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Serenity, Solace, and Simplicity of a Village Life

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This sketch is symbolic of the bittersweet memories of my childhood back in the province of Biliran. If you are a Filipino who lives, has lived, or had lived in the provinces or remote villages in the Philippines, then, this artwork speaks so much to you without the need for words, perhaps because uttering those words will ruin the moment that summons us to see, feel, and reminisce a distant past we cannot afford to forget. Let this artwork speak to you in silence. Let this be a mirror of a life you had lived or long to live in your lifetime --- serene, quiet, simple, tranquil --- away from the hustle and bustle of a chaotic city. Profoundly personal and symbolic, this artwork is a stark reminder of our difficult but peaceful life in the province of Biliran back in the late 80s to the early 2000s. We had no material wealth. No television. No radio or sound system. No electricity. No gas stove. No refrigerator. No bungalow. Only a few nipa huts with kerosene lamps to offer light in darkness when the moon was hiding from the mayhem of the world. However, despite our dire situation, our hearts were full of joy. We used to run on our great grandmother's rice paddies unminding the mud squirting on our clothes and our skin. We used to play *patintero* in the rain, or hide-and-seek during full moon. We used to listen to World War 2 stories from our grandfather who fought during the war. We used to dive in the sea almost every weekend and dip ourselves in the river while doing our laundry and enjoying our cooked rice soaked with soy sauce and cooking oil. We used to take turns straddling in the back of our *carabao* who was with us through our difficult struggles. We used to race climbing those fruit trees of our grandmother --- *cacao*, *caimito*, *santol*, mango, *balimbing*, avocado, and coconut. We used to help our grandmother plant cassava, corn, sweet potato, and yam so that we would have food on our tables. We did not get to enjoy our rice fields fully. My grandmother had to sell it because our grandfather was already dying with lung cancer. Yes, we did not have material wealth back in our province before, but we had each other --- we joked, bantered, quarrelled, and fought --- but we were together in full retaliation when someone hurt our brother, sister, or cousin. Then, every weekend, we all look forward to our grandmother's sumptuous *ginataan*, *biko*, *iraid*, or *suman* with *piniritong daing na tamban o bolinao*. We had to share these as one big family under the scorching sun, then we would all run to the sea unaware of the passage of time. We lived life as if there was no tomorrow. This sketch is symbolic of a nostalgic past I cannot afford to let go. Sometimes sweet, sometimes hurting. I will not trade such a difficult life but with enormous joy in our hearts and souls. I carry these memories wherever I go.

Bionote

Jeric P. Lausin likes to reminisce his childhood memories back in the province of Biliran through sketches using a pencil. His scenic sketches portray the simplicity of village life in the Philippines. Wherever his feet lead him, nothing beats the tug of a county life. It is always home to him, and he will keep coming back.