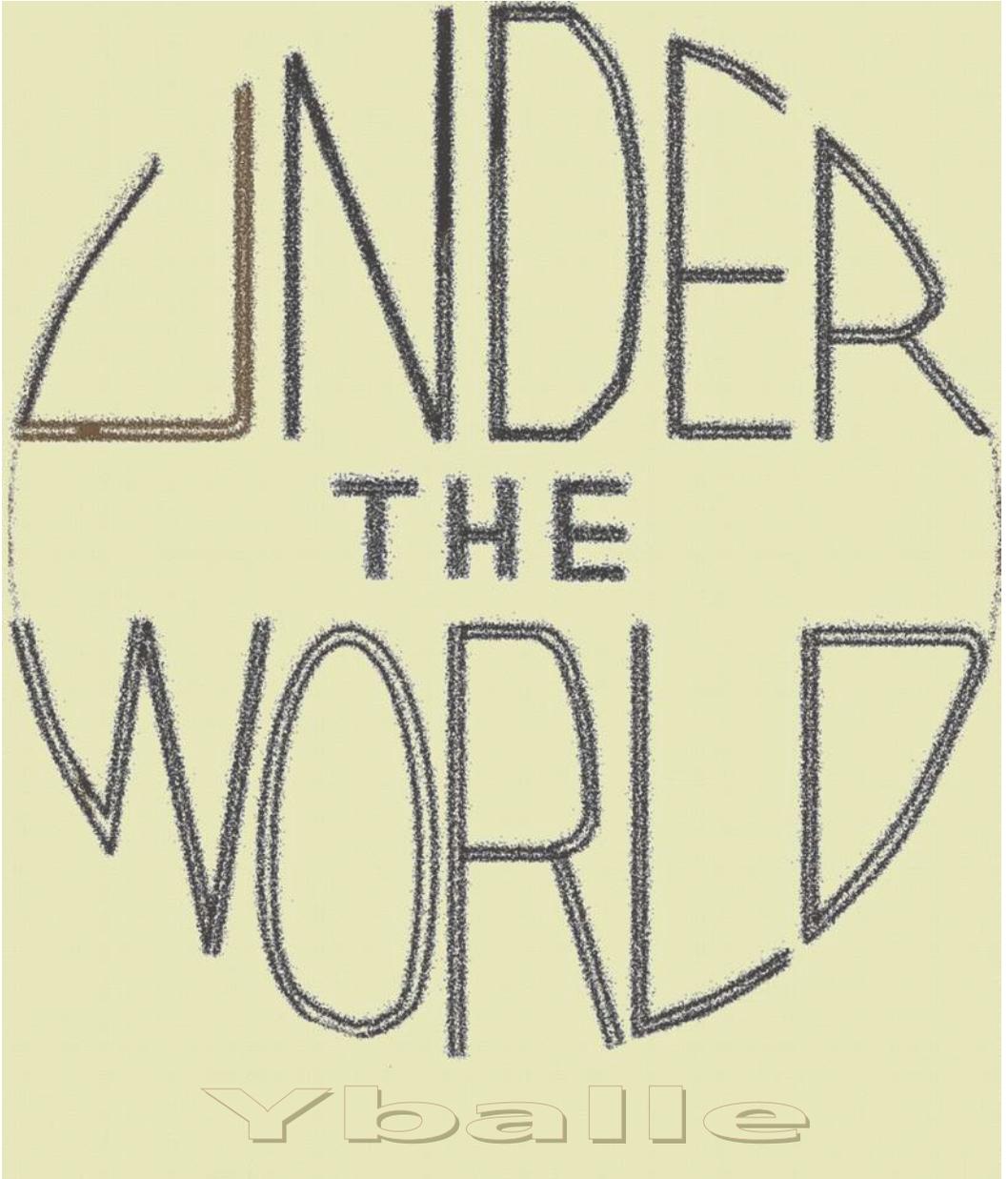


Benjie



presidents **Marcos** and **Aquino** transformed what we had into a perverted society. These are stories that reveal the whole ugly truth.

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Characters and events
depicted herein are
creations of fiction.

These recordings are recommended listening for the following
portions of this compilation:

Firefly	Kylie Minogue "Can't Get You Out of My Head"
Bill of Sand	Prince "Orgasm" from the album <i>Come</i>
Street of Love	"Love Street" from the soundtrack of <i>The Doors</i>
Push	John Cougar Mellencamp "Hurts So Good"

And finally a slow burning song from White Lion towards the end.
Please make sure those are legitimately owned copies you will be
playing.

EPA

“I still think you should take up professional boxing.”

Flediu cast a short glance at his foster father and stared once again at the blue leather gloves on the dining table. He did not finish fitting the gloves before putting them back there. Three times before, comp psychometric and sportsmed physiologic evaluations typed him as a counterpuncher who could dance away from trouble.

“Costs too much air to practice and compete,” he said to Dreko with regretful finality. “Why don't I just stick to books and comps? You don't have to breathe as much doing those things.”

Both their gazes drifted to the wall vent. While they were in this room, its two apertures would pump in life-giving oxygen. After they leave, these would stop and the room would be atmospherically sealed.

"It's just too bad. That ancient pug Sugar Leonard whom the

med matched to you, I watched on the comp after that. Old timer he looked really smooth and got a killer instinct too. Saw you as just like him if you ever became one." Ray was one of the sweetest ever. His fists flew all over the ring and almost always he landed the blows that counted most to the judges, the last second combos that stick to the mind before jotting down the round scores.

"Too bad but you know how well you can do other things."

"I'm sorry too. I better be off to something less ambitious. It's no way for me to make a living, far as I can say for now," concluded Flediu as his motion to retire was gestured to in reply.

—

The comp placed artificial law near the top of his scholastic aptitude so that is what Flediu took up. Law is easy especially if by way of engagement all that is required of you is to see to it that other people, whether or not you are representing them or are the ones you work against, are

going to abide by it. Laws increase in number all the time but it's not hard to keep up once you obtain the credentials to search and cross-reference from the online datamaster.

He had a girlfriend, Jurea, but she was not really just Flediu's girlfriend. Jurea ran the antigovernment cell in the university. It was not too long after they had become special friends that he knew her secret. Soon he was invited and accepted.

"I really like the idea of having sex with you."

"I do too. I wonder what it is going to be like."

"Too much air."

"What?"

"We will use up too much air. Costs too much."

"So we should start saving credits then."

"Forget it."

EPA took over world government after air quality deteriorated. They said it was this many percent bad and in

order to avert respiratory disasters from lack of clean air as well as to rebuild the ultraviolet protective layer and to cool down the atmosphere, somebody responsible had to be in charge.

Jenner was the one he was assigned to as a buddy for verifying the air duct schematics of EPA for their region. Ninety-nine percent of the population was confined to underground quarters while the few who were needed above ground stayed inside concrete domes and other structural enclosures. Flediu had been exceedingly efficient in identifying pumps and fixtures for potential sabotage and Jenner was only too happy to show him past an unguarded ground hatch as a brief reward for all his help. Then they sneaked back to the university through the labyrinth of tunnel catwalks.

"Since when did you know that the air outside..."

"Quit that, we cannot take chances... we might be monitored."

"You already knew about this but why have you not told the rest of the world?"

"Are you crazy? Do that and we lose the only weapon we have against the government."

"You are the ones who are insane. How could you do this? You are no different from them."

"Come on, let's go back to Jurea. They must be waiting for us. Be patient. There will be a time for us to make our move, Flediu."

The university registrar summoned him after several months. "Flediu, take a look at this. The publiccomp says that you are to be conscripted to the outer council after graduation next month."

Jurea has once more averted graduating this year. The previous year she transferred to another program so she could stay behind in the university to continue the cell. It had mostly been hard times for their cause in that Jenner and

Prego had similarly poor luck in the subcity maintaining their cell. He and Jurea attended the bigger cell's anteplenary the day before his commissioning.

"Congratulations are in order Commissioner Flediu. Our clandestine cellmate in the outer council will make himself known to you in due time. Good grades, good voice and good respiratory rating are exactly the stuff the council demands from products of the university system like you."

"Prego, I heard not too long ago that the inner council vacancy stays unfilled."

"No one in the outer seeks to brave the challenge. They wait for the inner to get tired of waiting and just appoint one of them instead."

"I will take on the challenge."

"Then we wish you survival, Commissioner, after you state your challenge on the day two days from now when you are commissioned and the day of the fight will be scheduled."

The heavyweight champion of the world entered the chamber to grace the outer and inner council members with his mighty presence. Flediu was at best a middleweight. Perhaps no more than half a dozen kilograms short of the champion's class. He was led to the center to face his opponent who stood ten meters away.

"We who are about to die salute EPA."

Of course that is not going to be me, thought Flediu.

"What is your request, Ornex?"

"20th century gloves."

"Very lethal choice. Granted. Now both of you occupy your corners in the equilateral square ring."

"What is your pleasure, Flediu?"

"I want to bring the first order of business to the inner council at the suplenary session."

"Granted but that is not the request you were asked for."

"Zero oxygen."

Immediately, the outlet valves unclamped and the boxing cube was steadily pumped free of oxygen. Ornex got over his initial confusion and charged. Flediu looked to stand his ground and parry that straight that was coming but suddenly backpedaled and laterally eluded the champion. One more swing in the direction of his face he managed to deflect using his right while connecting with a weak upper cut of his own. He knew he could not use what was left of him on jabs so while he still could, he let go of a left and then a right. He tried to stand for as long as he was able to with his eyes closed. He might have just been imagining the ring announcer fading out with the numbers five and four before everything turned absolutely black.

He vaguely remembered how his head hurt like hell in the few times he woke up. The next time he was roused there was no recollection of waking up, just the sight of the inner

council principals deferring to his possession of the floor.

"Must air continue to be the basis of our economy? You know you cannot sustain this. A more flexible mode of currency should be provided to our citizenry. I propose that individuals be permitted to sell themselves at a future date and be given the opportunity to enjoy the corresponding wealth in the present. Measures will be taken to prevent default by suicide and ensure that participating citizens will remain viable commodities in the future. Please also be aware that the fact that the air above the ground and seas is not unbreathable as EPA has made everyone believe for the past hundred years is known. I will not say how I came about this knowledge without such information being passed to me by any of you but we will take steps to ensure that nobody outside of our privileged circle who comes to know about our state secret will be allowed to live. Lastly, as the heavyweight champion, it is my prerogative to declare myself world leader."

Save for the three in front who nodded first, the council signified their agreement at the same time. Flediu reflected on the sweet irony of it all. It amused him to imagine that EPA might have poisoned the air 110 years ago to force its climate management agenda worldwide. Now he had an entire political system under his thumb and he could not care less if half the underlings in front of him had portions of their brains damaged by instances of oxygen deprivation. Full mental functions can only be counterconductive to the imperative for docile acceptance of authority.

Firefly and Butterflies

Gentlemen of the galactic exploration fleet, I realize that my earlier report must have been unsatisfactory to certain members of the yellow star worlds committee but I have to nevertheless defend my choice of that place they call convent. Our study of sentient animals on this planet must allow for apparently unintelligent choice of subjects at times. We seek to comprehend and therefore it would serve our purpose well to chase the unexpected rather than the obvious.

The establishment in front of me looks promising in terms of the availability of a diverse yet representative selection of social denizens. This one is definitely more lively than the rest hereabouts and even has colorful lights outside surrounding a figure that looks like an insect with disproportionately large wings.

Now I am buzzing past a patron being hand checked by the

security person between the legs for concealed weapons and recording equipment. He is let in behind me. In this reconnaissance mode, my hearing is not so good but I can tell from the beat that the music onstage is neodisco. It's going to be loud and I won't hear much conversation so I just hope their thoughts or, more precisely, their mental monologue will be worth it.

This one, to the left ear, I am buzzing inside. I'm in. I should be getting his thoughts now. Aside from the music of Kylie Minogue reverberating inside his skull, that is.

Excuse me but it is as if all intellectual brain activity in the subject has ceased. He is just staring at the dancer onstage but she seems to have four legs and four arms and two heads. The liquid contents of the five vessels in front of him must have intoxicated him so much already. Egressing subject now.

Transfer to Table 8. Very clear thoughts from this one.

“One day I'd like to climb on the stage. It is my life ambition

to dance and be the center of lustful attention, of envy, of admiration. It is only in this beautiful place where I can imagine clearly my ambition to have come true.”

Hopefully my data transmissions through the chain of repeater stations will meet your satisfaction, gentlemen. Entry denied by this comparatively hairless male human. It's happened a few times. Next one I think should work.

Transfer

"It is such a drag pretending to enjoy this when the only body I am really interested in is my officemate seated next to me. I have never seen a man more handsome and he is so very masculine in everything. It is impossible for him to ever be interested in me."

Transfer

"I wonder what he is thinking. My heart aches with the thought that he gets erections looking at those naked women. If only he could spare a few for me. Look at that fat bitch. I

have much nicer curves than she has."

Transfer

“Philosophically speaking, the most common existential derivation of delight for those who frequent places like this is from the momentary immersion in self-worth, the fleeting individual power one can bask in. There is nowhere else that has at your disposal a stream of young women coming forth to entertain you by baring and gyrating. It is true that they also provide similar fare during variety shows and politicians' rallies but they coerce that to a general and nonspecific audience rather than to adult males with money to waste. But me I came to watch naked bodies and relish the sight of body parts as they are uncovered whether by direction or under the influence of some not quite so licit substances earlier consumed. I am here for the genitalia and I am easy to please.”

A more interesting target spotted than the previous one who to be honest bored me. Most evil eyes in that one I have ever

seen in a human. Approaching now.

Splat.

The dirty old gentleman now rising toward the exit chuckled at the object he had just slammed with his palm on the table.

"Mamasan, you always have new pleasures in this house to surprise me. Imagine, encountering a firefly right here in the middle of the city!"

Marketing Plan

“Phase out the MacLara artificial female sex partner line? The sex doll is our bread and butter, are you out of your mind, Sir?”

"You know very well the competition across town is coming up with the Sisa model. 'Insane and insatiable collaborator in the art of love. Love so real, you will permanently forget about natural sex.'

“Gentlemen, the market for artificial has been soaked up sooner than we can say saturated beyond competitive redemption. Now is the time to move on,” proceeded this year's chairman of the table who then turned away from Manny and pointed to the new products committee head.

“The sun shone, we made our hay, what else but the next logical thing at hand,” was Koree's preliminary statement before the vice chair cut her off with two words and egged on the senior vice president to resume his objections.

“What you want us to do is give up products that account for 8 billion of our annual 9 billion net profit. Half of our stockholders will be gone by tomorrow afternoon if word of this goes out,” warned Manny.

“The phaseout will be gradual. In the first year of implementation we will program a reduction of one million from the user base,” Koree tried hard to make the details and merits of the plan clear enough. “The writing on the wall was impossible to misread as early as last year when the internal report of Marketing was tabled for deliberation. We spent the last several months evaluating alternative sex product offerings and identified male and female escort service to have the best potential for revenue substitution. This is going to be a two in one package featuring a flesh and blood partner and the other not so much so.”

“What happened to the VR solutions exploratory task? We have not heard from the virtual reality team since the time it was formed.” The pathetic sycophant seated between Koree

and the chairman asked a question that was obviously planted by her superior for the other inferior to take care of.

“Less than ten years ago the technology became mainstream for the consuming public. Other than its fitness for non-sedentary gaming, efficiency as a job training tool, and appeal as an economical substitute for excursions, there are practical drawbacks that have held it back from replacing flatscreens. Conventional wisdom indicates that virtual reality appliances should be widespread by now but there is not even one in this room wearing an output eyepiece receiving real-world or simulated data from the greatly hyped cloud information system.

“The fact is that first time experience is awesome regardless of the addition of a generic sex doll or even if only a handheld toy is made available. VR manufacturers have suppressed data about dizziness and disorientation lasting for up to a few hours but that has not prevented the larger segment of the public from eschewing the product even if

average household personal computer or a recent top of the line mobile device can be configured to work with most standard output receivers. Aside from that the software and hardware are both easy to replicate so going after the demand if it exists would be wasteful. You may review the demand patterns predicted by our market specialists if the general consumer trend is vague to you at this point.”

Senior director Jackie asked to speak. “And several years from now the demand which is projected to drop to only a few thousand disposable doll units we just leave to the competitor? How is it possible that a decline of zero point nine percent in sexual interest of the general public can necessitate something this drastic? After all, the administration of vaccines starting with the millennial generation for inhibiting appetites for alcohol, narcotics and porcine meat had the unexpected bonanza of boosting sexual consumerism sky high. The only reason crime still exists is that not every consumer has the economic capacity to procure all the sex he cannot help but desire.”

“It will be a smash hit I tell you. In the chairman's briefing Koree presented to me, I observed that the live partner channel could run into supply problems at some point but we quickly prognosticated that a lot of consumers themselves would enter into part-time escortship for added income. Essential as it is, that is, for a one to one pooling of human labor with the mechanical escort inventory since supervisory control is indispensable at this point. Minimal training, there hardly is going to be any time going to be spent for that since the mechanical partner will be receptive to the sexual predilections of the handler partner. The production quality department has also backed us up with assurances that these units will be cost effective to produce, maintain and refurbish. They will just be essentially the same sex dolls, be of the same basic dimensions, only there will be a bit more of electromechanical parts. There remain just a few design challenges for the refit-to-order doll face and secondary sexual anatomical parts. Nothing we can't eventually handle before production is greenlighted.”

“And I suppose everyone in this room will be compelled to participate in blind test trials for the proposed service?”

“Yes of course, participation is always fully on a volunteer only basis. All of you are expected to report to your assigned field test locations with the exception of those with known medical conditions. I promise it will be more fun than sex dolls alone.”

Barrio 92503

Retirement always is not a happy occasion. Here in my tiny village we have an old tradition of assigning one person to a particular role that everybody considered tremendously important. Anyone else could take up any job as may be appropriate or as forced by economic circumstances but there could only be a single town whore and today she was retiring. I came by the house that used to be assigned to her out of concern for how she was taking to the termination of her fulfilling career. So did a few others whose needs she had been obligated to fulfill up to the very night before this morning. There was no way of telling if she was hiding some overflow of inner joy or any emotion to the contrary. It was as if she did not want those who had been the biggest part of her life to know what she was thinking. She had her possessions packed and ready to be moved.

An older guy from the tax office arrived right after me but

soon left together with me saying it was too much for him to take. He tearfully lamented that she was the finest of all nine of them he had gone through ever since reaching the age permitted for rental. I asked why he seemed to be rushing back to work when he revealed that none of the eligible town girls have consented to be candidates for the replacement town whore. I told him I had almost forgotten that indeed there had to be one who will transfer to the house we have visited just now by this nightfall. He said he had to run right away to the council meeting or he might not be able to present his ideas on this matter and the urgency of averting a crisis of historical proportions.

I waited all afternoon at home with my wife and our infant and since no proclamation ring from the central plaza sounded I thought I should check if they were holding a town hall affair this sundown. Rows of long faces were seated in front of the captain. Whoredom had always been a voluntary expression of civic duty on the part of our young maidens. There were some who considered town whore to be

a more worthy function than town captain. The fabric of our society was now about to be torn apart but the man we elected to head our village offered one last hope. He could not fathom the reason why the girls this year have lost their willingness for this job but if the times have indeed changed then we must address the need to adapt.

After a lot of thoughtful consideration his council had decided that they will declare as the alternative of last resort the identification and selection of a pretty boy in the barrio who will be considered and thereafter employed per our longstanding practice. A desperate measure that immediately drew thoughtful silence. Until the captain summoned me from among those who stood in the rear to speak my mind. My first question was how could we remain an upright community if we bend to the dictates of hedonistic liberal politics that outside our local confines have mortally weakened the foundations of modern society with same sex marriage and commercial exploitation of aborted fetal remains amongst other moral aberrations? Must the

settlement of an ethical conundrum be screened through the lens of popularity and convenience? Is democracy worth the price of destroying our future?

Game!

"Gerri over here is our elimination round winner from Greenhills. His contestant information sheet says something I'm sure all of you will find interesting. He says in here that he is going to cheat in this contest. According to Gerri, somebody watching the show at home will feed him the answer to all our questions via telepathic transfer. Is this true, Gerri? Is this also how you got all the answers right in the previous two rounds?"

"Yes and no. One of his correct answers, he just told me now, was not the right one after all. Which means that once again you are wrong. I don't even know if he is a girl or a man but thanks anyway to him or to her," he ended with a wave to his unknown partner.

"You two have not met? But he or she is communicating with you by ESP, does that mean you too have psychic powers?"

“No,” Gerri replied honestly.

"Well you don't have to worry that we will take away your prize after the show. Unless, of course, we get absolute proof that you are involved in a conspiracy to defraud our production executives, commercial sponsors and brainless audience. But if as you say, you are cheating in an honest way, then we will just say it is business as usual."

“Thank you, you have not asked yet but I am going to use the money I win for my favorite charity. My sweetheart will never recover from the experience of spending all that money at the mall.”

"So Gerri, are you game?"

“Yes, I'm gay!”

"I don't think you heard right. Are you G-A-M-E?"

“Oh, that. I thought gay was what you wanted me to answer so I cooperated even if I'm not. Anyway, if you are also going to ask sex from me, I'm more than willing to answer.”

"Alright, you have now just picked the category of sex, one of my not favorite topics, if you think you know what I mean about me being the other way around it when the topic is concerned. Your first question is, for one hundred thousand bucks, how long is the average local male..."

"Four inches at most but the propensity to exaggerate might have inflated this to the four-and-a-half reported in the latest survey. Which is a shame because I have read once from your next to the last former lover that your mouth can take up to seven..."

"Hold it there, Gerri. We are not talking here about my oral hygiene. This show is parental guidance recommended and now I am going to complete your first and only question on this subject. What is the average time he can hold a smile after rejection of an imploration for intimacy before frowning?"

"Not according to your mother."

"Wrong answer. You lose, Gerri."

H Plan

“Damn the government for ... and damn you whoever the hell you are L. Henares for the damnable Henares law.” The man nicked his wrist with a pen knife, popped a few pills, waved a very small calibre pistol halfway to his head, stared blankly at the camera for a while then dropped steadily to his side.

Commissar Teteng motioned to the Catholic priest if he wanted to see the recording again. The middle-aged man shook slightly and after several minutes of discourse begged to be excused. He was appointed to the review committee for expired social misfits and we usually include one of them here because their being misfits themselves potentially offers the benefit of their insights. Something about this incident bothered him and it was evident he did not want to take more part. He was instructed to make sure he would be able to return for the closing of our deliberation in another hour

and a half.

These nonconforming Skippers failed to see the beauty of the concept brought up by social commentator Henares during the Cory Aquino era. A young man or a boy who becomes of age begins his journey to adulthood by becoming the sexual ward assigned to a mature woman. Fifteen-fifty was considered ideal but it did not really matter. Girls who have just bloomed sexually would similarly be given as a long term gift to a dirty old man. In this way, the young would learn their place in society while they at the same time would have the benefit of learning from the sexual competence of their elders. And forget about notions of exploitation, it is all about training and preparation for a fulfilling life. The Philippine constitution was exceeding difficult to accommodate any manner of amendment however every notable politician and magistrate cooperated to ensure this exception would be passed even if it would be the first and only one to pass muster.

But we have been taking for granted too long a time the precept that the young must serve the old. And also that education is the most important thing in the world. A world that we try hard to convince ourselves envies us for our success as one of the greatest nations ever. Curiously though no country has yet attempted to imitate what we have achieved. But that might be because not one of them has what it takes which is why we always raise our foreheads as high as we can every time there is a foreign person. Filipino nation you are everything we were born to live for.

The subject mentioned a woman at the start of the recording. They were of the same age and district and for very obvious reasons off limits to each other. The priest immediately raised a query about the woman which revealed her murder two days earlier by a boy who was appointed to her that day. The priest almost choked on his words declaring what the dead woman must have meant to the dead man. We only have few uses for these priests but this is one of them, their ability to arrive at unsavory truths. How else could we have

determined that per the H law that man who skipped senior designation was a pervert.

Night in the Life of a Fish

There were twenty of them seated on the bleachers when I entered the aquarium. 19 nodded when I sat down beside her next to the far wall. Her name here was Cindy but to me, her face looked like a Pam. Just like my second year high school classmate did.

Two of the girls in front of us were comparing the cellular phones which, of course, they left inside their handbags in the lockers outside. No more small talk though when the curtain is opened.

As it goes up slowly, one more light is turned on. The routine then is simple to follow. Smile if still possible; cross the legs demurely; do not stare into the one-way glass unless you need to fix a stray hair or anything pronto; and by all means, move your hands and head deliberately like a proper maiden. Try to act as if the world does not exist beyond the glass. Be not conscious of your self.

It was only a few minutes before seven and the red curtain had been opened only once before I came in. Starting this time, they will be paying regular rates at the counter. 09 and 31 were caught during happy hour. Somehow, 31 would almost always manage to come back inside in less than one hour and a half. Some nights, before we go home at three, she has gone in and out up to five times.

Cindy was caressing her left pinky as if she wanted a cigarette. Before I could reply to her question about why I was late again tonight, the room became brighter. My skirt did not need to be adjusted. Nobody could tell if there was only one customer outside or a group of them looking in. Examining us one by one, from row one to row three. One pair of eyes would certainly pass a second look at 16. If I thought anyone in the room was better looking, it could only be her, Gretchen here. Many of us still feel a little bit of anxiety during the long minutes that follow. The intercom came on and called out 15. The curtain moved down slowly and I stood up to leave.

Roel was waiting outside. He said 32 to 35 years old, average build. Had one companion waiting in the lounge who might sample 09 when she is through with her first customer.

I do not hurry. We give them several minutes to simmer down once they are inside the massage booth. Alone in there with nothing to do and no one to talk to, their tension and self-doubt swing back and forth while I prepare my body.

When I went up, only one other booth was in use. I put down the lotion and powder kit on the lamp table. My eyes were just beginning to adjust to the dim light. He was lying down with just his shoes off. His forefinger was thick and short and close to his thumb. There are other signs I have learned and the most welcome to me are those that point to the goodness of small things.

Did he want his massage now? I turned to the lotion kit as he started to undress. Then I asked him to remove his shorts as well. They actually were jockeys but I until now I can not

bring myself to say briefs. Once, a customer protested that he did not even bare in front of his wife. I reminded him that his wife was not the person who was about to give him a nice massage.

Few know about the training we had for massage. All the girls here work on the fingertips to the toes in the same way. Competently. The first time I touch him between there is to check what is there. After a little while, the second time is to find out his response. I try not to overdo the massage or the fondling. He might fall into delicious sleep or it might all prematurely end so I would not be able anymore to ask him if he wanted full service. If he was going to pay the extra rate for it.

I have never been to other parlors so I do not know if they also have a clock inside their aquarium. We do not wear watches and jewelry.

The two were talking about cellular phones again, wondering what messages were now piling up and

fantasizing about passing the time here sending and receiving text. Cindy will be back anytime now. We do not ignore each other here but only a few become real friends. I might be comfortable with Cindy compared to most of the girls but I try not to be personally close. When I am through with this job, I will forget that I ever knew her or any one of them. To the other girls, I will also be a stranger. I think. I hope so.

Strangers. All of us. Like this male stranger now adding me to his knowledge. The previous hour I was worrying if I could get a third client. Being very friendly with a stranger is good for business. The manager needed not have told us that. I have prepared physically and mentally for the demands of my present friend, and once all his tensions and frustrations of the past day have been relieved, I will show to him just how much his friendship has affected me.

Time just passes by when you know your work very well. Five months here and I know my work very well. I do not

care if I do not like the things that I do and the things that they do to me. I can not earn the money I am earning by doing any other work that I can possibly do. And whatever anyone may think about my work, I earn every bit of what I earn from the parlor and the men who find happiness in my body.

Nobody can just hurt me here. Roel and the others take care of that. The parlor needs me in good condition and makes sure that I do not get sick. Even if they have bad breath or body odor, I try to be a good girl and do nothing worse than raise the price. The only ones that I will refuse are those who wear decorations.

But there is one thing here that, privately, I can not stand. Most of the time they ask you how you started out in this work, how long have you been doing this, if mama knows and who else. I have been asked many times why I work as an attendant. I tell them the familiar stories but I will never tell anybody the real reason why six months ago I left my

province and the details of what happened to me when I arrived in the city.

Inside the booth, we can play our business of pretend. Let us make believe that what you say your name is is really your name and that whatever else you say about yourself are the same things you say to those you don't have to lie to. I will do my part and give you what you are paying for.

You see the clock first when you open the door. Only fifteen minutes to go. I look down at the clock again and it is only five minutes now. I am one of the last to get up. I do not really know why but the curtain is opened up again every time we make our exit. Maybe to remind the girls that the world outside does not welcome them the way this place with the big aquarium does.

Welcome to the World Republic of Googookfaceb

“Take me to your leader.”

The short guy's request was common enough these days. Few relish being migrated from regular Face to Dickandcuntbook. But we were a recently organized division of Goog that was supposed to deal with persistent back integration issues with the Face hypernets. Those with accounts randomly selected for intermediary redirection could not be permitted to opt back in or else things would revert to the severe infrastructure overload that forced such distasteful measures in the first place. None of this would have happened if Goog was not able to overcome its reservations about letting the other company have access rights to the proprietary self-driving system which beyond all expectations went far beyond just autonomous cars and delivery drones but extended to majority ownership of all

significant makers of vehicles, and all the way now to self-driving airliners, near planet space flight, and command of centrally controlled military strike and defense assets on land, air and sea with the exception of regions in the vicinity of Africa ruled by jihad terror institutions. Face privately disclosed to them in the most honest way humanly possible that such things were of no import to it since there was only one thing they wanted and that was to be and to remain famous for which the key is to accumulate and maintain the greatest quantity of friends. It had been assumed that the merger of the processor, hybrid storage and fiber capabilities of Face and Goog would solve once and for all the service congestion issues endured by billions of users worldwide since after the second decade of the millennium rolled in. Both companies had previously implemented incompatible hardware and software technologies which required several levels of interfacing solutions stipulated by the two party business paradigm set down by the United Nations prior to its dissolution. Regardless of its eventual success, there still

was not enough to go around. As a matter of fact, it was soon discovered that with forward and backward integration spinning voraciously, even greater bandwidth and server computing muscle was needed by the personal and commercial cybermarket. Which is why we were forced to resort to appropriating confiscated assets of the dark internet or enter into sharing agreements with cooperative handlers of pirate operations. They get some sort of amnesty in exchange for a handful of petabytes for our hourly necessities. In order that the regular netfrastructure of GoogFace would not be in any danger of being compromised, a parallel service spun off and managed by our division was set up. Hence Dickandcunt, the social and entrepreneurial portal to which we had the thankless task of diverting more than two billion individual user and business accounts. No exceptions made or allowed. Even a few religious cults and institutions were forcibly resettled and everyday our public relations offices from Davos to Davao were deluged by indignant owners who were under the

impression that their precious accounts were being unfairly downgraded. People do need to understand one or two things. This is no longer 2017, the year Trump became president and attempted a foolish leveraged buyout of the globe. Someone (two of them actually) had to step into the chaos and become undisputed master of all things flesh and ethereal.

“It is futile to fight your government. The only reason we are doing this is because we have decided that this is what is best for you. But since we are open to suggestions, do tell us how you think we can better serve you in this system we have firmly put in place. You can rest assured in our official commitment to total quality and continuous improvement.”

Independence Day Message

This being the most important holiday of the year, I will take a break from expository diatribes against our favorite fake national language, the one based one hundred percent on Tagalog. I have to admit that this is my favorite among the very short stories I am quite so pleased to be sharing.

Alright, I give up. Zebras don't change their colors. Just one potshot, I promise. Today commemorates 104 years, supposedly, of Philippine independence. While the event is sanctimoniously thought to have formally severed the colonial dominion of Spain and America over the islands, colonial rule simply changed hands from foreign to local, with the provinces and their languages now under the boot of Manila.

The Part that Comes First

Alexander considered his belly. It rose and fell slightly with each short breath, a fingertip caressing the distended skin delicately. Propped by a large pillow, he drew the linen up to cover his nakedness. His tummy had grown so, he could not see down his crotch nor was there much sensation left in the area. But he did not care to know at this stage of his pregnancy if he still retained the genitals he was born with. Tomorrow he gives birth and tomorrow is the first day of his life as a woman.

His visitor stirred to wakefulness on the chair beside his bed. "Gotta go, Pare," intoned Achilles.

"I wish you would stay longer. Having you here makes it easier. I never knew what happened to the woman I had sex with."

"She did not fertilize. Only you did. It happens sometimes. It is not all the time that a woman and a man have sex and then both become pregnant. For the woman, sometimes, but for

the man it never fails."

"It makes me sad that they are taking away my baby boy tomorrow. They will not let my boy be with me just like our kind must be kept a secret to the world."

"Prepartum blues, don't let it bother you. They cannot let you keep your first baby boy because it is going to take time for your body to change completely into a woman's. And we are not a secret to the Sentro ng Wikang Filipino. For many years now, they have made our island their project."

"You mean those awful outsiders who seem to be studying us, Achilles? I feel some reason to fear them and I think some day they will destroy us."

Alexander's childhood friend laughed. "On the contrary. They are not studying us for they have no need to steal our words. We are in fact providing an important service for them. One that will allow them to fully control the country that does not even know our kind."

"Tell me Keel why you did not have sex. You are older than me and have passed two chances already. Do you wait for me to become a woman and then we can get pregnant together?"

"I do not wish to become a woman. Hope you understand. Although I am too old already, I convinced them to see some other use in their world for me. They made me do an audition today and they said I sounded just perfect for the job, one on what they call television. Alex, I am going into show business!"

The Part that Comes After

Sandra has by now gotten used to owning a vagina. Keeles barely figured in her thoughts anymore. There were many other things to think about. In two years' time, so much has changed.

For their kind, it might have begun when an Italian

archaeologist stumbled on their hidden island and promptly reported his discovery to an acquaintance at the most powerful cultural agency of the dictatorial government. No one has heard of him again. Ten years later, the same agency with yet another name for itself and its false god gripped the unknown island with the same iron rule that was expunged from all the other islands in one swoop. Now, all baby boys were removed from their mothers or nurses after lactation had weakened and were dumped in the big house the outsiders had built. There they were taught to speak in a funny tongue. If these are the only words Sandra clearly recalls, these are what the mothers clinging helplessly on the fences hear of their drills day in and night out: "Magandang gabi, bayan!"

As in most places elsewhere, things were not always like this. This used to be an island of idyll, one unseen by passing boats, an indifferent sight to the indifferent eye of the outsider. It was so that the island kept on, men and women bearing children, babies growing up to manhood. But what

was it that the outsiders despised in the islanders? Just last month, Sandra could not help overhearing one of them castigating a youth in the adjoining copulation hut. He was good for nothing, one who could not perform it properly with the woman even under his careful supervision. He was roundly cursed for the islanders' accursed ability to cast off penises and have an entirely different organ thereafter. It was unfair, he said, that an uncivilized people could do something that he only... One final mind-shattering shriek and the one who loved to speak Filipino stormed out.

The Part that May Be an Epilogue

"You cannot be certain of this. I don't know whether to laugh or call you a fool for believing that they are getting all those trainees of theirs from an uncharted island of hermaphrodites."

"Wherever they are getting them or whether you believe me, they are getting very effective support from some place for

their promotion of the Filipino dialect."

"And there you will go again, singling out the barkers of ABS-CBN and in more recent years GMA-7. I agree, they sound inhuman..."

"One more screeeeeeeeeeeeching announcement in Filipino fruitcakespeak and I myself will go nuts!"

"Even so, you can't just attribute them to a misbegotten branch of humanity. Any veterinarian could have operated on their testes and have gotten the same results."

"Nothing in this world damages normal minds the way their demodulated voices do. You keep asking for evidence, just go to the two universities."

"I remember when this whole thing started last month. That old woman who called herself the Manay of her tribe jumped from the twentieth floor of the Mental Hospital. She was crying that their young boys were being brought to Manila, that they would not grow to become women, and

that their tribe would not be able to make any more children and would soon die."

"Nothing makes sense anymore. We are supposed to study strategies for neutralizing the idolaters of Filipino not engage in fantastic speculation. Madame Chairman, I have to move that all our preposterous discussions be stricken out of the minutes."

"Anyone seconding the motion? No objections? The next item on the agenda then. The race is becoming desperate. Another presidential candidate has approached us. She promises her commitment..."

Ex Post Postscript 2016

In her almost ten years, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo performed as the best and most competent head of state and government of the Philippines. But she failed once in attempting to reform the country and never tried again after

that failure. When she left, hopelessness returned. The cultural dislocation brought about by the Tagalog national language imposed by Marcos and Aquino and the concurrent economic decrepitude attributable to it is blissfully ignored by sheep made blind and deaf by ABS-CBN.

Push

"He'd better be. We're not making enough money from the gate lately. But if what he does is pinch dead babies' heads out, how can he be an expert on the hymen?"

Mayga stared through a new Rayban at her sole and lonesome theatre manager. "Boss Lot, we know his job is pulling out unwanted fetuses but I think he was taught in medical school how the hymen would look like in an unused vagina."

"Make sure to add in the script that after the examination the doctor expects to see the girl many months later in his clinic to extract something growing inside her. The audience will surely love that."

"I'll talk to the announcer," assured Mayga before leaving the cubicle.

The educational features of ABS-CBN news and magazine

programs frequently presented the favorite techniques routinely applied by specialist doctors in the life termination field and the one she best remembered was the pumping of some kind of saline solution plus a toxin or two that do not harm the girl or woman patient's uterine and vaginal tissues too much. To our theatre's poor Mayga there were only a few regrets in her life as had been divulged to me in our long work history. Partial surgical mutilation was the only procedure she could afford even with government health subsidy but as always our government was kind enough to bless her with gender reassignment. If only she was born a biological female then she could have gone through this reputedly rewarding experience of having fetal garbage flushed out of one's reproductive system.

When I stood up I thought of checking if the rain outside had stopped but then decided to check for newly torn upholstery starting with the rear cinema seats.

Inside the theatre, only one pinlight at the left side of where

there used to be a projection screen was on. Jingo stopped mopping the narrow stage floor to shoot the cigarette butt he was holding to the pail. He looked down to Mayga approaching on the center aisle. "Two hours to go. You brought food?"

"One hour and a half," corrected Mayga. "We'll eat after the defloration is conducted."

The city used to have more than a hundred movie theatres. Now every single one of them had closed. People did not watch all the movies they wanted to see in the comfort of their home just a few years ago. Now everyone did. As the cinema business slowly died, the older theatres were demolished unless there were born again business takers. Some of the newer ones were converted to drinking and partying places, there even was an experiment with seating only short time hotelier stuff, and two became sex abattoirs after securing special government permits.

"Have you rehearsed by yourself, Jingo? Boss Lot wants you

to try a few new lines aside from the German joke you have already killed to death."

"You mean the one that goes what is no longer a virgin in German, broken...?"

"Look, you can be offensive to all the women in the world, just say what the audience wants to hear. But you don't have to demoralize our man too much by making fun of his below average penis. Ninety-nine percent of all males in the Philippines are like that. I should know because I used to be one. What if our man cannot get it up long enough or fast enough as a result as a result of the negative moral support he is getting? Try to give some sort of encouragement alongside your usual humor. Besides, we do not use killer penises because we do not want to hurt the girls long term."

Our janitor-announcer flashed a partially toothy smile to indicate he liked hearing Mayga's reminder. I thought there were some other things I needed to add to what she said but I had to answer the buzzer at the ticket stall.

“Early, aren't we Doc?”

“Finished aborting my abortion quota this afternoon. In my profession, out can get tired of poking veteran vaginas all the time. This noon, I thought what you offered for me to be inspecting a first-timer was going to be a nice distraction breaking my routine. The hospital administration of our megacity medical centre might not be convinced of the morality of my new part-time job here though. Abortion is socially desirable but public debates still rage in some quarters about the acceptability of commercialized defloration.”

“I can't truly understand all the fuss, Doc. Some things you can do for free but if there is a way to monetize one thing or another, the money thing should prevail over the free thing, don't you think? Please take that seat in front while we try to rehearse Jingo over there.”

We had only a single event last week and it turned out to be a disaster. The act was not done right by the torero so the

ticketholders rioted and had almost killed the previous house doctor in the middle of the aborted melee. Quick thinking on his part to promise them that after he has surgically repaired the hymen and then it was even going to be more realistic next time, tighter aperture, the sound of pain all the more gratifying to one and all.

"Push. Push." I thought it was just Mayga shouting and clapping inside the theatre but the good doctor abortionist enthusiastically joined our rehearsal.

Jingo pointed his hand at the soon to be filled seats and barked to his imaginary audience. "Each one of you shut up. Don't you see our bull has not even pulled down his pants yet. There you are. Come on hurry up. Don't keep our audience waiting.

"Master, at this point, when they see how unimpressive his penis is, they will start booing." He pleaded that it would be most appropriate for him to chastise the designated bull at this point for his small size. I wanted to argue but maybe if

he proceeds extemporaneously and with a modicum of tactfulness when the curtain opens a little later, everything will be alright.

The examiner came early, our rehearsal was done earlier than we usually finish, and now the jail van is here early as well. The guards will be letting out the lucky punk a few minutes after we introduce the girl picked by the social welfare people from the street late last night. They are usually recent runaways if not the smarter streetwaifs who have outsmarted rapists up to this point. After that, it will be time for her and the one lucky prisoner lent to us by the justice department out of the few millions they are detaining in hundreds of jail complexes to know each other.

I have just spoken to the van driver who revealed to me that the bull they brought tonight is another condemned convict who will soon face public pay per view execution telecast live on the paid cable channel of ABS-CBN for the local and overseas worker or expat market for which the selection for

hanging, decapitation or chemical death is determined by the quantity of social media likes by the latter audience in recognition of their consistently being a larger source of revenue. He lamented that he did not have the extra cash to enjoy even just one of the two performances of his passenger but I ignored the implied plea for a freebie. When I saw that they only had prison food for our star to eat, I made sure that he would have some of the delicious meal and drinks ordered regularly by our theatre's operator and owner for the crew and doctor. The girl we always bring in a state of hunger and panic-anxiety to the stage for more intense effect but it wouldn't hurt to provide some pampering to our penetrator and boost his performance nerves. I have a good feeling that this our one hundredth show since opening early last year would be as successful as the ninety-five others we finished profitably.

Bill of Sand

"Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that every single member of the chamber has attended this special session."

The president of the senate knew how to project a smile. She fielded a particular one for every different occasion, and just for her fellow senators in session this morning, a wizened and expectant one.

"The joint special committee for justice and entertainment may now open our extraordinary session."

"Esteemed colleagues in the highest legislative body of our beloved land, let me bring our attention to the bill submitted last week in support of the initiative to regulate the sex trade and bring under control the rising extent of sexually-oriented criminality that we had henceforth deliberated and thereafter assigned by the majority for urgent revision by the combined legal research staff. Beyond its prescriptions for the

application of sandy materials, icebug stimulants and KY lubricant for wetting the private parts of convicted offenders, you are invited to appraise the proposed law for its redeeming social value and superlative impact beneficial to the national economy. We are about to enter a new era in criminal punishment and it will be one that will be profitable to the law-fearing citizens of our nationalist society. Senator, you are raising your hand. You may address the senate president.”

“Madame president, do I understand correctly from the good senator that cost-benefit analyses has clearly established the advantages accruing to our centralized political system and that the greater glory of the Filipino nation, race and species will be fully upheld and to no extent diminished as a consequence of implementing the proposed legislation?”

“Your response, senator.”

“And it is in the affirmative for our confidence in the bill is without equal. Honorable members of the august senate,

need we demonstrate further the beauty of a punishment such as this one that will deter with utmost effectiveness the despicable crimes of unregistered prostitution and sexual molestation conducted without the benefit of lawful countenance? We end the mockery thrown with impunity by these most dastardly lawbreakers in affront to the supremacy of law in our land.”

“Thank you, senator. But as we all need to see this law in action with our own eyes, we are adjourning for a few minutes and will return to this chamber after two hours. The senate dining hall has been prepared for our eyewitness session inasmuch as the venue is better designed than this floor for close range viewing of a toro scene. If I have been informed correctly, a contraption resembling a tiny sand mattress is now ready for use atop our dining table where two subjects who have been administered a BFAD-approved cocktail of metamphetamine, ecstasy and Korean bug will be made to copulate under said conditions right before our very own eyes.”

“Esteemed colleagues of our great senate representing at large the entire citizenry of our great country, allow me to praise the principal proponents of the sand bill for a law well produced and let me state my humble hope that we can pass it in the shortest possible time for our dear leader in the palace to sign as a permanent and lasting fixture of our judicial system.”

“Madame president, I likewise submit my concurrence to the wise words of my honorable colleague. I myself am thoroughly convinced that the rapist animal who has just been led out of the session hall has learned his lesson regarding the perpetration of an illicit act of sex. Let no one fall under the misimpression that the law will turn a blind eye to those who avoid paying for the license fee for one-time rape.”

“Nay, madam president, let me point out to the one who has just taken the floor that the same criminal he has just

witnessed as having been traumatized by this barbaric excuse for judicial retribution was thrusting his still erect and bloodied organ at the nearest attendant who was wrapping him up. Surely, the proponents of deterrent value are hallucinating.”

“Mister senator, may I remind you to be more respectful of your colleagues and to not use inappropriate words like barbaric which may tarnish the reputation of our highly regarded institution. Besides, you do not even need a good imagination to predict that tomorrow after the drug has lost its potency, the rapist criminal will forever stop entertaining notions of forcibly eliciting the sexual participation of a weaker human being away from the eyes of the law. Not after what he has gone through, no Sir!”

“And just what was this minority of one senator up to calling the president of the infallible senate, madame without an E. His hypocrisy, Madame president is palpable. I saw him watching it the entire time and watch it was not the only

thing he did. The senator enjoyed what he was looking at the entire time.”

“I thank you for defending my honor but we have had enough of this. No matter how much it is that we senators may disagree among ourselves, that can never be allowed to detract from the fact that we senators are the most special persons in the whole country. And may anyone who disagrees with that proclamation of our extraordinary status have sand forever tarred to his or her sex organ.”

Dress Code

senate

RESOLUTION NO. 666

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of the midnight law signed on May 2016 popularly known as the anti-family code, males and females are encouraged to switch gender identities as many times as they want as long as the corresponding fees demanded by the census office are satisfied in full, in order to put an end to confusion and to mutually explicate expectations for multiplicities of sexual congress: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, To adopt, as it hereby adopts, the following: RULES OF WHAT CLOTHES TO WEAR

- I. Males or females wearing skirts are only going to be allowed to assume the inferior role in consummating the act of fornication with their partner(s). If you want to wear pants then you should take the superior or equal position after disrobing.

II. Compliance will be examined by the Bureau of Internal Revenue from mobile phone footage customarily uploaded to them for levy purposes. Penalties not exceeding the amount for undocumented sex acts will be applied by the tax examiner.

III. And since what you are doing is an official act in our unitary presidential centralist imperial republic, for that duration you are compelled to speak only in the national language imposed in the constitution that you should know by now is Tagalog.

(Sgd.) president of the senate

Street of Love

I saw them march as I came out from work after dawn. Not just a march really for they were a torrent of bodies streaming along a street that they filled to capacity. But I was not afraid of them as I drew nearer. Not a bad day for a stroll. The clouds were cooperative, it was not going to rain, they were just there to shield us from the heat of the sun now beginning to rise.

And not that I had a choice really. You won't see more people in the most crowded of the big malls. All these people massed on the thoroughfare had stymied all transportation for those headed home like me. I could not get a ride if I wanted to so here I am riding with the flow instead.

I heard about this one the other day. It was supposed to be in protest against the rise in fuel prices. These have gone up again after rising unseasonably just the other week. Each

time it did, so did the government's cut on the pump price, it was as if they wanted it to go up and up so they can squeeze more taxes from the working class. Well class, it sure has been a struggle.

Our pace was casual. Curiously there was hardly anyone screaming slogans and stuff, even the bullhorns seemed muted. It was as if everyone was saving his energy for something momentous. I turned to the years-removed-from-college type beside me. I noticed the slightly built female beside him when I asked what was the program at the rally point. After glancing at me, he looked straight ahead and gripped the hand of the girl even more tightly.

Some people take their protest too seriously. I am ostensibly just in it for the walk, I agree though that the authorities should be reminded forcefully of their excesses when needed. But just how forceful and when to tell when such outpouring is needed? Let's see here, last month it was one hour protest of absolute silence, the previous one was a

shout until your voice becomes totally hoarse and one of the earliest ones actually degenerated into a rave till you drop dance party when a suspected government agent plugged an mp3 player to the arena audio system. New age disco suddenly sounded like backmasked anthems and patriotic lullabies set to simplistic ska and reggae beats. The organizers had since learned from their amateurish mistake but have stubbornly committed to holding an original protest format each time. Now what was that going to be this time?

Walking far is not as tough when you are not by yourself on the sidewalk striding robotically and thinking ahead of every step of where your destination is and how much longer are you going to take. The steps become lighter when you are with a massive crowd even if the air is thicker with competition for the same element floating in the atmosphere all of you are breathing.

I wondered if my recollection was correct about the Technicolor Protest Party having been behind the larger

rallies against the government. They were the ones who dealt with the leak of confidential internal party matters not too few days ago. Some of the purists of the Protest party had protested that their central committee treacherously decided to sabotage their own chances to win the past general elections. It was all about the core party constituency not wanting to give up their role of institutional opposition organized as a Congress of the streets. In order not to win they had to lose. I love their sense of humor and destiny. Protests, always and nothing else but a protest against something. I asked myself again what it was they were going to do this time.

It was then that I saw this sales representative from the country's second biggest condom manufacturer handing out a sample carton to the protest participants. Boxes were opened all around me and the merchandise was passed on by hand with remarkable efficiency. I remember now. So that is why the clergy have stayed away from away from this. It was the first ever mass public sex denunciation of

government policy. Boy was there ever a day like this lucky day for me?

But luck in my case would be along the line of spotting somebody of the opposite sex who was fairly attractive to me and entering into mutual agreement to fornicate in the grass at the appointed time together with a multitude of other paired protesters. But though this was the type of protest I found most agreeable, I decided shortly that there was nobody who agreed mutually in such an enthused manner.

Which is another way of saying that the non-abnormal folks I could see marching ahead or behind came with their own preselected partners while the rest looked as if they were the type who got off watching others do it or were in it for a blind free for all gang bang deathmatch.

I decided to stealthily back out just as the head of the march reached the national park. Slowing, pausing, and sidestepping until I could make my departure, I thought for one brief moment how the organizers could have prepared

measures so the participants of their massive orgy don't lose the belongings and articles of clothing they are soon going to take off. Or had they? If not, several thousands would confront the lingering regret of not being able to find one's phone after enjoying sex. Otherwise if the Technicolor Protest have done something like collect the numbers of individual participants so they can call up lost units later and cajole for their return to the owners, then the party deserves to be commended and probably even handed the reins of power over the imperialist central unitarist government. As a superior token of reward, maybe they should at the same time be licensed to operate the biggest sex club in the planet.

Instead what I could visualize in my mind was the grass in the park littered with new shoes and old socks come the final minutes of morning after they have dispersed. There still wasn't a ride you could get. I had gone on my way for a quarter when an instantaneous white flash and loud clap of thunder came up from behind me. The second bolt of lightning struck the spot I would have reached just inside the

park had I left not earlier. I stopped counting after seven, eight and nine came in succession and started running. Fortunately for me the direction I needed to take was free of obstacles.

Stem

Hospitals and schools since the 1990s have sprouted all over and established their trade as among the most successful businesses in terms of the ability to squeeze the peso juice from common people. Schools that are also hospitals are even more noteworthy for performing as profit centers for the families that own them. This is a country where the people who inhabit it have somehow turned into hypochondriacs and sheepish consumers of all sorts and inducements of medical persuasion. Herbal and conventional treatments are equally profitable given their extensive public acceptability. Given this high degree of health services activity, we might question how much further into the future will system-wide support hold up under the present unsustainable insurance and individual expense model. Having provided a very general overview of the public health system in the country, we now move on to the subject of our study.

We begin with the interview transcript featuring two unnamed doctors from a top university medical center discussing with our senior field researcher their unit's best practices for optimizing revenues from the fetal stem cell harvest trade. This country was a latecomer in the fetus supply business but has since achieved the same level of success it had in matching enterprise process outsourcing pioneer India. The first hurdle was the addition of sufficient abortion, cold storage and packaging facilities inside participating hospitals. The earliest significant contribution came from underground abortionists who were granted licenses regardless of their absence of formal medical background. Most women's health care centers now take advantage of their indisputable skill with the exception of the more prestigious medical institutions that insist on their own in-house trained abortionists.

Importers from mainland China hold a worldwide monopoly in collecting the raw materials from fetus producing countries and in global sales of the finished products.

Gestation terms vary per buyer specifications with three months as the average preferred age of the fetus. At least one is known to pay a premium for fetuses extracted from teenagers. Most of the production comes from late tweens but the assurance of high income has encouraged even much older women to disregard health warnings against their engagement such that most of those who do so work under the table. One of the doctors concede that, although their corporation discourages the practice, frequent exceptions are made in consideration of economic hardships endured by these women who obviously have incomes insufficient to be able to afford the latest high end mobile phones made in China.

With decades of abundant fetal extracts and unhampered experimental activities behind them, China's researchers had in no time made autologous stem therapy less practical in comparison to their products. The pluripotency of embryonic inner cell masses as well as the abundance of multipotent cells derived from the material enabled medical

entrepreneurs in mainland China to grab worldwide leadership in the *cellula praecursoria* industry. The Philippine government jumped on the opportunity to enter into a preferential supply deal with the Chinese in exchange for undisputed control by the communist party of China of the southeast Asian sea lane to its west that the country's oligarchy had previously neglected to secure territorially and had effectively ceded to full possession by the communist navy at the time Noynoy Aquino was president.

The country had for several years relied on salary remittances by overseas posted laborers but now had the means to boost moribund domestic economic activity by cultivating a human embryo production work force that reported regularly to government-regulated health facilities rather than work as slaves abroad. Its K-12 education system is geared primarily towards preparing young girls for the future task of repetitive short-term pregnancy and enriching the economy from export sales of their fetuses while tertiary education is circumscribed as for men only.

Support from the male population is assured by the stipulation that all pregnancies save for those females with varying degrees of infertility conditions requiring artificial fertilization be initiated using natural methods only for the requisite instances of genitally correct copulation for successful impregnation to be determined. Males who are out of favor with the political establishment though are denied participation in the nationwide program while certain individuals who have proven their nationalism and patriotism had been rewarded with daily service to designated females in their corresponding stage of the pregnancy-abortion cycle.

It cannot be more obvious at this point that no other economic activity on local soil can match this degree of empowerment enjoyed through gainful and satisfying employment by women in the B, C and D social strata while potentially opening upstream business opportunities for auxiliary services. To underscore its seriousness in protecting the country's supply trade leadership, the

government has negotiated with mainland financiers for conversion of its antiquated navy craft as well as of a number of interisland ferry vessels to hospital ships for extending abortion services to remote locations. The government does not care if a supply glut will ensue as long as other countries are warned of what it can and will do to fight for this market. Additionally, the executive branch has abruptly closed for good the House of Representatives in order that the senate can meaningfully concentrate on a priority bill that will deputize male citizens to expand their fatherly duties to child-bearing age daughters in support of the fetus abortion industry.

Heart

Tibur got off from work and before he could cross the street he paused on the sidewalk by the main road. It seemed to be an episode of vertigo and it came from nowhere. When he opened his eyes he thought he was still in the southernmost business district of the archipelago but the place looked different.

There was a tavern next to where he stood and in he went. Jack, an old friend, waved him over. Wasn't he in the other city? Long time no see, they greeted each other from a distance. The evening news had just started. He did not recognize the newscaster on the black and white television station but the name was familiar. The story was about the former president who absconded with Dovie Beams to the north American states on the day his term ended. In his place a celebrity prostitute was said to have elected been elected but he did not remember this occurring twenty-five years

ago. People were heard saying that the Philippines was being punished for the shamelessly carried out act of adultery but the report dismissed this as superstition.

A few presidents have come and gone as far as Tibur could recall but there was nothing that had really changed in the country after all the time that had passed. Wait a minute, what happened to all of those years that he had gone through? That president he knew did not elope with an American woman, in fact what he did was make himself dictator. Tibur sensed that it was as if he was not far removed from the time that thing happened. He dared not ask anyone and took the weekly magazine occupying the rack then took a stool far enough from the other customers.

Spain defeated the United States in the 1898 war and colonized its vanquished opponent according to an article on the recent and unexpected rise of Estados Unidos as world's foremost economic power. The Philippines was set free by Spain in 1910 and became the most progressive country in

Asia for quite a while. Vietnam was only recently granted independence by France and was now negotiating for confederation with the Philippines in order to put the southeast Asian trade route under their joint control. The Philippine-Vietnamese confederation would likewise be among the top five global economies.

Tibur moved to the bar for a stiff rum and was barely done with his first sip when Jack came by to say he had to go someplace with his two companions and left him a medium Tabacalera. They said they would just see each other again soon and then Tibur started thinking once more about what he was doing here. “How do I get back? That is if I can even get back. I should not even be drinking and smoking a cigar.” The memory of the chest pain he experienced this morning early at work returned to him. He looked at the mirror behind the glass hooks and saw somebody much younger than his brother Filomeno who was many, many years his junior.

The water from the faucet was meant to cool his face after splashing it and to clear his eyes. He planned to sit down several minutes and then go out. Tibur could say to himself the name of the city he is in right now but what about that one he was in this morning, noon and afternoon? What was that city called? How is it that he can recall the details of his conversation with a visiting engineer that proceeded well into their lunch of tuna apapangig and humba?

They were discussing how much easy money was made by pulverizing and reconstructing highway stretches still in perfectly good condition and adding an expensive asphalt overlay. The top layer and the padded subgrade yet again increases the road grade relative to existing establishments and habitation which in effect makes it act as an even better barrier to floodwater flow. His guest mentioned how their latest contract would later intersect with a superhighway toll project planned in another two years. He declined to comment on rumors that their firm engaged in child sacrifice practices for flagship projects. He did admit though that the

standard operating procedure followed disregards provisions for utility, conduit and drainage networks in order to enhance the potential for future digging and covering awards.

His mind was clearer by the time the door closed behind him. A few empty taxis had passed but he had no idea where to be going. So he sat at the plant box of the building further down the road and closed his tired eyes. Take me out of this place! He could not decide if it was twenty plus years he had lost or gained but he wanted no part of it.

Not much later he heard what faintly sounded like a vehicle with a siren approaching and then the rear door of a van slamming shut. He could only manage to open one eye and saw that it was a person in white ministering cardiopulmonary resuscitation in a not so gentle manner to him.

Promiscuous

Police Chief Superintendent Pinky Poison confirmed at a press conference held inside the Maasin City station that a middle aged woman was arrested after her release from the metropolitan general hospital and brought to a secure location. He acknowledged this was the same woman reported in an exclusive story published by the sensationalist national broadsheet newspaper that cannot be named to have spent all her years in the past century agelessly before health officials discovered her anomalous history during her recent admission to the hospital in an unconscious state.

Their controversial report alleged that the woman, whose name we are omitting for reasons of respect for privacy unlike the abovementioned newspaper, had been linked to an extensive compendium of multiple sex partners in Spain, the Americas, Japan and Manila. Over a period of 79 years under ten assumed identities that were checked and said to

match identically. This, if true, would mean a pattern of residency in one country over several years before the people who know her would become suspicious of her inability to become old.

As confusing as this tale is, a college professor from the imperial capital who gained notoriety from theorizing an alternate reality that begins at a level below the surface where the world turns upside down and expands inside out disseminated a public statement to mediamen after the conference claiming to have been confided the woman's secret on the last night of 1999.

He reveals that in her world the supreme authority schedules the first and only sex experience of females. This ritual is followed religiously in preparation for the several years of multiple birthing from insemination they obligate women to fulfill. Only 99 sexually functional males are said to be allowed alive in their world at any one time. Majority of male babies are killed after delivery and boys who reach

sexual maturity are executed if 99 viable males are still around. This professor who need not be named by us did not indicate though what happens to their males once they become useless as livestock for artificial reproduction.

If any reader of ours finds it impossible to give credence to these fables, so would the denial issued by the chief in contravention of the claims and allegations currently circulated. He in fact has even related the incident to renewed efforts of insurgent elements allegedly belonging to the outlawed Roman Catholic Church to bring down the unitary republic. The chief appealed to the public to resist attempts to upset the peace and harmony prevailing in society after the imperialist government shut down all mainstream Christian denominations and permitted only the operation of religious-political institutions that seek inspiration from Satan in collaboration with the devil-worship by broadcast service offered free of charge by ABS-CBN. But until evidence is presented to the contrary, many have elected to remain skeptical of the centralist authorities'

avermment that it has not yet completely eliminated the Catholics and other opponents of the devil.

xRay 2015

Barquibom was not your average college student. He could root his not really impressive but functional enough cellphone and put in original or customized modifications of mobile applications. One day he came across an old magazine with a small advertisement for X-Ray glasses. Rubbish he thought. But I could do better was his mind's declaration as he set on to combine the capabilities of computer graphic imaging, streaming capture and full body editing programs in his workstation. He would just have to set the data mode of his mobile phone online to be able to tap the U.S. NSA repository of user camera captured nude images.

Barquibom tested the video app the following day during his mandatory Pilipino subject. Most teachers of the Tagalog national language are usually female but the one in his class was a not really masculine male. Somehow the body image

rendered below the head turned out to be of the feminine variety but he was privately satisfied with the result. Later that night his father who did not own a smart phone borrowed his to see if the camera function was worth the trouble. He loved Barquibom's mother very much so she was the one he focused the screen on as she served them on the family table. He frowned as if the totally naked body on the small screen he was looking at was not the one he had been familiar with for the last twenty years and returned the phone to Barquibom vowing to never buy a gadget like that.

Barquibom had to attend the day after the next one a compulsory event in school where most dearly beloved commander in chief Straightnessity Alley Bend Over was going to lecture them on the merits of corruption and the profits of incompetence. There was one television camera to cover the Tagalog monologue of dear leader but it would not operate on this particular afternoon.

None of the station and government staff could be convinced

to part with their smartphones in case they would miss out on important text messages and Facebook and Twitter and Snapchat updates. So the Presidential Security Group borrowed the student's most expensive possession without even asking and told him to tell them how to activate wireless network sharing in order that the ABS-CBN transceiver unit can upload the phone video capture to the live nationwide broadcast feed and the special feature later on at night on TeeeeVeeeeeeePaaaaaah Troll. Full high definition cam resolution is never a bad thing. Seconds before action time Mr. Straightnessity was right in front of the stage with a minimicrophone on his collar and facing him was the cameraperson holding Barquibom's amazing phone in landscape position about to press the cam start icon with his right thumb.

Until Death Do Part You

Ordinary people, meaning those in the majority who have inadequate literacy skills, have difficulties understanding the myriad changes introduced by the twice revised family, or as formerly called, civil code. As a prelude, I always educate clients seeking marriage of the long story why it has come to be that government no longer accepts processing and officiation of weddings. There were many who received the development with great relief especially since certain presidents have made no bones about their receptiveness to same natural born gender marriage. Now that the state has run away from the marriage business, only churches recognized for the legitimacy of their religious quality have the right to sacramentally bestow it to qualified couples.

The only recourse for those who have no religion is to sue in court someone whom they want to ensnare in what is a lesser equivalent of a marriage contract to follow a judgment

ordering domestic partnership. There have been times that I have won such cases for my clients but I can't recall having left the court with a clean conscience after obtaining a favorable ruling. I am happier dissuading male or female clients from squandering the half million consultation, acceptance and court fee total that departs from their pocket win or lose. Here is a sampling of my most persuasive one liners.

“Taxation and death are inevitable once you start breathing the air on Planet Earth.”

“The personification of evil in human society started with the formation of the first government. You would not want your future family to have its roots buried on evil ground.”

“Walk on an aisle littered with flowers to your husband to be. Wait at the altar for your bride to reach you and become united before God. As woman and man. And for goodness's sake have government should stay out of marriage.”

The Season of Christmas Cards

"People are going to send Christmas cards again this year, Polly. I have finished with the two dozen you bought yesterday. Twenty-four CEOs and presidents, chairs, same people as two years ago. Polly?"

The greeting cards were stacked in the middle of Ferdie's executive desk. The first names following "Dear" and his initials below were the only scribblings he had to make inside the envelopes. Where was Polly, he thought aloud when he saw that his office door was shut. He picked up his cellular phone and pressed the first autodial key. He hung up after two rings.

"Grandfather." Polly stuck the door to the wall and sat in front of Ferdie. "Visitors."

One of the things that pleased him about his granddaughter was that she looked at him in the eye. "I'm through with

these. If Sally is not here before two, call the head office to make sure these are finished and mailed immediately. Where do I put this piece of paper that you can easily recall where it is next year." The printout contained names of businessmen and executives.

"Your address book. Right drawer." She was watching the old man sign the cards this past hour from the garden. Her back now was to the portrait of a handsome boy which she could see through the window from outside. The painting doesn't resemble him now at all. Grandfather is narcissistic, that's all.

"I will not go the Christmas party downtown beginning this year. They are already used to not seeing me anymore anyway. When does your vacation start? I want to go to the country and bring you with me."

Polly did not care to spend her vacation at the farm but anywhere grandfather went was where she should be. "After tomorrow, then Tuesday is the last day of classes,

Wednesday. I'll go."

"Who did Rico say the guests are?"

"The attorney who had an appointment with you. We'll let them in now. Autodial three, two rings." Polly put the phone back on the table. Ferdie picked it for a moment and shook his head. Never used the tiny contraption for talking, just for ringing. "So what year are you right now?"

"Graduating already in three months, Grandfather."

"Uh-huh, and what course?"

"High school. After that, any course will do. Even no course will do." Polly laughed but her grandfather looked concerned.

"I have forgotten again. It has been so long that you have been the only one left to me. And you always try to be more than enough for me."

Ferdie glanced left at the hand knocking on the door. "Mr. Carso, I am Jake Duwa. This is Jack, my grandson. I hope

you don't mind."

"Good afternoon. Polly bring those two chairs closer here."
Attorney Duwa sat next to the table and set his cane awkwardly next to Jack before taking Ferdie's extended hand.

"I don't really use it so much but there are times my legs can't seem to carry me. The doctor's note I have brought will tell you that I have six months more to live at most."

"No, thanks. Don't have to read the thing, Jake? And call me Ferdie."

"I had a hard time believing your ad," the attorney briefly recollected the first time he read it. And the next one the following day. "After I spoke to your former secretary I realized it was not a prank but I still do not know what this is all about. Is it alright if the children are here?"

"Polly is my only family. And if your grandson already knows your condition, then there is no reason why our

families should not be around when we discuss the contract I want to make with you."

"He has no secrets with me, sir," acknowledged Jack.

"Jake, I have asked other people regarding you so I already know what I need to know. What do you know about me?"

"Only what I read in the papers. You officially retired from Color Food in 1999 but stayed behind the scenes for almost a year. Little by little you have disappeared from the conglomerate's affairs but you still have the single largest holdings."

"Don't look incredulous now, I want you to make representations for me in the afterlife." Ferdie shifted his eyes to Polly while waiting for Jake to respond.

"You mean when I am dead I am to begin working on a case for you?"

"That is why you have to know a little more about me, Jake. When I join you, I want you to be there prepared to defend

me, to argue for me. Please take no offense. I have to have the most honest lawyer money can buy when I am gone."

Jake tried not to look skeptical for he felt the man was serious. "Any particular reason?"

Ferdie saw that Jack was also looking intently at him then turned once again to Polly. "I did not become a wealthy man and stay as one by doing only the nicest things, Jake. And right now my memory is playing tricks on me. I can't remember half of what I have done in my life and I can't do half of what I'm used to doing anymore. So let us say that if I had the chance to have an advocate exonerate me for my sins down here when my time comes to go up there, then I will do what I can while I still can."

"And my remuneration for that will be as what you put in the classified ad? You did not ask for a priest or anything. You want someone who is used to defending individuals."

Casual mention of payment almost always heralds closure of an agreement, Ferdie thought then he nodded. "Your

attorney's fee will come in two parts, half for you and the remainder goes to your inheritor. I will ask you to prepare a memorandum for this today and when I receive that, I will send you accounts of my personal history and details for you to study. I don't have to mention that you will destroy each copy after you are through."

"It never occurred to me that I will be handling one last case, Ferdie. When I retired a few years ago, I continued to perform some minor lawyering but even that had to stop when I became weaker. I have been told to stay in the house and rest, this being one of the days that I am a little better. Even then, I have to have Jake with me when I go out. I believe we will not need to see each other again after this then."

"That is right, no need to burden you. I trust that you can be trusted to keep your end of a bargain no matter how strange. Sorry that I don't take refreshments myself inside the office but Polly can offer you anything you want outside. She will

also ask our driver to take you home."

"If their place is not so far, I would like to ride with them, Grandfather," Polly asked.

"About five kilometers from here," Jack said softly to their hosts.

"Maybe I should go too but I am going to be thinking about how to be busy here. Goodbye, Jake," Ferdie said as he reached out to shake both men's hands. "Your grandson reminds me of my granddaughter's late father."

"I don't know how but I will do what I can, Ferdie," Jake announced before Polly closed the door.

Polly picked up some bottled water from the chiller before they went outside. Half of the car's doors were left open by Rico who was reading on the passenger side. "I'll sit with them here in the back seat, Old Brother Rico," said Polly as she went in first. Jack came in last.

Rico started towards the gate. "Where are we going?"

"Attorney?"

Jake pointed to the front and right as they turned for the main road. "The Old Section. Our house is just beyond the area."

Road traffic this afternoon was light so they would not take long to get there. Polly shifted to the old man beside her and asked a question that was slightly different from what she thought of at the house office. "Attorney, I'd like to know but it's alright if you can't tell me. If you have the money, can you not spend it to get better and live instead?"

"I am going to die. Jack can answer the question."

"Grandfather retired a second time after becoming too ill. He did not earn very much before and has to rely largely on his small pension. He now takes medication for pain relief and to inhibit some factors. They told him at the public hospital that one facility is offering experimental treatment for the condition he suffers from but he refuses to consider it."

"Jack's parents left him with me after they broke up. That is why he has lived with his grandfather since the first day of his life that he can remember. I don't have a lot of money and even if I had more, I would not spend it on a treatment that has less than half a chance of curing me. I would rather leave what I have left, which is not enough, to my boy. You see, he is graduating from college this term and if he passes the examination, he will be setting for the career that landed me where I am." The two Duwas leaned back as they sighted the next and last road to pass.

"Left, Old Brother, then three houses after the second block," Jack told the driver.

"That your house? I thought you would have a bigger one since, you know, you two are dressed quite nicely."

"I live within my means except when going to a business meeting," replied Jake with a smile and half a laugh to Polly as Jack stepped outside and helped him out. "Jack, keep Polly and Rico company. I won't take long with the

typewriter." Then he went in after removing the padlock from the door. Their area was not as crowded as the others but none of the houses had space for gates.

"This is one of his better days. How about your old man, does he suffer from anything?" asked Jack.

Polly did not really come here to know more about the Duwas. She had felt the urge to relate to a dying man the matter of Ferdie's own illness but the car trip did not last long enough. "I hear people talk that he is going crazy. What I can see for myself is that he has a memory disease."

"Alzheimer's disease," Rico tried to correct her.

"Both of them are resigned to dying."

"Both of them face their death, one sooner, one later."

"Alzheimer's disease," Rico repeated to no one in particular.

"But Jack," Polly inquired "does it not bother you that Attorney Duwa has a chance to be treated but is about to leave you everything he has so you can, maybe, finish

school?"

"Yes, he has some money now from his own pocket and some more coming from his strange deal with Mr. Carso but he has made up his mind already about not spending most of what he has left for something that has little certainty. No, it does bother me, but I have no right to deny him what he wants."

"He is about to sacrifice himself for you," Polly spoke in an attempt to grasp their situation, "and you are going to allow it."

"Grandfather Jake would not be doing it this way if he did not love himself. The first choice he has will most probably leave him as a shell of his former self with nothing for his family. The choice that he believes is better will let his family live on after he is gone. He has a family that he cannot separate from himself and from his love. Maybe one who goes to an expensive girl's school would not truly understand something like that."

"He enrolled me in the high school nearest our house so I wouldn't be out so much. But I wish I can look at it that way between myself and Grandfather Ferdie. Or maybe it is but in a less urgent way. I think he might even be my best friend but I'm sure that's not how he thinks of me."

Jack looked into her eyes for the first time. "It makes me uncomfortable talking like he's almost dead already. I can sense that what causes him the most pain is not knowing if I can live up to his expectations, the ones that he's too kind not to torment me with. When the time comes, I can only try not to fail him."

"Jack, he's back."

"Polly, can I call you. I will give you my number."

"I have a better idea. Here, I will give you my cellular phone and you exchange yours with mine."

"I thought a rich girl like you would have a nicer unit."

"That clamshell thing was expensive four years ago but why

would I need anything else?"

Jack opened the door and handed over to Polly the envelope carried by Jake before stepping out. "Bye, Polly."

"That is for your grandfather, little girl. I made no other copy since our word would be enough."

"Hold it Old Brother, I'm moving to the front. "I'll be going along, Attorney," said Polly in farewell while taking his hand.

If you happen to be curious as to what the boy and the girl did after that, you can very well guess it would not be much different from what otherwise normal young adults would be doing after being beguiled by a television set at the joint they ordered some food in showing ABS-CBN programs designed to spread immorality and perversion to a clueless and unsuspecting television audience. A pity because the young man and woman would have grown into the kind of normal, responsible citizens you can count on to help make this woebegotten place a better country.

Apologia pro libro suo

This is not an apology for writing this free to read and circulate in original not altered form volume. These are dark times goes the cliché. Though not as explicitly so as with the caliphast variety, the jihad liberals of America and Europe are out to destroy Christianity. But that is of no consequence to people whose faith in Christian precepts of divinity and humanity is thin. Historical turns in the last two thousand years would have led us to a world much worse than the one we have if not for the existence of powerful Christian institutions. Where is that power now? Shallow liberals have diminished Catholicism, the Orthodoxy and mainstream Protestantism in all of Europe. Peoples who have nothing substantial to live for other than the daily stimulation peddled by consumerist providers are not going to last for long. Who do nations of weaklings fall down to but to organized militant followers of a psychologically overpowering doctrine? You should know of at least one

because there are many.

The problem with Christianity is that it is not a systematic and internally consistent political ideology. Christians have only comprised a non-numerical majority or plurality of the world population over the past several centuries. Instead of inching to global domination, it is currently on track to getting surpassed by a competing religion. Supposing that fundamentalist Christians will form their own terrorist network in response to this challenge, how is that going to work out? As an absurdity. Because terror has no place in basic Christian doctrine. There is no command to kill for any reason. Not even military defense of a nation is justified although anyone who is sensible enough will take part in it out of sheer practical necessity. You need no law to order you to do what it takes to not allow others to end your life.

As evil as big government is, Jesus Christ taught us to accommodate it unless there was some way to make small governments or an incredibly complex configuration of

social community modeled on anarchism viable. Christianity prescribes neither form nor system of government but it can coexist with any of the classic Western political iterations. Its compatibility with good science and structural innovations in human society essential to long-term survivability is poorly appreciated. The beauty of Christianity is that it is not an ideology. It is the only pure religion in the world and the only one that can save man from the dark side of humanity.

A few of the preceding stories are set at different times in the real world. The rest shift to an alternate historical reality warped by malice, greed and incompetence of a government that overreaches and abuses. Nationalism and the lust of its adherents for Tagalog supremacy have brought only political perversion, economic failure and cultural dislocation to the Philippines. It used to be a country of hope that needed some change to become better but the self-serving changes they imposed were for the worse, and worst of all, impossible to undo.