

Meditation and Other Poems

THERESE P. ABONALES


Introduction

These poems were written in a span of three years, between 1996 and 1999. Every poem I write is a reflection of my life at the time it was written. I think it is the same for every writer. A writer may be writing about someone from some place else in another time, but always, there is something of himself in what he writes.

What makes a writer write, is a question I like to ask a writer whenever I meet one. The answers are practically the same—they come across a word that they like to use; an image suddenly comes to mind and they want to paint it in words; they just feel the urge to write; they can't sleep without writing what just came to their mind, etc. I do not consider myself a poet or a fictionist yet, but I write for almost the same reasons as these people have.

Dr. Gemino Abad said in his *A Letter to Writer*, "The writer writes from the life he lives, and writes out of love – a sense of every human being's worth. Nothing is created except from love. Not anger, not hatred, not bitterness. These are poison. Love alone is the source."

A writer may write about pain and anger and hated and bitterness, but what makes him write is *love* for meaning, for life. Love is what makes we make up in the middle of the night and in the dark, to write a word or two on a notebook

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I keep under my pillow. Love is what leaves me staring on the wall and thinking of a word that best fits the image I have in mind. Love is what encourages me to go on writing even after magazines have give me rejection slips, or friends tell me they do not understand what I have written.

To me writing is a form of meditation. Writing is meditating on life. Words cross our minds and stay there for sometimes and we contemplate on how, when it came and what we can do with it. The it becomes a mantra and we say it over and over again and it is not just one word but a string of words. The string becomes some kind of a labyrinth and we try to find our way out of it, try to make sense of this string of words that is supposed to express what we have in mind. Only after we find our way out, (because *love* wills us never to give up trying to), do we freely breathe again. Because a poem is born out of meditation.

The Ascent

You can only go higher
Until you feel you have
Reached the peak, whether
Or not it is what you think it is.

First you may ask, Am I
Ready for this? Then having
Convinced yourself, you fill
Your bag with some clothes

Easy to put on, and easier
To shed off. Considering
Your provisions, you pack
Canned food to appease

Your unappeasable appetite
And bottled water to quench
Your quenchless thirst.
Then you start the long, rocky,

Precipitous climb to the top.
Higher, higher you go –
Beads of sweat roll down
Your face, down your spine,

And down your legs
That shake as you crawl
Your way up to that peak.
You hold on to scrub, shrubs,

Grasses, and branches,
With a firm grasp, you push
Yourself upward, forward
And forward, until you can go

No higher and just lie on your back
Because you have reached that
Lofty,

Grassypeak-
Satiated.

Quiescence

Sedentary on a solitary
Strand, I delight
In the music the undulations
Of the sea makes. Tarrying

To heed some antediluvian wisdom
The ripples might reveal, I remain until nature bids
The sun home behind the hushed horizon
Of a quiescent world.

Meditation

Like a mantra,
The words I rehearse
Gently release me
From this confinement.

With eyes wide open,
Fixed on those that stare at me,
On those that look beseechingly at me
I strive to discern my spiraling way

Through this tortuous labyrinth
Your impending exit is mapping out
On this, my winding existence.

A Tomb Story

Moss has grown on the concrete
White, which isn't quite white
Anymore. Inscriptions are barely

Visible on the surface that was once
Smooth. Grasses have grown on the sides,
Straight and still. No trace of a candle,

Not even of faded flowers. Cobwebs
Had found their way where a frame
Should have been. Then I move on,

And like the others, forget....

Exam

The whirl of the fluorescent lamp,
The rustle of pages turned and torn,
The heavy breathing of one body,

Could not still

The swift movement of ball points
As hands scribble thoughts
On humanity's existence.