

The Filipino American Experience Research Project  
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The Filipino American Experience Research Project  
**The Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society  
of Salinas, California**

Edited by  
**Alex S. Fabros, Jr.,**

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project of The Filipino American National Historical Society

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Published in the United States by: The Filipino American Experience  
Research Project, Fresno, California.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 95-Pending  
First Draft Printing: 08/05/98

For additional information:

The Filipino American Experience Research Project  
is an independent project within  
The Filipino American National Historical Society - FRESNO  
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Fresno, CA 93722  
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The Filipino American Experience Research Project-SFSU  
is an independent project sponsored by  
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# **The Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society of Salinas, California**

*Edited by Alex S. Fabros, Jr.*

The writers of the "Philippines Mail" would gather together on Sunday afternoons at the Juan dela Cruz Cafe on Pajaro Street in Salinas' Chinatown. Here, they would share a "chop suey" dinner and fellowship. A small cup was passed around the table. As each person received the cup, the individual had the choice of telling a poem, a joke, a very short story or else downing a very bitter tasting Chinese tea. Mr. Delfin Cruz often printed the best of these literary gems that sprang forth from these dinners. We share these with you.

SOURCE: 28 January 1935

**Bittersweet**  
by Helen Killera, San Francisco

*Ah, Life thou art sweet  
But sweet's mere pain!  
For awhile we are happy---  
Then grieved again!*

*How dearly we pay tomorrow  
For a smile we bear today!  
There's naught we get in all the world  
That doesn't demand its pay.  
Each black night has its satisfying day;  
Each day is followed by night;  
Just as we grope o'er our sorrows and woes  
Before we can feel the light!*

*Yes, life is a game of Bittersweet,  
Of compensation dear,  
But there's consolation in the thought  
We paid for every tear.*

SOURCE: 4 March 1935

**My Cefing**  
by Ida B. Tompkins

*Dedicated to my roommate  
Ceferina M. Agubtin,  
Glad Tidings Bible Institute,  
San Francisco, California  
In this life, your soul I see,  
A picture of three flowers---  
First, a love for God, and sure to be,  
A solace in dark hours.*

*Through the swamps of woe you trod,  
O'er the hills and dales,*

*Seeking whom you may comfort,  
Listening for the heart-felt wail---*

*Of men---lost eternally  
Without hope, it seems,  
Until you came along with Manna  
No ray of Love-light gleams.*

*Second, is your love for man,  
That is nothing amiss.  
Your heart has a big capacity,  
And it fills their hearts with bliss.*

*You love them when they are young,  
You love them as they grow old,  
Yet your heart is ever tender,  
And finer far than gold.*

*They come from the East,  
And the West, South and North,  
Sending gifts of flowers, candles and books,  
Trying to prove their worth.*

*Sorrowfully you turn your head,  
For you see---not lovers at all,  
But far above the heads of men,  
You hear the Master's call.*

*Thirdly, I must be modest,  
Is your love for me.  
I know it's there, 'cause every day---  
Kind little deeds I see.*

*Playing on the strings of time,  
Moving souls by your love,  
Into a higher, brighter clime,  
Inspired by things above.*

*Maybe that's the mistake they make,  
They look at you instead of Him,*

*Causing your little heart to ache,  
And your eyes too frequently dim.*

*And this, dear Cefing, is you,  
Your love does ever abound,  
And not until that day, when He rewards,  
Will love like yours be found.*

*So keep it up, and don't despair,  
Someday you will have won,  
When all our troubles here are through,  
And our days on earth are done.*

SOURCE: 18 March 1935

**To Delia: On Reading Her "Evermore"  
By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*O Delia! Delia, sing not where  
Pinoys might doubt a sincere song,  
Nor sigh for Love's beloved where  
I might commit a villain's wrong.*

*The flowers I spread where once you slept,  
Are still the blooms you used to know;  
The love I gave---a gift you've kept,  
Is still the vow told long ago.*

*So never think---perhaps with dread,  
That I (in love) have spelled a lie;---  
Oh, no, Adela, the things I said  
Were long recorded in a sigh.*

*Nor feed on woes---Ah, never weep  
And let a heart in sadness grieve;  
A dream of love must ever keep  
One faith that sorrows never give.*

*Nor wish that all's for love alone  
Ah, life is laughter in a tear!*

*Even those fond hopes lovers own  
Are but feign'd sweetness of a fear.*

*But if you're sure of a woman's wish,  
And glad to speak a woman's part,  
Then sing again a-sighing this:  
"you're evermore within my heart."*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 1 April 1935

**On Mother's Death**  
**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*We'll die tomorrow: soon the Earth will show  
Where we will lie. Things living stay awhile---  
Like us---till slow, like setting stars they go,  
And come no more. E'en Nature lends a smile  
In Spring; then summer comes and passes by---  
To fade in Autumn when the winter's nigh.*

*Yes, we will go and pass where others pass'd.  
Who will return? We can not tell for sure.  
Who will remember? This we may know at last  
When life with love, while dying, yet endures.*

*When we have lost this Life's brief afterglow,  
We may yet think that Death has lived now.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 5 April 1935

**That's You**  
**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*Please never wish that I should soon know  
The pains that once upon thy shoulder weighed,  
Nor ask why tears should ever help the flow  
Of sighs and sobs which Sorrow sure has made.*

*If death be but an end to cares and woes,*

*To hopes and fears and life's heart-breaking throes;  
Then I'll thy passing not bewail because  
Thou canst now have thy tranquil, dear repose.*

*But all that makes the tears my cheeks bedew,  
I've lost a heart so kind and true---That's you.*

SOURCE: 15 April 1935

## **I Have Learned What Life Is**

(Dying Man's Last Words)

**By Helen Rillera**

*All thru the earth I have wandered  
In search of blissful strife;  
Thru thick and thin I've tried to win  
The best there is in life.*

*With restless hands, I've labored hard,  
I've walked till my feet did ache;  
But my goal was set and until death  
Knowledge of life I'd ne'er forsake.*

*The rocks I've climbed were mighty high,  
But I've overcome them all.  
I've never backed from life's many beckons:  
I've heeded every call!*

*I've dealt with traitors, thieves, and cowards,  
I've known the goodly crowd;  
I've learned at times to keep my voice---  
At times, to shout out loud.*

*I've experienced the thrill of success,  
And I've known failure, too;  
And I've learned that for every joy of glory,  
There's always sorrow due!*

*I've had my shares of happiness,  
I haven't escaped my woes;*

*I've had my chance to love my friends;  
And bitterly hat my foes.*

*I know hot it is to be in youth's glad prime---  
Then suddenly turn old and gray,  
I played with love when I was young---  
Love plays for me today.*

*My eyes are dim, my strength is gone,  
My role on earth is done;  
And life is left for you to see,  
To know, to learn, to love, my son!*

SOURCE: 29 April 1935

**Pasalamat Sa Mga Kalahiko**  
**By Maria de Guzman**

*Salamat sa lahat na mga kababayan,  
Sa kanilang pagtulong at mga pagmamahal;  
Ikinararangal kong malabis kanilang pagdamay.  
Sa aking pagpapalaganap nitong pahayagan,  
Pagdamay na ito'y siyang kinakailagan,  
At isang bagay na malaking diko malimutan.*

*Ikaw na tumutunghay nitong aking tula,  
Sakalit ang tulong moy dipa maysagawa;  
Umaasa akong dika magpapabaya,  
Sa iyong sarili at sa ikalalaya,  
Ng *ÒThe Philippines MailÓ*  
Na tagapagbalita.*

*Ang lahat na naitulong at maitutulong pa ninyo,  
Pinasasalamatan kong lubos at malabis na totoo;  
Pagka't kundi sa mga tulong ninyong ito,  
Ayhinde makakalamang nitong aking botos,  
Inaasahang kupa ring di magsasawa kayo,  
Sa inyong pagtulong upang ako'y manalo.*

*Ang pagtulong ninyo sa ating pahayagan,*

*Ay isang pagmamahal din sa ating Inang Bayan;  
Pagka't itoy isang sagisag niya sa pagsasanggalang,  
Sa mga pag api at pagyurak sa ating karapatan,  
Ng mga lahing puti na nasa kasalukuyang,  
Lumilibak sa ating karangalan at bayan.*

*Ang katutuhanan ay sa kasalukuyan,  
Ako ang nang una at nakakalamang  
Sa kanilang lahat na aking mga kalaban,  
Sa pagpapalaganap ng ating pahayagan,  
Ang lahat ng itoy nangyari nga lamang,  
Dahilan sa tulong ninyong lahat ako-y nagpapa salamat.*

SOURCE: 13 May 1935

### **To My New-Found Friends of Monterey County**

*Hearts of gold! (Souls of sunshine.  
How good you've been to me!  
I can't quite express my thank you Ó yet  
But I pray someday you'll see.*

*I came to you with an empty heart  
To seek good friends anew---  
And oh, you've filled it with treasures to blest  
Of friendships steadfast made true!*

*I know as yet that I'm not worthy  
But some day I'll make you see  
That my dearest wish is to be deserving  
Of all you've done for me!*

SOURCE: 13 May 1935

### **Madreamor**

(To the Memory of My Mother)

**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*The world has been a black-framed looking-glass  
Where Pain, in various forms, reflected seen.  
Since you did pass a drearier, darker scene  
Has been revealing sights of woes, alas!*

*All that were once fond pleasures to my eye,  
Are now remembered marks of Sorrow's gain;  
Things that were then sweet solace to my brain,  
Are now sharp mocking sings of tears and sigh.*

*Those boyhood hours of joyance I divined  
When yet you were to me a friend and gentle,  
Are moments now of mourning well supplied  
By every thought of you kept in the mind.*

*An' pleasant places where gay I roved with joy,  
In younger years are murky now and lone;  
Save for your grave where kindness dreams along,  
Each earthly site conspires now to annoy.*

*E'en lovely lanes of buri palms in Morl  
Are now sad silent paths of saddened hours;  
Gardens full filled with the rarest tropic flowers,  
Are now seared spots of beauty all once wore.*

*E'en feral fields nigh which with happiness  
We dally hailed each bright Salangan dawn,  
Are now like barren haunts of mayas flown  
And ruined wastes of rural loveliness.*

*For since you left our humble hut before  
And found with Death a happier road to tread,  
Each beauteous view which Nature happily made  
Has veiled itself and moaned to me, No more.*

*Oh, I have kept it for a hope that you,  
Now safe in Heaven, would come to Earth again  
To cheer once more this orphan-heir of pain,  
And bring that bliss of having you anew.*

*Although I've learnt my sad loss to sustain,  
Here still I have dear Mother's love again*

Mor is an abbreviated form of Morong, a town in the Philippines where the author spent his childhood.

SOURCE: 3 June 1935,

**Buhay Ay Pagibig, (Handog Kay Maring De Guzman)]  
By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*M---aghahandog ako't huag kang ntagkakait  
Kung ang tulang ito'y tula ng pagibig;  
Magtatapat ako't sa lilim ng langit---  
Aking isusumpang: Kita's iniibig.*

*A---yaw ko nga sanang ako ay umawit,  
Pagka't ako'y sawi sa sang nilalangit'  
Nguni't ang ngalan mo ay siyang umakit,  
At siyang nagturon: Buhay ay pagibig.*

*R---osas kang mabango ng harding Silangan,  
Balitang diwata ng mahal kong bayan;  
May sariling puri't iwing kuyumi-an.  
Matimtimang-puso't tanging paralumang*

*I---kaw ang dalangang kay tangi sa lahat,  
Pagka't ang ngalan mo'y ngalan ng pangarap;  
Banggitin mo lamang kung kapus kang pala,  
At masasabi mong: Buhay ay pagliyag.*

*N---oon pa mang araw kita'y mamalasang  
Doo'y umaawit sa inyong tahanan---  
Ang puso kong aba-t laging nahihimlay  
Sa dusa't bagabag, ay muling nabuhay.*

*G---inising mo ako, Oo at ginising---  
Sa mga pangarap---malungkot isipin;  
Ang ganda mong taglay nagturo sa aking  
Ikaw ang diwang dapat kong hirangin.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 10 June 1935

## **Handog Kay Bb. Maring De Guzman**

(Matapus tanghayan aug yanyang mga tuls)

**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*Di ko akalain, O Maring na giliw,  
Ikaw pala'y makatang may awit sa amin;  
Ikaw pala'y bituing may ilaw na lihim  
Sa salid ng iyong tahimik na hinhin.*

*Ikaw pala'y diwatang sa pag-aaruga  
Ay maa-asahang maglingkod sa madia;  
Marunong kang tumolong sa bawa't kapua,  
Sa bawa't hakbang mo'y may tapat na nasa.*

*Oo at tutulong; ang sino man sa amin  
Ay laang dumamay sa The Philippines Main.  
Sino mang binata'y ang puso'y subokin  
At makikita mong kakampi ni Maring.*

*Sa yumi mo lamang at ngiting may awit,  
O tanging bulaklak ng rosal sa langit,  
Sino mang kalahi ay pilit na pilit  
Na makikidamay sa banal na nais.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 17 June 1935

## **Advice To A Girl**

**By F. V. Tolentino**

Watsonville

*Never love unless you can  
Bear with all the faults of man:  
Men sometimes will jealous be;  
Though but little cause they see,  
And hangs the head as discontent,  
And speak what straightway they will repent.*

*Men that but one Saint adore,  
Make a show of love to more;  
Beauty must be scorn'd in none,  
Though but truly served in one;  
For what is courtship but disguise?  
True hearts may have dissembling eyes.*

*Men when their affairs require,  
Must awhile themselves retire;  
And whilst we thus should make our sorrows one,  
This happy harmony would make them none.  
Crisping the brook beside the road,  
Then pausing on set down its load.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 17 June 1935

## **Love Is A Sickness**

**By F. V. Tolentino**

Watsonville

*Love is a sickness full of woes,  
All remedies refusing;  
A plant that most will cutting grows  
Most barren with best using.  
Why So?  
More we enjoy it, more it dies;  
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries  
Heigh-ho!*

*Love is a torment of the mind,  
A tempest everlasting;  
And Jove hat made it of a kind,  
Nor well, nor full nor fasting,  
Why so?  
More we enjoyed it, more it dies;  
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries,  
Heigh ho!*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 17 June 1935

**Ang Paisanong Mananayaw**  
**Katha ni Gregorio S. San Diego**

*Sa ganda ng kanyang bihis, sa ayos ng kanyang buhok  
Parang aking makikitang mayrong sayang inu-otet;  
Kung mag-upo at magtindid, kung mag-usap at maghambog,  
Sa wari ko'y siya lamang ang mayroong iniirrog.*

*Pati ng nga si paisanang dati-dati'y parang santa---  
Ang puso kong malungkoti'y palagi ng nagtataka:  
Pagmasdan mo sa bulawaga't nakikipaglaban siya  
Sa ligligan ng lalaki't sa kindatan pa ng mata.*

*Totoo nga't parant Toro kung magsayaw silang lahat,  
Paranga cambin at kabayong sa putoka'y nagugulat;  
Sa paglukso ni Babae't sa paglundag ni Gulilat,  
Akala ko'y yaong sala'y patuloyang iwawasak.*

*Di ko naman nilalahat---nguni't sa aking nakita,  
Nalulungkot ang puso ko, nagagalit-naatatawa;  
Si paisano at paisana'y hamag yata ang kapara:  
Kung magsayaw sa bulwaga'y itmoluksong parang vaca.*

*Nguni't ikaw, O kalahing palagi na sa sayawan,  
Mabuti ang isipin mo't ng huag kang matawanan;  
Akala mo'y smart ka na, nguni't di mo nalalamang  
Ang kilos mong sakdal sagwa ay kay samang mapagmasdan.*

*Paano bang di sasama'y lumalabis yaong lahat:  
Kumikindot yaong powit ng baillerena mong yakap,  
Samantala namang ikaw'y lumolukso't tumatadyak,  
Akala mo'y believe akong sa gilas mo'y nagugulat.*

SOURCE: Philippine Mail, 24 June 1935, Page 2

**Stanzas To Helia Rillanor**  
On Being Told That Poets Are Liars

**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*When I sign at this life  
    As the prize for a pain,  
Or, the cross that we cell  
    With some loss for a gain  
Men would swear with a sneer  
    And declare madly them,  
That a bard's ever sad  
    In the grip of refrain.*

*And when I speak of that Dream,  
    Which eludes our hearts,  
As the curse of desire  
    Where each joy soon departs -  
They would sit by your side  
    And whisper to your ears,  
That I feed evermore  
    On the hopes of my fears.*

*And then I write of men's love  
    As the vice of throng,  
Or, the bliss of madness  
    For a thrill that is wrong  
Villians base would exclaim  
    With the scorn of a sigh,  
That I whine ever when  
    There is truth in my lie.*

*So when I sing of you, dear,  
    As the Queen of a Dawn,  
And declaim with my song  
    That's beauty thing, alone  
They would pass laughing by  
    And belie me along,  
Then suemise that I lie  
    In the guise of a Song.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 27 November 1933

## **"Tapat Kong Pagibig Ay Di Kukupas"**

Sa Aking Giliw Nelly At Natiis Mo Ng Di Kita Na Kita,

**By Little Pancho, San Francisco**

*Ang tingin ko'y luksa, sa bughaw na langit,  
Gayong sinumpaang ako'y sinisinta,  
Sa aking pagaiis ako'y nagiisa,  
Halik ng paalam ikinait mo pa,*

*Sa mga mata ko'y gumiti ang luha,  
Sa kinalintay sa pile kong mutiya,  
Ang lahat ng yaon panaginip yata,  
Pagkat di dumating ang sintang dakila,*

*At ako'y yumaong malongkot ang puso,  
Sa mga mata ko ang luha'y natuyo,  
Ang api kong pala lalong na sipaayo,  
Kung alalahanin ang sawing pagsuyo.*

*Hangga't lumalayo an aking sasakiyan,  
Ang daing ng puso'y lalong sumasasai,  
At doo'y na isip na muling balikang,  
Ang pang-pang na dagat na aking iniwan.*

*Sa lawak ng dagat kung gabing madilim,  
Ako-y dinadalaw noong salagimaim,  
Ang aba kong palad parang panganorin,  
Na pinaglaroan ng halik ng hangin.*

*Katulad ay bula sa pisnge ng dagat.  
Gayon ang'kawangki ng aba kong palad,  
At ulilang ibon sa gitna ng gubat.  
Na walan kasuyo ng wala ring pugad.*

*At ulilang tala sa gitna ng dilim,  
At hibik ng pusong balot ng hijahil,  
Gayon ang katulad ng aking panimdim,  
Laging nalolongkot sa iyo ang dahil.*

*Nagialakbay mandin sa pakpak ng ulap,*

*Ang palad kong aba balot ng hinagap,  
Katulad ay bangka nawaray ang layag,  
Iniwan ng hangin sa lawak ng dagat.*

*Na soan ka giliw bakit na titiis,  
Ako'y ulilahin ng iyong pagibig,  
Na saan ang halik na ubod ng tamis,  
Bakit itinago at ipinagkait.*

*Matitiis mo bang ang aba kong puso?  
Ay taging gimbalin ng mga siphayo?  
Matitiis mo bang dibdib ko'y dumogo?  
Sa subiyang na likha noong panibugho.*

*At kung gunitain, ang gabing lumipas,  
Gabing lualhating, pospos ng pagliyang,  
Diwa'y nagduduyan sa mga pangarap,  
Nag isang kahapon kay daling lumipas.*

*Kay tamis ng ngita, kay tamis ng halik,  
Kay pongay ng mata, kay lambing ng titig,  
Na namamalas ko sa pisngi ng langit,  
Subalit, Oh! hiras, isang panaginip.*

*Na inip na ako sa kinaiintay,  
Puso ko'y ng hina sa dahas ng lumbay,  
At ang pagasa ko'y tuloyang na matay,  
Diwa ko'y dinawi ng bangis ng pangyaw.*

*Hindi ko malaman ng ako'y umalis,  
Pagkat yaring diwa'y kalong ng hinagpis,  
Ang tingin ko'y uiksa, sa bughaw na langit,  
At luhang nasaklap, ang agus ng tubig.*

*Pitong ibong luksa, naghatid sa akin  
Luksang karagatan, yaong tatawirin,  
At pang-pang na luksa ng aking pagiliw,  
Ang lumiligalig sa aking panimdim.*

*Na tiis mong ago'y yumaong magisa,*

*Na pigta ng luha, ang dalawzng mata,  
Samantalang ikaw wari ay masaya,  
Na ang pagyaon ko'y di mo aiaaia.*

*Bagama't natiis mong magisang lumayag,  
At ulilahin mo, ang aking pagliyag,  
Ang tagubilin ko at huling saad,  
Tapat kong pagibig ay di kukupas.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 27 November 1933

## **Questions**

**By Helen Santiago**

*Can gray ashes be rekindled,  
Or old rose dust bloom again?  
Do we recapture melodies  
Of once dreamed of refrains?  
Does dead love bud into new life?  
Will you come back to me?  
I know through tears  
That such things live  
Only in memory.*

SOURCE: 26 April 1933,

## **Asug Ti Ina A Filipina**

**By Trinidad A. Rojo**

*Mano kadakayo, O annako dita America,  
Ti mangdada-el ti tiempo ken pigsada  
Kadagiti vicio a makaidadanes iti character  
Ken ragragsak a makairoromen, makaidagel,*

*Ngaman pay aya a kasta ti aramidyo  
Idinto a masapulko unay ti pigsayo  
A mamagbalin a borayok ti puro Mindanao  
A pagparocpohan ti sanikua ken rang-ay?*

*Agbalawkayo ita mato-on pay ti kabannuagyo  
Wenno saan, sangsangitanyonto ti toggoty  
Ta abbiagkay kas kulibangbang wenno ngilaw  
A dina sagana-an ti masakbayan nga aldaw.*

*Ti America pudpudno nag ayuyang ni gasat  
No adda kadakay ti karakad ken salun-at  
Ngem no dikay agsabay ay-ay! pay ti banagyo  
No ti kinalakay ken kinalopoy mapagtengyo.*

*Ngarud ipameysa ken regtaanyo a gun-oden  
Naraniag a bituen, binulonyo a pakinakem  
Ta diyo dita nga agbaba-ak ken aglaklakay  
Ket bilegyo agnanayon kaniak maipaidam.*

*Agkaradkad, agadal wenno agornongkayo  
Tapno madaras umayyo bangonen familiayo  
Tapno adda balay, kamang ken hospitalyo  
Inton kinalakay ken kinalopoy magpagtengyo.*

*Ti narayray nga init ti wayawaya  
Tomangkayag ngato ti bantay iti daya  
Umaykayo, umaykayo, umaykayo ala  
Ta ibayog tay ti nagloria-an a bandera.*

SOURCE: 30 April 1934,

## **Mary's**

Dedicated to Miss Mary de Guzman, of Watsonville, California

**By S. A. Abat**

Watsonville

*When I observe her wavy hair  
Droop on hr glorious shoulders.  
I marvel not that sights so rare  
For me and all beholders  
Should envied be by pretty girls  
Renowned for beauteous tresses-  
But who could find among their curls  
Such beauteous ones as MARY'S?*

*And MARY'S eyes are, oh, so bright.  
So full of sweet revealings---  
They seem to look at you and try  
To read your inmost feelings.  
None can resist their sly appeal.  
They surely do enthrall you.  
To Mary's side you'd like to steal---  
A willing slave for her to call to.*

*Her voice is like the nightingale's,  
That friends all wish to hear.  
Enrapturing falls its cadence soft  
Upon each willing war.  
And all concede the truth in time.  
That MARY'S voice is charming,  
No poet ever paid in rhyme  
Sufficient tribute to MARY'S voice.*

*Of other charms has MARY such a store,  
All pretty rivals excelling.  
Thought I used adjectives galore  
They'd fail me in the telling.  
So now discretion stays my hand  
About the many beauties  
Of the fairest charmer in the land---  
There's none I so profoundly admire as MARY.*

SOURCE: 30 April 1934,

## **Gundina**

**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

Berkeley, California

*Alas! like Azrail that had fled  
With Love, half wishing to be dead,  
The breeze that linger'd 'neath the shade  
Tad ta'en Spring's fragrance from the glade.*

*And e'en rare blossoms of the Earth*

*Did come and vanish like our mirth---  
Our birth that laughing soon didst die  
Where all came, passing said, "Goodbye."*

*Ah off in silence we conceive  
We learn by Sorrow. So we live---  
That in our task of striving through---  
We find sad loveliness and YOU.*

*O heart that languished young and died  
Like flowers that withered soon, abide.  
For thou art now where Heaven's Springs  
Cleanse life of morbid, mundane things.*

*If life is but an excuse to live---  
And living's but a means to grieve.  
Then there's Elysium with the means  
That blot all dreary, sullen scenes.*

*Last year Chance failed thee in thy quest,  
But now, thou mark, thine is the best.  
For there the hours are free, serene;  
Devoid of Sorrow's sneering mien.*

*If love is fondled for its woes.  
While hate is grudging life in throes,  
Then dwell in Hades' hallowed room;  
Rejoice in silence 'neath the tomb.*

*For what is waiting here on Earth  
When life is drudgery since birth?  
Earth has no blessings of its own.  
Nor perch perennial Death has known.*

*Life knows no glory nor its doom,  
It hangs repining from its gloom;  
So heart that parted young, thou rest---  
God takes Guldine in His breast.*

SOURCE: 1 October 1934,

## **To a Mother Bird**

(Written by Request of a Young Brother)

**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*A perched bird sings a lullaby  
Atop a mango tree;  
At peach maybe, the reason why  
She sings for you and me.*

*Awhile she stops but sings again,  
A sweeter song she sings,  
As passes whistling, dancing wind  
Her gentle voice a-rings.*

*So sweet! Again her voice of love  
Fell on my heart of care,  
I wonder where up there, Above  
Is there a song more rare?*

*She ceased, and as her notes rang out  
I saw her gently soar,  
To far off distant field no doubt  
Some nestling food galore.*

## **II**

*But wait; I hear thy birdies cry  
As when a babe was I;  
Come back again thou mother bird,  
Please sing Love's soothing Word.*

*Again for them of joy thou singst,  
And 'tis of Love's refrain;  
Thou lulls thy loving ones to sleep  
Some perfect tunes so sweet.*

*And soon they one by one thus fall,  
To sleep thou soothe them all;  
And while'st they sleep thou too must rest*

*Inside thy sunny nest.*

*Ah, winged nurse, thou wake my soul  
To past years. I recall  
A mother's love and faithful care  
And son that now thou bare.*

### **III**

*And O, I deem thou must have led  
A busy life of strains;  
To feed thy birdies dear, thou tread  
The fields for fruits and grains.*

*O Bird, I have a mother too,  
She lives a life like thine;  
I thought her life doest thou ensue,  
That's why I drop this rhyme.*

*Of children's care of children's love,  
Thine is a perfect one;  
I'll ask the angels up. Above  
If Woman lives like Man.*

*For all thy days of patient toil  
Hath kept them 'gainst the woe;  
When thou art gone, with Him thou dwell,  
I fain wouldst remember you.*

SOURCE: 15 October 1934

## **Repentance: A Resolution**

(To My Filipino Friends)

**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*Resolved, at last, we'll follow Heaven's light,  
Shunning with prayer the Earth's proud tempting glare;  
Sure now we know that in each human care  
Repentance hides its silver sword. The night  
Of carefree hours, and uncensored delight*

*In gay romance, let's leave to stars and moon;  
The days of mirth and Youth's enticing boon---  
All these we'll leave. The world's pleasant sight.*

*Till Time belies us, like Fall belying Spring  
In gray October when the cloud begins  
To mock the sun; till we all feel the sting  
Of losing all what's fair for our sins.*

*A pleasant sight's the world till this we know:  
Death cries alone behind Life's baneful show.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 10 December 1934

**Tanong Ko Saiyo**  
**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*Lalampas, babalik; darating, yaya-o:  
Ah, ganyan ang lakad ng ano sa mundo?  
Bukas ay KAHAPON ang araw na ito,  
Kahapon ay BUKAS matapos makatlo.*

*May ngiting lalapit; yaya-ong may tampo:  
Ah, ganyan ang kilos ng ano sa mundo?  
Ganyan ba ang isip at diwa ng tao,  
O pakikisamang may ingigit, siloso?*

*Ah, ito'y di awit na salang awitin,  
Ni tulang may lambing sa mga bituin;  
Nguni't ito'y tanong-tanong ko sa akin?  
Tanong ko saiyong dapat mong kuroin.*

*Bakit ng kaharap kita ay kausap,  
Ay di mo binanggit sa aki'y siwalat?  
Ngayong malayo na'y saka mo inungkat,  
Labat ay sira't pangas-ngas na paslat.*

*Di ba't noong araw ay ika'y nangako,  
Tumpak mong binanggit, sa aki'y tinuro;  
Aniya: bigan ko, ang tapat na puso*

*Ay yaman ng taong dapat tang itago.*

*Nguni't ngayon ko lang nataho't nalining,  
Na ikaw ang udas na lubhang butihin;  
Ang pagsisilosong bulag pa'sa dilim  
Ay siyang puso mong nainggit sa akin.*

*Sana'y wariin mong ang gawang mang-uyat  
Ay tandang ugali ng isip na pahat;  
Ang lisyang pangarap ng Lawing busilak  
Ay sumpang inawit ng lasong bulllaklak.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 24 December 1934

## **Christmas Spirit**

**By Helen Rillera**

San Francisco

*'Twas a wild, weary eve in Bethlehem  
When Mary's son was born;  
"Twas in a manger of rusty wood  
Where dirty rags were torn.  
He wasn't born to be the heir  
Of wealth from silver and gold---  
Instead He took His humble place  
In man's hard toiling world!*

*That night a prayer was lifted on high  
From Mary's thankful heart,  
And promised that from God's right guidance  
Their son would never part.*

*And it was an angel straight from heaven  
God sent to herald His name;  
And three wise men who heard of His birth  
With precious gifts they came;  
And up above, a lamplight shone  
From God's own place afar---  
To guide the path of the new born Babe  
Was the aim of the lighted star.*

*The earth rejoiced and sang their praises  
To the little infant boy,  
Here was one whom God had sent  
To supply the world with joy!*

*And Christmas spirit is still the same  
Today as 'twas of old;  
It isn't counted by palaces, and  
Countless weights of gold!  
It reflects the humble spirit  
Of that first Christmas eve---  
We must be sincere in our praise of God  
His blessings to achieve.*

*So it isn't at all counted  
How expensive is the thing.  
Give it with all sincerity---  
And full worth of God's blessing!*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 24 December 1934

**Manila Melody**  
**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*Ah! Life's a passing dream  
That soon or late we lose,  
And love's a fairy theme  
Which Youth alone can choose.*

*Life blooms gay as a flower  
In Spring when days are fair,  
Till comes each searing hour  
Of summer's blighting glare.*

*Hence lie soon where you may  
A hail a life of Song;  
Or wend a lover's way,  
And sing your heart---along.*

*Or come to this Paradise  
Where sampaguitas bloom  
For the modest maidens' eyes,  
And the men to wed in June.*

*For here's where Maming sings  
Ere she could give her heart  
To Love;---so come, my friend,  
Ere youth and beauty part.*

SOURCE: The Philippines Mail, 31 December 1934

## **To Leonora**

Rizal's Faithful Sweetheart

**By Gregorio S. San Diego**

*Oh, fond relations sometimes cease  
When Fate does break the binding tie,  
That even life remains one wish---  
And hopes too often die.*

*But his you knew: "Love does not part,  
It lives---and living suffers too---  
That, in the patience of one's heart,  
Love's pain is sweet when true.*

*And so, Leonora, you could meet  
Life's mundane woes with silent song;---  
You've died believing Death was sweet,  
But Love was never wrong.*

*For like an everlasting flower,  
Your faith was ever strong---and so  
To him you're ever true.*

*Ah! I still remember where you once  
In youth your young beau did divine,  
Though cruel years belied Love's power,  
When passion's budding in his breast  
He thought: "You're only mine."*

*As you had seen a god in him,  
For sure he saw a soul in you;---  
He thought and sang and always dream'd  
Like you who loved and knew.*