry

Talang 09
Dumduman 10
On Belonging 11
Untitled 12
False Spring Veins 13
Flowers 15
Like a seed 17
From the Garden Meadows 19
Breeze 20
Sundowning 21
Two Poems 22

Short Story

The Chrysanthemum Child & The Water Snake Priestess 24
--

Essay

After Magdaragat: Writers on the future 27 of Filipino-Canadian literature

Art

Sama-Sama Tree Hearts 32
Pagpitas 33
Untitled 34
Mariang Makiling sa Hardin ng Paghilom 35
Mystical Forest 36

Sibol and Spring Symbologies

I confess that I put too much burden on spring. Growing up in a tropical country, where technically, it is always spring, I was expecting the North American iteration to present itself on a more bombastic scale. I was imagining a melee of colors and shapes—large sunflowers thrusting their faces to the sun, roses of every subspecies in a competition to be the most fragrant. Birds chirping in a frenzied symphony. A pastel hued sensory overload—that was what I expected, and wanted.

We landed in Canada on a March day when winter's only remnants were patches of stubborn ice on shaded backyard corners. Spring was hovering at the doorstep but didn't want to be rushed into crossing the threshold.

Then...voila...spring!

Well...

There was some birdsong, yes, and some flowers, sure.

But—it was all rain and it was all beige.

It was like I didn't leave Quezon City at all.

It was a minor grievance in the grand scheme of our family's immigration to this great big "first world" country and I got over the disappointment.

More springs made their annual sojourn. After a few years from that March day, with the clear-eyed perspective of someone settling in joyfully to an altered existence, I found myself able to see this season in a different way,

I came to behold spring not just as a period of rejoicing but also as a period of respite, less about newness and more about returning to the old. That while it can manifest as a grand aria to the flow of a year's passing, it is also the merciful anticlimax to winter's meteorological oppressions.

Spring's quiet aspects began to tantalize me more. I delighted in witnessing blades of grass ache with the effort to turn green. The sight of a matriarchal mallard calmly leading her ducklings through the river now filled my heart with honeyed warmth.

It was perhaps not a coincidence that around the same time, I had become the subject of another transformation: a childhood penchant for writing returned with startling urgency and galvanized me into crafting prose. I wrote a thousand lines of them, then paragraphs that rolled onto each other into a narrative, then chapters that crescendo toward an unexpected conclusion.

I was metamorphosing into a novelist.

Spring and I have evolved in our relationship. Calgary's beige landscapes now hold for me a distinct allure. I see it afresh through the eyes of a writer and the heart of one who claims the city as her own.

For this spring issue of Salingpusa Magazine, our theme is SIBOL which means the act of sprouting, emerging or coming into being. But it can also mean the violent breach of earth's soil strata, or that purgatorial phase from seed to fruit.

Our managing editor, Renato Gandia, an RBC Bronwen Wallace Poetry Prize finalist, wrote an erudite piece about Benson Flores, the first documented Filipino-Canadian on the commemoration of his 96th death anniversary on April 11, 2026. Renato's third and final installment on the Magdaragat anthology series looks to the future of Filipino-Canadian literature and introduces us to some of the authors of this groundbreaking work.

salingpusa

Dianne Lya Miranda's article on four Calgary-based Filipino tattoo artists, Jonas, Alyzza, Jean and LJ speaks with stunning lyricism on the different kinds of growth/change/reckoning that each artist went through to become what they are today.

The submissions we received from Filipino Canadian writers for this issue interpreted SIBOL in wildly different ways and created different symbologies for spring. Exactly how we wanted it. The poets wrote pieces that include flowers, some in a dainty bouquet and some laying on graveyards, warrior seeds, vegetables of the bahay kubo drenched in angst and fierce lolas. There is a short story about a chrysanthemum child and a water snake priestess. Artworks for our Sining section are vibrant with colors and images depicting iconic forest goddesses and continuing personal journeys.

We hope you enjoy SIBOL.

Cecilia Ortiz Luna

Salingpusa Magazine
Volume 2, Issue 3
Copyright 2026 Salingpusa Creatives

About the cover: Art by Lyndon Navalta. Muy-Muy (or Percival)/Digital/2019. "Mum calls this specific goat Muy-Muy. The first goat I've ever owned. Definitely a cutie. I had fun painting his wet face fur as his mum had just given him a tongue bath. Such a happy memory of my trip back home."

Editor-in-Chief
Cecilia Ortiz Luna

Managing Editor
Renato Gandia

Contributing Writers

Alexa Tajanlangit
Alyzza Casas
Apat Cat
Dianne Miranda
Francis Arevalo
Grace B. Sanchez
Lielyn
Mary Poirier
Norina Jones
Rochelle Deloria

Contributing Artists

Apat Cat
Day Pajarillo
Hayat Moroporo
Kath Beredo-Endaya
Mila Bonco-Philipzig

Layout and Design

R. Melvin Alcaraz

Cover and Sections Design

Renato Gandia

Cover Art

Lyndon Navalta

The first documented Filipino Canadian: the life and legacy of Benson Flores

by Renato Gandia



He arrived on the Pacific coast as a teenager, likely as crew aboard a trading vessel, in a land that had not yet decided what it wanted to be called. He would spend the next seven decades there, fishing, trapping, renting boats, and playing the concertina in a float house on a small island outside Vancouver. He died in 1929, was buried in an unmarked grave, and was largely forgotten—until a curious journalist on a day trip to Bowen Island stumbled upon his name in a library book.

Benson Flores is now recognized as the first documented Filipino immigrant to Canada. His story, pieced together over years of archival research, has reshaped how the Filipino-Canadian community understands its own history in this country.

Born in the Philippines around 1846, Flores is believed to have arrived in what is now British Columbia in 1861—six years before Confederation, a decade before B.C. joined the Dominion of Canada. He was, by most estimates, about fifteen years old. Historians believe he may have been working as a young seaman aboard a ship that docked at the bustling timber

port of Vancouver, known then as Granville—or Gastown, as locals called it. Whether he intended to stay is not recorded. But stay he did.

He eventually settled in Snug Cove on Bowen Island, where he built a floating home and carved out a life from the sea. He fished. He trapped. He beachcombed. And as the island slowly transformed into a tourist destination for Vancouverites seeking fresh air and recreation, he adapted—establishing what the Bowen Island Museum and Archives identifies as the first boat rental service on the island. He had a gift for community. Neighbours remembered him sharing crabs and provisions freely, paddling his dugout canoe around the cove and leaving food on people's beaches. His closest friend, George Dorman, described Flores in a preserved audio recording as his “greatest friend”—genuine, generous, and known to people long before they had even set foot on the island.

He was known, in his later years, simply as Old Ben.

Flores died on April 11, 1929, at Vancouver General Hospital from chronic kidney and bladder disease. He was unmarried, had no next

of kin, and was buried in an unmarked grave in the Horne Addition section of Mountain View Cemetery. For nearly a century, that was where his story ended.

The revival of Benson Flores's place in history begins with Joseph Lopez, a Vancouver-based journalist and radio host who visited Bowen Island in 2011. Waiting for a ferry, he wandered into the island library and picked up Irene Howard's *Bowen Island 1872–1972*, a local history that briefly mentions early Filipino settlers in Snug Cove — among them, a fisherman named William (Benson) Flores. Lopez spent the next decade in archives, cross-referencing census records, death certificates, and historical newsletters, eventually confirming what that library book had only hinted at: Flores had arrived in 1861, making him the first documented Filipino in Canada by decades.

Prior to Lopez's research, the prevailing understanding held that Filipinos first immigrated to Canada in the 1930s, when a group of workers arrived in Manitoba. Lopez's findings, published in a four-part series for *Canadian Filipino Net*, pushed that timeline back by seventy years. Writing in the *Pilipino Express*, historian Dr. Roland Coloma noted the significance of the discovery: Flores represents not just a date in a census, but evidence that Filipinos have been woven into the fabric of Canadian life since before Canada itself existed.

On April 11, 2024—exactly 95 years after Flores died—hundreds gathered at Mountain View Cemetery to honour him. The event, organized by the United Filipino Canadian Associations of B.C. (UFCABC), included remarks from Vancouver city councillors and the Philippine consul general. The City of Vancouver declared the date “Benson Flores Day.” The Philippine Madrigal Singers performed. And after years of lying in an unmarked plot, Flores finally received a gravestone—funded through a community GoFundMe campaign spearheaded by Ted Alcuítas, founder of Western Canada's first Filipino newspaper.

The effort to restore Benson Flores's place in history has taken many forms—archival, communal, and, at its most tangible, physical.

For Alcuítas, marking the grave was never just a gesture of sentiment. As he reflected on how to memorialize Flores, he was struck by a parallel that was difficult to ignore. “When I was thinking of how to memorialize Benson Flores, the unmarked graves of Indigenous children in residential schools were very much on the news,” he said. “It struck me that here is one kababayan who was practically forgotten and laid to rest in an unmarked grave, just like those children.”

What began, for him, as an interest in telling the story in other forms soon shifted into something more immediate. “At first, it was the documentary that seemed more important,” he explained, “but eventually I decided that marking his grave was paramount.” The gravestone, he emphasized, is not only a marker of where Flores lies, but a marker of memory itself — a way of ensuring that Filipinos know not just where he is buried, but how his story was recovered. “Until we eventually erect a proper marker in Bowen Island where he settled, this tombstone will serve both as a homage and a reminder.”

There are, still, other ways his story continues to be carried forward.

There is something quietly moving about his story. Flores left no descendants, no letters, no known photographs beyond one faded image held by the Bowen Island Museum. What he left behind was his presence—in census records, in a neighbour's remembered words, in the history of a small island that knew him simply as a good man who shared what he had.

Canada was still becoming itself when Benson Flores arrived. In some small way, he helped shape what it could remember—and what it might yet choose not to forget.

#

Under the skin

by Dianne Miranda



From left: Jonas, LJ, Jean, and Alyzza. Photo by Dianne Miranda

A tattoo is a seed that doesn't ask permission to grow.

For four Filipino tattoo artists in Calgary, that growth has never been comfortable. It has been rent they weren't sure they could make, apprenticeships they were denied, the weight of parents whose pride they wanted so badly it almost swallowed them whole. It has been the slow work of learning a craft in a country that was not the one that first shaped them, carrying something from home they couldn't always name — and finding, eventually, that it wanted to surface.

Tattooing, for them, is where it does.

Seed starting

Alyzza is the one who first makes eye contact. When asked about early memories of art-making, they speak like someone who has finally stopped apologizing.

"My mom had to give me a lecture because I was drawing with crayons on the walls. My dad would get mad at me for taking the printer paper because I just wanted to draw."

"I had a painting set from the Philippines and I carried it on the plane to Canada." A pause settles over the table — everyone here was born in the Philippines and migrated to Canada. There is a shared understanding of what survives a move like that, and what gets left behind.

"In fourth grade, my teacher told my mom she should push me to do more writing. I kind of was in and out of art because I felt like I had to focus on things that are more socially acceptable. When I found tattooing, I was like: I have to pursue this because if I don't, I'm gonna regret it."

Beside Alyzza, Jean shifts slightly. For them, it came through manga. Moving often as a child meant books got lost, collections scattered — so when the moving stopped, having physical things to hold and return to mattered in a new way. The fan art phase came next: mimicking favourite artists until the mimicry became its own thing. “I remember when I was a kid, I loved Sonic the Hedgehog so much. I would trace over the cover because I thought it was so cool. If you’re creative, it just translates into your life.”

Jonas listens with the quiet of someone holding space for more than just words. “I started drawing when I saw my dad. I was maybe five — he was drawing his own version of Volkswagen cars on t-shirts with markers and wearing them. I thought it was so cool how you can draw something and wear it.” Then: “When I moved here, I couldn’t speak English like everybody else. So drawing was a way to express myself.”

LJ grew up in Guinyan, Quezon, where the landscape is wide and signals are narrow. “My childhood was so fun. No big buildings, all nature, carabao. There’s so much joy in the simplest thing.” She tried her hand at a poster-making contest in elementary school and found that art had a place in her. When she moved to Canada and put serious effort into her high school projects, a teacher noticed and connected her to the Red Deer Advocate. “They featured my art. It’s still hanging in downtown.”

Germinating

Jean dropped out of university one year from finishing and has made peace with the fact that this sounds more dramatic than it felt at the time.

“I was in school for my parents,” they say. “I was raised to be the golden child. I carried the weight of all of their expectations. There was something so rewarding about seeing your parents proud of you.” Then comes the part that turns pride into pressure. “But they were always ones to tell me, ‘Focus on your art on the side.

Worry about getting yourself a big time job — a nurse, an engineer, a lawyer, a teacher.’ And I was always like, kick rocks, no I don’t think so.”

“I was putting so much time and effort into expectations that weren’t mine. And I felt like my youth was slipping away from me.”

So they went looking for an apprenticeship. “I got laughed at. Nobody gave me a chance.” So they did what they could: slow-motion YouTube videos. “I faked it until I made it.”

Jonas’s path had more waiting in it — four years of construction work, thinking about the studio every single day from the job site. “I was so patient about it. I was at work, thinking about being a tattoo artist and actually making it work without struggling.” He says it with the calm of someone who has learned that difficulty sharpens the thing you’re waiting for.

Alyzza’s breaking point came from inside a studio rather than outside one. They had been tattooing for a while when they realized something had gone wrong — not with the craft, but with how it was making them feel. Their friends noticed. “They said, you look like you don’t want to be tattooing, you look so sad.” They left, and their last day happened to be their three-year anniversary there. “As soon as I left, I felt a weight off my shoulders. I could breathe again.” They took a month off. When they came back, the thing they had been missing started returning.

For LJ, growth looked like stepping back entirely. She tried tattooing as income, found it produced a particular kind of anxiety — “Did she like it? It’s permanent on other people” — and eventually named it clearly: this was not the form her art was meant to take. “I just don’t wanna do things I don’t really love doing to other people. I’m so glad I tried it. But there’s more opportunity for me.”

Bearing fruit

There is a particular pressure that sits on artists who need their art to pay the bills.

“Having so much pressure on making your art your main source of living actually kills your creativity,” Jean says. “I monetized my outlet, the thing I love, and now I’m scared of the thing I love. How do I get to a point where I can reconnect with my creativity and feel authentic again?”

Social media compounds it. Jean describes dropping new flash designs and watching attention arrive, crest, and vanish within days. “There’s a constant pressure to always make stuff because people get over it so quickly. I’m a person, I’m not a machine.”

Jonas, working from a new city and a new client base, has taken tattoos he might not have chosen otherwise — cover-up work that doesn’t fully reflect what he wants to make. “If I had more time and if I wasn’t in this situation, it would have been different. I felt bad at the same time, but I’m trying my best.”

Tending

Ask Jean what tattooing is really about, and they don’t talk about aesthetics. They talk about the room.

“I always tell clients at the beginning: ‘I’m the engine moving this vehicle, but you’re in the driver’s seat.’” If a client says stop, they stop. If they need a break, they take one. The work is built on consent — not as a formality, but as the actual foundation of what happens. The person in the chair is not a canvas. They are the reason the session exists.

A tattoo appointment, Jean has found, can open something a client didn’t know they were carrying. “Sometimes people have emotional experiences that are so beyond what they came in for. It’s my job to be removed enough to let you have this moment, but I’m here to make sure the truck is following the path.”

Alyzza describes something similar, especially with their Filipino clients. A number of them have said they specifically searched for a Filipino tattoo artist because they wanted



Photo by Dianne Miranda

someone who would, as one put it, just get it. “Filipino clients have a special place in my heart just because we struggle. They get the mentality, the feelings of the pressure they feel in the culture. There’s so much that goes unexplained because it’s like: say less. It’s like family.”

They give clients a choice at the start: quiet appointment or conversation, someone to bring, something to watch. They encourage clients to move the stencil, change their mind, slow down. “This is their body. Their choice.”

Jonas’s consultations are long — sometimes two hours. He asks questions about people’s lives, their stories, what they are trying to carry with them permanently. “I want meaningful tattoos. Not just cool-looking tattoos. Every time I do something with real research behind it, I learn so much about the culture, the history, whatever it is.”

Mycorrhizal networks

Philippine tattoo culture has a long history that predates colonization. The Pintados — painted warriors from the Visayas — wore their marks as identity and rank. In the Cordillera, the practice of pagbabatok among the Kalinga,

Bontoc, and Ifugao continued through centuries of pressure to abandon it. That history is alive again, in the Philippines and in the diaspora.

For each of these artists, it is something both inherited and still unfolding.

Jonas's first full back project centred on Philippine mythology: the Bakunawa, the Minokawa, and the creatures that followed them into that tradition. The client had originally come in wanting a Chinese dragon. After a second consultation, they decided to draw on his Filipino heritage instead. "It's more meaningful. Having that on your back, it's a little bit different." His mentors had told him there was no market for Filipino mythology in tattooing. He took it as a challenge.

Alyzza has been incorporating baybayin — the pre-colonial Philippine script — into their designs. "A lot of my Filipino clients have been asking for it. And it's like, they trust me. I like that."

Jean has gone deep into the endemic flowers of the Philippines: what is native only to those islands, what carries meaning that imported imagery cannot replicate.

Filipino culture in the diaspora is not always easy to access. It can get diluted by distance, muffled by the urgency of survival. What these artists are doing — in their separate studios and shared language — is a kind of seed saving.

Seed saving

"I feel like the Filipino community here is absurdly large, but it's isolatory," Jean says. "Like a bunch of different islands. It literally feels like the Philippines."

Without deliberate effort, artists end up working in silos — the same city, sometimes studios apart, with no particular reason to connect. "If you're not making an active effort to find community, it can be hard to feel like there is one. If we find more excuses to connect and lift each other up, it could be so lit."

Jonas is direct about the tendency he has observed — and felt — to hold clients close and treat other artists as competition. "I feel like a lot of Filipinos have this mentality. But if we collaborate, especially around Filipino-themed tattoos, I think we're going to learn more from each other."

Around the table, something has already shifted. Four artists who had never been in the same room are now in one, talking for hours about craft and culture and what it costs to keep making things. The donuts are gone. The coffee has gone cold. Nobody has left.

Meet the Artists

Jean (they/them) is a self-taught tattoo artist located in Gabby's Barbershop, with seven years at the needle. They specialize in consent-led, client-focused handpoked tattooing and a practice built on care and collaboration. Their work often leans towards the intimate, trying to bring a little magic to the tattoo bed.

Instagram: @conjeaniality



Photo by Dianne Miranda

Alyzza (they/she) is a tattoo artist based in Rcafe Studio. They are also a writer with a Bachelor of Arts in English from St. Mary's University, where they were published three times in their undergraduate literary journal, with newer work appearing in *Ginger & Smoke*, a digital publication produced in Vancouver, BC.

Instagram: @harana.inks



Photo by Dianne Miranda

LJ (she/her) is a visual artist whose practice remains a quiet search for where it fits next. She has explored handpoked tattoos practicing batok/batek/patik, painting, and currently nail art.

Instagram: @lj.tatuu



Photo by Dianne Miranda

Jonas [Dayo] (he/him) is a tattoo artist working out of Skull and Lotus Tattoo in new traditional and Filipino-inspired styles, drawing in ornament-forward blackwork. A father of two and a husband, he approaches each tattoo as a story. He dedicates where he is now to his family, with gratitude for his parents, brothers, and most importantly, his wife.

Instagram: @dayo.tattoos



Photo by Dianne Miranda



Poetry begins underground.
Before language, a stirring.



These poems emerge slowly,
carrying the difficult work of
becoming visible. Sibol appears
here as growth shaped by
uncertainty, care, and
persistence. What rises in these
pages does not bloom all at once.
It reaches carefully toward light,
learning the shape of its own
becoming.

Talang

By Rochelle Deloria

It's cyclical, the cynical.

Placate my fears with generic reassurance, platonic verse repeated again and again in the stretched cynical of an unsympathetic grin.

tell me hopes are not worthless, every word that I say has thought, idea; worth.

tell me knowledge is only but a figurative term; one that lingers at the premises of our brains always within reach but ever so slightly out of grasp at the same time. an oxymoronic concept of a conceptual ideal.

knowledge is only but a goal. my brain filled rather with past never future and as knowledge revolves as knowledge evolves, I am lost in the spin of a developing world, my own voice caught in the turbulence.

your calculated mind, an arithmetic formulation of your own physical brain, smiles a quadratic.

calculating my worth in a society of quantitative bodies, typology of boxes, containing the worth that pours out the seams of my flesh.

How the eyes seem to roll at the pass of compassion, bling to the empathy dangling in the line of vision – a neon sign in a pitch-black room.

Yet you sight dares not to pass the whites of those eyes, an ignorant bleakness, a sheen of selfish, and my words spit the hurt, the hope, that someday you may understand.

Praying that maybe this time the blood that I recall will paint that white in red for you to see color outside of your own world.

"I'm not like the other ones", my lips pull at my teeth, porcelain.

White grin,
Blank expression

Lost
Empty

Rochelle Mission Deloria (she/her) is a second-generation Filipino-Canadian settler who has found home, and place in Moh'kinstsis. She is a researcher, student, advocate and community member.

Her own work, and passions lie in transnational experiences, mental health and young caregiving research. Writing for her is a passion, and an act of reclamation, as she navigates the borderlands—in higher education, and as a hyphenated second-generation migrant. She hopes her words resonate for those who also remain within the contours of longing, and belonging.

Dumduman

By Rochelle Deloria

Do tentative caresses scratch the surface of curiosity, so that I may reach out farther than just the stretch of my index finger? The pads of my fingers travel across the expanse of self-discovery, yet they fail to take their time and explore the ridges of understanding, so I'm only left to face the world as a flashing blur before my blinking eyes.

"Stop and smell the roses, take the time to breathe" Yet as my torso twists to face the past, the seconds cling onto my skin and pull the hairs of my body further and further away. Oh, how I wish I could stop time, as easily as I shut my eyelids before the darkness of the night. Oh, how I wish I could mute the world with a press of a remote and finally listen to the calls of my heart that pound against the wall of reality.

Oh, how I long to speak my mother's tongue, silenced by my mother's tongue. Clipped teeth wheeze out words, tongue dry, gasping for the liquid of heritage. "I don't want to bring kan-on to school mom, can I buy pizza at school instead today?" Crackers, squished at recess, rice folded at home.

Oh, how I long to find love at a tender age and breathe the air of another in a scent of romanticism and adoration,

Oh, how I wish that my clouded eyes were only a circumstance of the haze of innocent love.

But my mind ages at the speed of a woman before her deathbed, softly calculating, analytical, regretful.

But as a hand strike against the flesh of an enemy in anger, I am pushed back into the depths of time and forced to walk the seconds of reality...

I just hope that my steps lead me to a happiness along the way.

I just hope that my feet fill the cervices that my ancestors left behind, toes trailing a past I long to swallow, encompass, become. The language of my home, the sweat of my manongs, my manangs. I find solace in the embrace of an old friend, a soft and gentle revolution whispered through our lips..my love, palangga, I yearn.

I seek abundance, in the stories that they carry, the lives I hold. I seek abundance in myself, my identity, and my word. Our knowledge carves deep pathways, the echoes of community water seeping out the seams. I seek fullness, and intention, passion, and revolution.

From my heart to my voice
From my voice to the stars

From my heart to my voice,
From my voice to the stars

From my heart to my voice
From my voice to the stars...

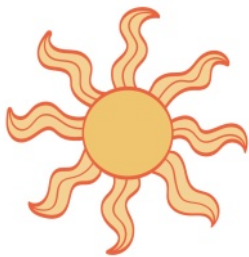
On Belonging

By Mary Poirier



I yearned for the warmth of an eight-ray sun
too scared to reach for her beams,
I do not speak her language,
or know her recipes,
all I can do is consume.

I fear I only belong to the night,
and I cry in the crescent of the moon,
like a babe in a bassinet,
and yet when Luna sees me,
smelling my hair she wrinkles her nose
and greets me lovingly with
“amoy araw.”¹



Mary Poirier [she/they] is a hard-of-hearing, lesbian, and Filipino writer from Hamilton, Ontario. They have a graduate certificate at Humber for Creative Writing. She is an aesthetician by day and a writer always. Her writing has been featured or forthcoming in Dirty Dyke Magazine, Fifth Wheel Press, Feels Zine, Ginger & Smoke, Queer Toronto Literary Magazine, Ricepaper, and Sick Stories. You can see more of her work here: <https://linktr.ee/marypoirier>

¹“Amoy araw” is a Tagalog phrase meaning “You smell like the sun”. It is often said after playing in the sun for a long time.

Untitled

By Apat Cat

Being between worlds as bakla
Navigating perpetual motion of self-discovery
Laro and growth along the way

Self-doubt creeping in
Shorn hair to conform to what 'nonbinary' should be
Dysmorphia creeping in despite loss of buhok
Deadnames, shame, and pain scar my skin

Hope found in embracing duality and fluidity
Growth in re-remembering roots
Adorned by batok, celestial light, baybayin
All signs guiding home

Back to the body, back to shared tongue, back to our breath
Rooted in Lakapati's joy in growth and being bakla
Tala guides the way home in darkest night
Mayari's fierce embrace of sacred skin and wholeness of being

Still emerging from split bamboo in constant creation
Kali sticks at the ready to dance and defend
Held in the softness of regrowing buhok
Honouring the scars and stories in batok

Reminders of who we are in the stars
All we have to do is look up
Reassurance that no matter what happens
Our resilience reigns

FALSE SPRING VEINS

By Alexa Tajanlangit

If a tongue is a blade,
it is an heirloom

anchored like a peridot
in my throat,

threatening to dislodge
at the slightest slight

to my pride.

My lola was a no-nonsense
type of woman,

she'd scare off my uncle's girlfriends
& curse out stray dogs

who got too close.

I grew up oceans away
but felt her presence at every breath of my mother's.

In the critical gaze, unsaid
disapproval

of my clothing, my weight, unbridled rebellion
against societal norms.

In the asking if I ate yet,
full chested laughter,

cacophony to put hyenas to shame.

Close to the end
she'd tell me she was just waiting

for death.

At the edge of thirty the veins
in my thumbs begin

to show like hers

when she'd roll banana leaves
over the glutinous rice
for ibos.

I do not cook cultural dishes well
but when I gaze down

at my hands
to light a smoke, type out a poem,

I can't help but notice

the way my capillaries thrum
with the sharpness

of who she was.

I feel like I'm always waiting, too.

Alexa Tajanlangit is a Filipina-Canadian writer of fiction and poetry. Reading and writing have always been a lifeline, grounding her in deep joy. Her works have been featured in *Ricepaper Magazine*, *Petal Projections*, *Ginger and Smoke*, *The League of Canadian Poets: 'Poetry Pause'* and elsewhere. Alexa graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelors Degree in Book & Media Studies and History. When she is not holed up in a café, she can be found reading fantasy books or doomscrolling on TikTok. Connect with her on Instagram @literaryalexa.

Flowers

By Francis Arevalo

I hope you feel love
And I hope you have the days that you want and need
And people celebrate the work we don't often see
Give you the flowers you deserve, every part of me
Would grow your gardens proper if it means I can offer thee
A bouquet every day to acknowledge the
Ways that you dig deep and see a seed honestly
Know what it takes 'cuz your efforts have shown
I trust you can make anything grow, I hope everyone knows
The time it took for you to get here, that's something we'll get clear
Your timing is divine, so don't sweat, dear
Know every plant's gonna differ in pace
Especially, if you tryna reach a different place
So get it, we hold space for wherever we're headed
We show grace for whenever we're stressing
Just remember the message, for what it's worth
At the roots, all the work is connected
So here's some flowers for my loved ones, the places that I come from
Faces that make up mine and stages that let son shine

And for the fans who listen close when I come rhyme
This is for the high school homies jamming at lunchtime, unsigned
This is for joy and the love of it
And always trusting the path while always knowing what'll come of this
This is for mom and The Rose That Grew From Concrete
For every teacher who just saw me and got me
My heroes that taught me through song, and got me through long
Days laying awake until dawn, yo
This is for music, how it's given me health
And for dad teaching me how to bet on myself
And flowers for every artist that's inspired to create
And my brother and a life having similar taste
Watching Lola in the garden with her watering can
Grew art in my hands
I hope you feel love and this day means something
You're more than enough, I can see you it's clear
We're all that we have before dust
With love, I'll give you your flowers while we're here

Francis Arevalo is a Filipino-Canadian East Vancouver-born-and-based emcee and spoken word poet who is equal parts hype and heart. From the intersection of his Filipino heritage, knack for language, and lifelong love for hip-hop, each song is both fuel and fire to keep you going and keep you company, day in and day out. His performances are energizing, empowering, emotive and memorable, from living rooms to festival stages. Having developed in the local poetry slam scene as a teenager, the common thread throughout his expansive discography is his personal storytelling, sharp lyricism, and deliberate delivery, refined over the years.

Like a seed

By Norina Jones

Like a seed
You are planted with intention
You are nourished with the sun
You are nourished with water
You have everything you need to thrive

To grow
To shine
To be your true self

You are planted with intention

Your ancestors fought all the wars
Your ancestors conquered all the battles
Your ancestors stood tall

They cried
They suffered
They preserved and rose

They rose under all the pressure
They rose with all the doubt in their hearts
They survived
They lived

You are planted with intention

Stand tall
Stand proud
Stand

Breathe

Look up

The sun is shining
The water is plenty
The soil is grounding

You have everything you need to live your life with love
You have everything you need to live your life with joy

You are planted with intention

Live
Thrive
Grow

Welcome home
The seat is warm
And we've been waiting

Like a seed

You
Are
Planted
With
Intention

Born and raised in Toronto, **Norina Jones** built a successful career in digital advertising. Her parents immigrated from the Philippines in the 1970s, and at 36 she followed suit, arriving in Colorado with six bags and a six-month contract. Alongside her supportive American husband, she became a dual citizen, planted deep roots in Longmont, and embraced her Filipino ancestry while cherishing her Canadian heritage. Now a passionate artist, Norina channels joy and flow into poems and artwork forged during years of silence and personal growth. She is deeply grateful for supportive communities that help her prosper.

From the Garden Meadows

By Lielyn

From the Garden Meadows

Echoes of strained vocals flow-through the garden meadows
The silence composed between, is scarier than the screams
We must meet his violence with compliance.
Sirens wailing towards the southeast crimes, harmonizes with our silent cries
Be not mournful for this is our normal
For we do not need a reminder of how unlucky we've got it
A symphony of empathy is what I need, not one's stymied sympathy nor apathy
Our pain collected is where he profits, in his world he is nothing more than a prophet
The child in me will always see the good in you
No matter how hard it is to do
Be resilient and diligent
For I must
Be not the man from the garden meadows.

Breeze

By Lielyn

Breeze

Melancholic memories linger in the air
Dancing, flowing through my hair
Whispers harmonize with the wind
Brisk, haunting reminders of what was
And what could have been
If I gave myself away
Would that have made you stay?
Forgoing the past, let love in one last time
For our love is an endless chime
That frolics through the waving pastures
Each step a new breath of hope
Try, but you cannot get past her
A repeating story, our familiar trope
But will you still love me in all my being
Promise me please, I won't ever grieve you leaving

Lielyn Magdadaro is a marketing university student who has a passion for writing, fashion, & literally anything creative. Lielyn was born in Cebu, Philippines and grew up in Calgary, Alberta.

Sundowning

By **Grace B. Sanchez**

She sits by the window overlooking the parking lot and wonders
What happened to our little kubo and lush tropical yard?

A turnip-coloured car wheels into a spot as she harvests
a bounty of legumes and eggplants still warm from the sun.

The garden teems of beans – string ones you snap, and the kind you cleave
for the pods. She’s grasping, reaching for a choice one trailing from the trellis.

Maybe today I’ll see my children.
She squints from the sunset’s shard of rays.

Now she is walking past a row of radishes and tomatoes, parting leaves with cupped hands
– to the left, to the right – exposing, to her delight, a fat gourd and pumpkin hiding in the verdant
path.

The nurse thinks she is swimming. Let’s finish our dinner, she said,
spooning a bite of bland turkey to the unready mouth.

She sees a dense bed of peanut plants. Oh, no! Peanuts are forbidden.
My apo is deathly afraid. She cowers under her covers, cheeks wet with tears.

I don’t want you chilled when the sun is gone, Lola, said a pretty stranger who drapes a
mustard-coloured shawl on her shoulders, kisses the top of her head.

By the hut. She remembers now: a raised garden with the holy trinity of her mother’s meals:
onion, garlic, ginger. She pulls the treasured shoots from the dirt.

What happened to it all? A flood? A drought?
Surely, the sesame plants survived. She craned her neck to see –

There are no fireflies tonight and
the field is cement with a garden of cars.

She minces Jello with the butter knife, humming
a folk song no one understands. Bahay kubo, kahit munti.

Grace B. Sanchez is an emerging writer from the Eastwood Writers Collective. Quezon City was home, then Calgary, then Vancouver, Prince George, and now, Toronto with part of the year spent in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. She is currently working on her debut novel.

Two Poems

By Alyzza Casas

a rotting margarita

aged heartache on the rocks
one up it, double tequila, triple sec
clementine, putrefaction
bitters of grief, sweetened syrup sympathies
garnished with withered natural flora
straight up detachment, salted tears on the half rim
frozen, rock solid, perfectly chilled in the morgue
that's how we celebrate life together
for renewal and becoming

deathly fauna

bloom upon bloom
please put them around my tomb
withered, corroded, decomposed
how will i ever return back to the world?
one with the earth, abandoned by heaven, rejected by hell
grieving of a shell
although they say shells are good fertilizer
same as bodies, we return to them after

Alyzza Casas is a Filipino creative, learning about everything as they grow.

S H O R T

S T O R Y



A short story begins with a shedding. A body learning how to become itself again.

This story moves through the uneasy terrain of growth—through exhaustion, fear, memory, and the difficult work of renewal. Sibol appears here not as sudden blooming, but as transformation: the painful, necessary act of leaving behind what no longer fits. What emerges is tender, uncertain, and alive with the possibility of becoming.

The Chrysanthemum Child & The Water Snake Priestess

By Alyzza Casas

Lotion, medications, changing clothes, taking a sick leave, and dieting all failed me. Even thoughts and prayers could not solve why my skin is drastically peeling off. I decided to visit the local water snake priestess for guidance my Lola Lima raves about. According to Lola Lima, she masks herself a human form during the day. Onyx eyes, deep skin, adorned in radiant gold jewelry, and carefully braided long hair—once called the most ethereal diwata. After a century and a half, she now quietly dwells beneath River Cafe. She bares her true form to a select few.

The fragments of winter remind me how much I hate the fluctuations of Calgary's weather. I linger around the cafe, occasionally moving from one bench to another. Breathing in the crisp air, I gaze upon the blanket of snow on top of sprouting patches of green grass. As I exhale, my breath continues to feel constricted.

"Chrysanthemum child." A gentle, firm voice rings into my ears, shocking my spine. It dulls my senses, yet soothes my worries away. "Do not seek my presence. I will appear to you if I desire. I will guide you to my home."

She tells me to act how I normally travel about in the city, and does not enter into my head unless I take eight steps too far. I find it fascinating how her voice strikes through the music I listen to as I carefully step over mud, yellow grass, and slushy snow. I eventually find myself inside a small house across from the cafe itself.

"At sobrang gulo mo Liyana Maria," the priestess's voice resonates as I enter inside her home. I look down to take off my shoes, as per her request. "Of course she'd set her grandchild up to look lost."

The aroma of burnt orange peels, fresh basil, torn books, and kisses of bourbon vanilla overwhelm my nose. A quaint space, although it is overflowing with vintage furniture and a carefully selected curation of decorative pieces across the bookshelf captures my eye. Picture frames and art pieces occupy the walls. A pale warm light hangs overhead.

"You may admire, if you please." I approach them slowly. I've seen similar in the ancestral home back in Quezon. I examine an engraved broken hilt from what could be either a kris or a farming knife. Baybayin. I hear her set a cup down on the table. I shift my body to find her—"Child, remember." I apologize, and she laughs it off. "Sit. Put your bag down, and have some rose milk tea. I will observe what is wrong as you drink. Remove your mask, coat and scarf."

And I do.

"Including the cardigan."

And I do.

"And your skirt."

And I hesitantly do.

The cool air inside her home hits my broken, bare skin immediately. I shakily take the cup of in my hand, and quietly take a sip. The surprising bitterness and tartness catch me off guard. She clicks her tongue twice, and I feel her intense gaze piercing my peeling skin. She's observing. It's not as prominent on my legs, however my entire upper body is blistering. My back itself is even worse. I finally finished the tea.

"How long are you going to stay there?"

What?

I choose to defy her wishes, I stand and turn to face her, only to find a large serpent behind me. The water snake priestess. Onyx slits contrast her amber eyes, crimson tongue adorned with a small gold piercing, bearing bronze-coloured scales that shine so brilliantly. She slithers quietly around the apartment, focused. My curiosity elevates, along with my heart rate.

“Chrysanthemum child.” She says, “Answer my question.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Look at you, staying in shedded skin.” Her tongue grazes my flaked limbs, I try to swat her away. “You cannot stay in it longer. You must grow, chrysanthemum child. The longer you stay, the longer you deny yourself the growth you deserve. You cannot even breathe properly”

“What are you talking about? I’m fine.”

“Must I peel your smooth head with a rock so you have ridges in your brain to understand?” Her head sharply faces me. I look at my reflection in her bright eyes. “This skin that you cannot peel off? You are not allowing yourself to grow. You fear the aftermath if you leave, you cannot become comfortable like you are now. Do you understand me? This will continue on, and you will continue to prioritize comfort over your own happiness.”

“How did you—”

“I know what it is like. I have experienced a similar matter a millennium ago. Everyone does.” It is the first time this evening that her voice softens. “I wish it is easy, but growth will always be worth the discomfort. However, growth allows you to prosper, bloom— unfold aspects of yourself you never imagined. Don’t you want to become better?”

I fail to realize I have been crying.

“Liyana Maria told me you looked happier working at your clothing job than being at the studio the last few months. She cried and wondered if you now hated what you loved doing.”

I remember how Lola Lima struggled to accept me working out at a studio. Over the next few years, as I managed to juggle multiple jobs to keep myself afloat and still do what I love, Lola Lima began asking me about it. She’d cook multiple lunches so I don’t go hungry if I worked a triple. Bragged to her friends about me. Took me out for ice cream after leaving a job so I could focus working at the studio more. Allowing me to cry during breakfast due to being overworked.

“I didn’t, I didn’t think, she,” I let tears fall, snot run, and feel my eyes burn. “I didn’t think she would notice.”

“It’s a mother’s love, my dear.” A delicate hand rests on my shoulders. I look up, and the water snake priestess is in her human form. She purses her lips together to form a small smile. “She wants the best for you. To be bright, not dulled out. And I know you do, too.”

“What, what do I do?” In between my bawling, I find myself explaining my pent up feelings I had for a few months. How it felt like a chore to create and show up to the studio, I felt lifeless. Held back. I felt so stagnant. I got tired, and I lost my joy. I dulled out the feelings to where physical symptoms showed. “I feel so lost.”

“Well, what do you want to feel in the future?”

I closed my eyes and visualized the person who I want to blossom into. Always pushing to grow, re-discovering the love I have for what I do. To enjoy the process, and to live even towards the unknown. To renew myself. To be even more—

“Alive. And free.”

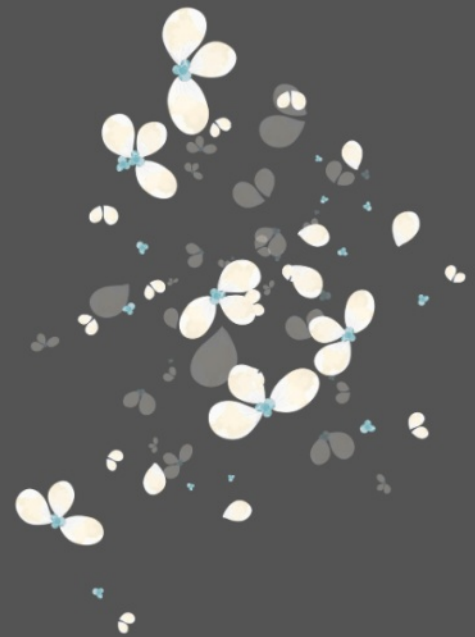
“Then we start by cutting dead ends.”

Alyzza Casas is a Filipino creative, learning about everything as they grow.

Essay begins with attention.
A looking back. A looking
closer.



This issue's essay reflects on
Magdaragat anthology and the
future of Filipino-Canadian
literature—on growth as an
ongoing act of becoming,
shaped by memory, return, and
the quiet work of imagining
what comes next.



After Magdaragat: Writers on the future of Filipino-Canadian literature

By Renato Gandia

In the first part of this series, I wrote about the moment the keel meets the water—the quiet but decisive beginning of a journey. To be part of *Magdaragat: An Anthology of Filipino-Canadian Writing* was to feel that shift firsthand: from writing in relative isolation to writing within a body of work that speaks back, that situates itself within a shared current. In the second part, I lingered on the anthology's internal rhythm, reading it through *hingá*—breath—as something that inhales memory, holds history, and exhales into the present.

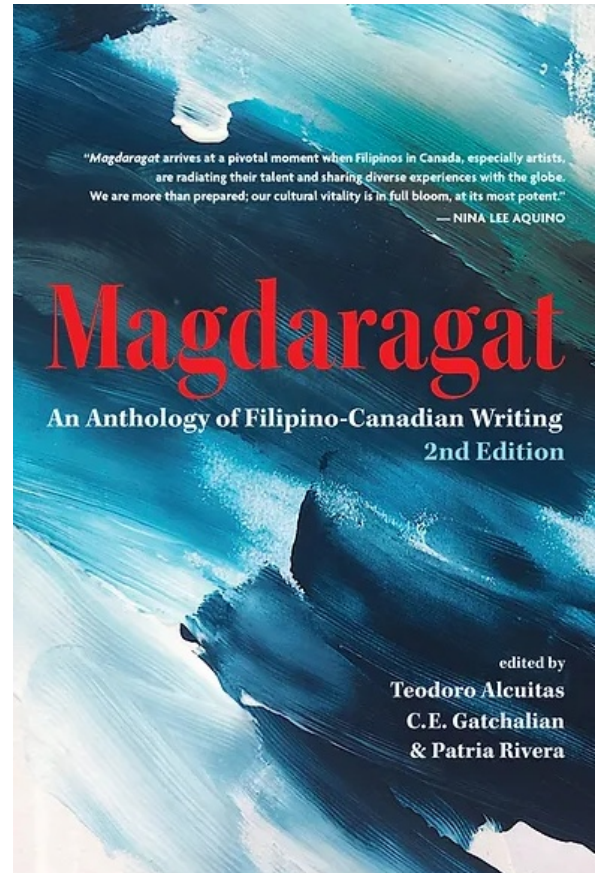
But if the first two movements of this series turned inward—toward arrival, toward structure—this final piece turns outward.

Because an anthology, no matter how expansive, is never an endpoint. It is a gathering, yes, but also a release. It brings voices together not to contain them, but to send them forward—into other forms, other conversations, other possibilities not yet written. What *Magdaragat* offers, beyond its pages, is not only representation but momentum.

The question, then, is not simply what the anthology is, but what it makes possible.

If *Magdaragat* is a fleet—as I came to understand it while reading and rereading these works—then it is already in motion. The ships have left the shore, carrying with them stories shaped by migration, memory, language, and survival. Some will continue along familiar routes; others will chart paths that do not yet exist. What matters is that the water is no longer empty. It is marked now by presence.

To think about what lies ahead, I invited a small group of Filipino-Canadian writers—across generations, practices, and geographies—to



reflect on what they hope the future of Filipino-Canadian writing might become in the years to come.

Their responses do not arrive as a single vision. Instead, they move in different directions—toward greater representation, toward deeper reckoning, toward a widening of form and place. Taken together, they suggest not one future, but many: overlapping, sometimes in tension, but all necessary.

To listen across these responses is to hear a set of overlapping urgencies—some expansive, some corrective, all attentive to what Filipino-Canadian writing has been and what it might yet become.

For Christine Añonuevo, Magdaragat marks a watershed moment—bringing together “emerging and established Filipino-Canadian writers and creatives across vast urban and rural geographies.” But what follows, she suggests, must reckon with forces that extend far beyond the literary field itself. She wonders how writers will respond to “the climate crisis, geopolitics, and the ongoing identity crisis of our diaspora grappling with colonial entanglements on a multi-scalar level.”

At the same time, her vision remains grounded in care. She hopes for a contemporary storytelling practice that not only offers new ideas, but also “celebrat[es] the care and tenderness we bring to the communities we are part of.” That future, she suggests, also depends on relationship: on how Filipino-Canadian writers build “generative relationships” with Indigenous and Black writers, and how we attend to the responsibility of solidarity—not as abstraction, but as ongoing practice.

For Nathalie De Los Santos, the future begins with a widening. She imagines “more voices... across genres, forms, and mediums,” and a literary landscape that reflects the country as it is, rather than the “narrow white voice that has long defined CanLit.” As more Filipino and other BIPOC writers move into editorial and leadership roles, she suggests, the work itself will be met with “greater care, understanding, and heart shaped by lived experience.”

That sense of expansion is echoed, but made more intimate, in Grace Sanchez MacCall’s vision.

“I look forward to walking into a library or bookstore and seeing works by Filipino-Canadian authors in every genre,” she said. “I want to see Filipinos in Canadian literature who are thinking and feeling beings expressing universal joy, sadness, hope and pain about being human. I want to see us as main characters. Not sidekicks. Not comic relief. Not tokens.

“I would like to read stories where Filipino words like *Lola*, *pansit*, and *sige* are not italicised but accepted as everyday words. Most importantly, I dream of an arts community where Filipino-Canadian writers are supporting and celebrating each other.”

If these visions move toward inclusion and normalization, Christopher Kawika Guillermo turns our attention to what must not be smoothed over in the process. His reflection asks us to reconsider the very metaphors that shape the anthology—particularly that of the seafarer.

“I hope we as writers can turn toward broader shores, to see the ‘landmark’ of Magdaragat as the ‘land we mark:’ the Indigenous, colonized space we—colonized people ourselves—continue to inhabit. I hope our future writing can understand the ‘seafarer’ of Magdaragat... not merely as signifying our shared belonging, but as coming from a deeply violent colonial history involving war, massacre, forced education in English... and innumerable atrocities that also define us.”

His vision presses against comfort. To write forward, he suggests, is not only to expand our presence, but to deepen our understanding of the histories that make that presence possible—and to draw from a Filipino literary tradition that has long been radical, critical, and unafraid.

Vincent Ternida, meanwhile, gestures toward another kind of expansion—one that is geographic, but also imaginative. He speaks of “an interconnectivity in the stories told through this Filipino diasporic experience,” but also of the lives that remain unwritten. What might it mean to encounter Filipino stories beyond familiar centres—to see ourselves in “a fishing boat in the Maritimes” or “a meat packer in Alberta”? His vision is one of continuation, where stories invite others to “breathe life into their own lived experience.”



Christine Añonuevo's recent writing appears in *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Northword Magazine*, *Gathering Our Breath Anthology* and *Braided Identities (Being Well in Canada)*. She holds a PhD in Human and Health Sciences and dwells on the Gitxsan *lax'yip* with her partner and family.



Nathalie De Los Santos is a writer and creative. She created *PilipinxPages*, a platform that features *Filipinx* authors. She was a fellow of the *Lambda Literary Retreat for Emerging LGBTQ Voices*, where she workshopped her YA fantasy novel *Diyosa Mata* under the tutelage of New York Time Bestselling trans author Aiden Thomas. Her short story *Bakunawa* and the *Seven Sisters* was shortlisted by *Fractured Lit* and the production of its YA version is being funded by the *Canada Council of the Arts* and *BC Arts Council*. Her novel *Debt of the Heart* was longlisted by *Anvil Press 3-Day Novel* contest, and she has been published across various platforms such as the *Globe and Mail*, *SAD Magazine*, and more. She is one of the key organizers of the *Filipino-Canadian Book Festival* and she also hosts the *Filipino Fairy Tales, Mythology, and Folklore* podcast.



Christopher Kawika Guillermo (they/he) is an award-winning author of seven books, including *Nimrods: a fake-punk self-hurt anti-memoir*, a *Finalist for the 2024 Lambda Literary Award for Bisexual Nonfiction*, *Of Floating Isles: On Growing Pains and Video Games*, and *Stamped: an anti-travel novel*, which won the *2020 Association for Asian American Studies Book Award for Creative Prose*, and was adapted into a free-to-play video game, *Stamped: an anti-travel game*. Their most recent book, *Domesticating Brown: Movements of Racial Imagination*, was published in March 2026 by *Duke University Press*. They are a *Professor in the Social Justice Institute at the University of British Columbia*, and are seen as *queer, neurodivergent, and third generation Filipinx North American traveler* whose family is primarily from *Hawai'i and Texas*.



Grace Sanchez MacCall is an emerging writer from the Eastwood Writers Collective in Toronto. Quezon City was home, then Calgary, Vancouver, Prince George, and now, Toronto with part of the year spent in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. A long time ago, when she was a student, her first poem was published by the Capilano Review.



Vincent Ternida is the author of *The Seven Muses of Harry Salcedo*. His work has been featured in *The Polyglot*, *Better This Year* anthology, *Magdaragat: An Anthology of Filipino-Canadian Writing*, and has been long listed for the CBC Short Story Prize in 2019. He is based in Vancouver, Canada.

Art begins with gesture.
A mark. A reaching outward.

These works gather around
the act of becoming. Sibol
appears here in texture,
colour, and form—in the quiet
insistence of creation itself.
Each piece moves toward
growth differently, asking
what can emerge when
imagination is given space to
take root.

SIBOLING



Sama-Sama Tree Hearts

By Mila Bongco-Philipzig



Sama-Sama Tree: In Love we Flourish

This mixed media artwork is part of a year-long anti-racism project which collected experiences of racism across Alberta, as well as stories of courage and hope towards a more inclusive and kinder society by acting together. While on exhibit, people are invited to respond to this art by writing, sketching, adding their own feelings, thoughts, and messages in the hearts and taking them home or hanging them back into the art.

The project, called Sama-Sama: Our Stories, Our Vision, is from the UPAAE – University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton.

Mila Bongco-Philipzig is a writer, visual artist, and community organizer based in Edmonton. She is a published author of children's books, poetry, short stories, and creative non-fiction essays. The diaspora of the global majority is a recurring theme in all her works. She is an avid advocate for human rights and social justice. What is the point of art if not to resist?

Pagpitas

By Day Pajarillo



Title: PAGPITAS

Size: 20x24"

Medium: Oil on canvas

Pininta ko ito noong 2018, pagkatapos kong ma-PR at makabalik dito sa Calgary galing Vancouver. I took a leap of faith para bumalik sa pagiging artist.

Ang image ay isang taong pumipitas ng maliit na bulaklak, pero ang pakiramdam ko noon parang, "Please, huwag muna, hindi pa ako fully in bloom." Kung may sense man iyon. Alam ko sa sarili ko na kaya ko at may maiaalok ako, na unique ako. Pero noong mga panahong iyon, nagsisimula pa lang akong muli. Sumisibol ulit. Reborn. Rebirth. Kasi tapos na ang mga stress ko bilang temporary foreign worker. PR na ako.

Noong time na iyon, wala pa akong pangalan, wala pa akong napapatunayan, hindi pa ako makapagmayabang. Kaya tama lang na sumisibol ulit ako noong mga panahong iyon.

Ngayon, nagre-resonate sa akin yung sinabi ni Maria na, "Malayo pa, pero malayo na." O something like that. Malayo na ang narating ko. May maipagmamalaki na ako. Pero malayo pa rin ang tatahakin kong landas. Marami pa akong gustong gawin at maitulong sa larangan ng sining. Hindi man sa yaman at karangyaan, pero nabigyan ko na ng puwang sa mundo ang sarili ko. At alam kong maipagmamalaki ako ng mga yumao kong magulang. May legasiya na ako para sa mga magiging apo ko.

Sa kabila ng lahat ng pinagdaanan ko, marami akong nare-realize. I live each day as if it were my last. At bawat oras na nagigising ako at namumulat ang mata ko, nagpapasalamat ako sa Maykapal.

Kahit sa maliliit na bagay na nangyayari sa akin, nagpapasalamat pa rin ako.

Maraming beses na rin akong sumibol ulit, nag-start over, matapos ang maraming maling desisyon at pagliko sa buhay. Pero ang kagandahan doon, bumabangon ka ulit kinabukasan, ipinagpapag ang alikabok, at nagsisimula muli.

Parang pagpipinta lang. Excited ako tuwing may bago akong canvas na sisimulan. Masarap sa pakiramdam humawak ng brushes, at ibang sensation yung nararamdaman ko tuwing nagpapahid ako ng pintura.

Untitled

By Apat Cat



Mariang Makiling sa Hardin ng Paghilom

By Hayat Moroporo



Mariang Makiling sa Hardin ng Paghilom
Mixed Media (Assemblage of Found Objects on Digital Art Canvas)
40" x 40"

Mystical Forest

By Kath Beredo-Endaya



Mystical Forest
Acrylic on Canvas

My painting is inspired from the story of Maria Makiling, the mystical guardian of Mount Makiling. She is a symbol of nature's beauty, generosity, and fragility. As a diwata, she watched over the mountain's forests, animals, and people, offering help in times of need and restoring balance when nature was harmed. Her story lives on as a call to protect the environment, honor its resources, and live in harmony with the land.

Maria makiling also becomes a symbol of nature; serves as an enduring symbol of the Philippines' deep connection to nature and the importance of protecting the environment; it is believed that she still exists, sometimes appearing to those with pure hearts or that her spirit has become one with the mountain itself. Through my painting, I aim to make an awareness that when we care for nature, we also nurture the soul of our own humanity.

