

# MANILATOWN

A Musical in Two Acts

\*songs are in bold text

## MANILATOWN

### ACT ONE:

Scene One.....2003/1968

Scene Two.....1968

Scene Three.....1969

Scene Four.....1969-1972

Scene Five.....1973

Scene Six.....1974

### ACT TWO:

Scene One.....1975

Scene Two.....1976

Scene Three.....1977

Scene Four.....August, 1977

Scene Five.....Following AM

Scene Six.....1978-1994

Scene Seven.....August, 2005

TIME: 1968 – 2005

PLACE: On the ten block radius in San Francisco that was  
once known as Manilatown

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

*“Once Again/Prayer/There Used To Be”*.....Company  
*“Manilatown/Letter #1”* .....Manongs/Al/Choir  
*“Cuba/Letter # 2”*.....Bill Sorro/Choir  
*“Rice/Mahal Kita”* .....Company  
*“Can I Come In”* .....Al  
*“Letter # 3/Supasit Mahaguna”*.....Company

ACT TWO

*“SanFrancisco”*.....Manongs  
*“We Will Appeal/Whenever”*.....Company  
*“Let Go”*.....Giuliana  
*“Arm in Arm/Save the I-hotel”*.....Company  
*“This Ordinary Day/Frankie’s Tango”*.....Luisa/Frankie  
*“At thisTable”*.....Bill/Company  
*“Once Again/This Used to Be”*.....Company

## CHARACTERS

BILL SORRO – dancer/activist, sports a mustache

AL ROBLES – poet, scruffy, bearded, glasses

EMIL DE GUZMAN – handsome student

LUISA DE LA CRUZ – sweet-faced, middle-aged

*MANONG* FELIX AYSON – walks with a cane, wise

*MANONG* FRANKIE ALARCON – dapper, womanizer

*MANONG* JOE REGADIO – hunched, tired-looking

*MANONG* SANTOS SANTOS – nervous, slight

*MANONG* WAHAT TOMPAO – fisherman, always smokes a pipe

*MANONG* ROBERT DE DIOS - tall, scholarly

MARGARET MUYCO – poolhall owner, matronly, kind-faced

GIULIANA MILANESE – pretty, Bill's wife

VICKY CASTRO – young, swarthy

\**manong* – a term of respect and endearment for elderly men in the Philippines, particularly in the north.

ACT 1:

Time: 1968-2003

Place: On the ten block radius in San Francisco that was once known as  
Manilatown

Scene 1:  
2003/1968

ON PORTSMOUTH SQUARE.

Near the site of the old International Hotel.

(Upstage Center is a high platform. MAYOR BROWN is up on it, in front of a podium, boring the crowd with his speech. Beside the podium is a cloth covered square structure that will reveal the model for the new International Hotel. Among the honored guests in the crowd are BILL SORRO, AL ROBLES, EMIL DE GUZMAN, et. al. witnesses to the fall of the I-hotel almost 30 years ago. They are standing around several rows of seats, mostly occupied by the elderly, downstage center. They are facing the audience. Music under.)

MAYOR BROWN: Ladies and gentlemen, today is a very historic occasion.

(Light on Bill)

BILL:  
**Here we are.**

MAYOR BROWN: (continuing his speech without skipping a beat)  
Here we are...laying the cornerstone for what will house the future home  
of the elderly.

BILL:  
**Standing here.**

MAYOR BROWN: (continuing)  
Standing here...I cannot help but think of the souls that made this  
possible. Today, we break ground...

BILL: (simultaneously)  
**Once again.**

MAYOR BROWN: ...on the International Hotel once again.

(APPLAUSE. The Mayor waits until the applause dies down. Music under.)

MAYOR BROWN: This has been almost thirty years in the making. Thirty years of fighting, negotiating, protesting.

(Light on AL ROBLES)

AL:

**Looking back.**

MAYOR BROWN: (continuing)

Looking back to 1977, at the fall of the original I- hotel, fills me with hope and nostalgia.

AL:

**Trying to...**

MAYOR BROWN: (continuing)

Trying to capture the moment here with us today are several men and women who were around those times.

(Applause. Lights on audience. The Mayor freezes.)

AL:

**Remember when...**

MAYOR BROWN: I'm sure they all remember when.

COMPANY:

**Some way back when...  
We were young so full of hope  
Surrounded by friends.  
Fighting for  
What we believed in.  
Nothing else mattered.**

(Light back on Mayor.)

MAYOR BROWN: And now, Ladies and Gentlemen...I would like to call on Father Greg Cho for his prayer and blessing. Father...

(A young Chinese man in a habit comes up. FATHER GREG CHO has a sunny, smiling face that triggers more applause. Music under.)

FATHER: I would like to offer a prayer and I would like everybody to please stand up and repeat after me.

(He takes the microphone off the stand and holds it as the audience stands.)

FATHER:

**In the spirit of peace...**

(He points the microphone to the crowd.)

COMPANY:

**In the spirit of peace...**

FATHER:

**There is pardon for the past.**

COMPANY:

**There is pardon for the past.**

FATHER:

**In the power of the present,**

COMPANY:

**In the power of the present,**

FATHER:

**There is promise for the future.**

COMPANY:

**There is promise for the future.**

FATHER:

**In the spirit of peace,  
We are all here today.**

COMPANY:

**Here we are  
Standing here  
Once again.**

FATHER:

**To dedicate.  
To celebrate.  
The long-awaited...  
New I-hotel.**

(Father Cho walks to the cloth-covered square and pulls on the drapery to reveal the model of the new International hotel. Applause. Music under.)

FATHER: And now, it is my honor to introduce to you...One of the original tenants of the original International Hotel, a witness to the history of Manilatown, Manong Robert de Dios...

(An older MAN is escorted to the podium by the younger man. APPLAUSE as the crowd disperses. Music under.)

COMPANY:

**Just imagine  
How it was  
So many years ago...**

MANONG ROBERT:

**Where else can you find  
When you feel alone?  
A home to consider  
Your very own.  
A radius of ten blocks  
That once was known  
As little Manila...**

I remember how it used to be...When I first moved here in the 1930's. It wasn't Manilatown then...not until all the sailors...and orchard pickers...and cannery workers found a home here. And Manilatown was born. I remember there used to be a Visayan restaurant known as Santa Maria on Jackson and Kearney. And next to this International Hotel...

**There used to be a barber shop.  
Next door was Tino's barber shop  
Where manongs got together  
To gather some news from home.**

(The sets change to 1968 as Manong Robert describes them. Tino's barbershop materializes upstage right of the platform, with its two barber chairs, a shampoo station and half-mirrored walls covered with old photos and yellowing news articles. Blinds filter the daylight coming in from the storefront window. Music under.)

MANONG ROBERT: There was the Senior Center where we all went for information for anything.

**And then there was the Lucky M,  
The pool hall called the Lucky M,  
A place where everybody  
Was happy and young again.**

(A pool table slides in, upstage left of the platform, topped by a low rectangular light fixture. There is a tall counter behind it that frames an old bulletin board and blackboard. Music under.)

MANONG ROBERT: There was the Mabuhay Gardens dance hall and social club. I can still hear the music and remember the dancing today.

**The Bataan Lunch on this street  
The diner where we went to eat.  
The laughter and the food  
That was so good, I miss.**

(The bottom of the platform opens and a long white diner counter slides out, along with its chairs.)

COMPANY:

**Life was simple  
Everyday was  
Full of promise.  
That's what I miss.**

MANONG ROBERT:

**So much of our lives has disappeared.  
And block by city block have been cleared.  
Manilatown is gone as I have feared.**

(The sets have changed completely to echo 1968. The COMPANY slowly changes their costumes. Bill, Emil and Al are taken over by their younger selves.)

MANONG ROBERT:

**What happened to our old neighborhood?  
Remember it as much as you could.  
Because those days are sadly gone for good.**

COMPANY:

**Here we are  
Standing here  
Once again.**

(The company is scattered around the stage, young and old alike, dressed as they were back in 1968. Lights out.)

Scene 2:  
1968/first eviction

TINO'S BARBERSHOP.

(In Tino's barbershop, TINO is busy giving a haircut to FELIX as the barbershop quartet is jamming. The quartet is composed of a guitar played by ROBERT, a mandolin played by JAMES, a bass guitar played by JOE and a cymbal set that is played by a young WOMAN. They entertain Tino's customer, FELIX who is reading the paper while the band plays 'MANILATOWN.')

MANONG FELIX: They did it...they finally did it...

TINO: What did they do this time, Manong Felix?

MANONG FELIX: It will just be a matter of time...

TINO: What will be a matter of time?

MANONG FELIX: First it was the Montgomery Block...

(The band stops to listen.)

MANONG ROBERT: What are you talking about, Felix?

MANONG JAMES: I think he's talking about that skyscraper they will be starting to build over at Montgomery...

MANONG FELIX: I'm talking about the beginning of our end...I'm afraid that Manilatown will be next...

MANONG JOE: (starts playing.)

That's where you're wrong...Manilatown is here to stay...

**Where else can you find**

**When you feel alone?**

**A home to consider**

**Your very own.**

**A radius of ten blocks**

**That's widely known...**

MANONG FELIX:

**Is down to an area**

**A one-square block area...**

MANONG JOE:

**We love that's Manilatown.**

(Light fades and spotlights office.)

INSIDE AN OFFICE.

A conference room is set up on top of the platform, which will serve as all the offices.

(A well-dressed MAN is addressing a table of business-suited MEN. Behind him is an easel that he uncovers to reveal a rendering of the TransAmerica building in all its glory. Music under.)

MAN 1: Gentlemen, as part of the Bay Area's redevelopment, this will be a very welcome addition to the San Francisco skyline. This will be the start of the Wall Street of the West. Gentlemen, may I present the TransAmerica Building.

**We will build you a pyramid**

**Like the Egyptians did**

**Stretching as high as the**

**Eye can see.**

**This will be the beginning**

**Of Manhattanizing**

**This city and changing**

**Its occupancy.**

MANONG FRANKIE'S BEDROOM.

The front of the platform is converted into Manong Frankie's bedroom, made up of a bed, a sink and a dresser. On the walls are several pin-up posters.

(The light fades from the office and spotlights Manong Frankie who is paying a young prostitute, VICKY after kissing her.)

MANONG FRANKIE: *Salamat ulit, Vicky...*

VICKY: You are very welcome, Frankie...

MANONG FRANKIE: *Sandali...*

(He stops the young woman who is dressed sexily. He opens his door and looks around. He signals the young woman to leave.)

MANONG FRANKIE: The coast is clear...

(He leads the woman outside his room.)

LUCKY M POOLHALL.

(The light fades from Frankie's bedroom and spotlights the poolhall. Several MANONGS are playing keno on the pool table. Each one of them is nattily dressed in leather jackets and hats as MARGARET MUYCO, an older white woman is behind the counter. Manong WAHAT calls for Manong SANTOS.)

MANONG WAHAT: Santos...Santos...it's your turn...

(Santos is moping on the bench, looking blankly into space, holding his cue.)

MANONG WAHAT: SANTOS! What is wrong with you, *ba*?

(Santos comes out of his trance as the others look at him.)

MANONG SANTOS: *Ha?*

(He stands up and takes his place behind the cue. They continue playing.)

MANONG SANTOS: Do you think those rumors are true?

MARGARET: What, that somebody bought the I-hotel?

MANONG SANTOS: (concerned)

There were all those men coming and going...do you think...what are we going to do? Where are we going to live?

MARGARET: Don't be too paranoid...This city will not do that to us...

MANONG SANTOS: But Margaret, that's what they said about the Antwerp...and now they're building that pyramid over it...

MARGARET: Don't you worry about it, Santos...Those are just rumors...

MANONG WAHAT: Don't worry about that and worry about this! hehehe...

(Manong Wahat scores a winning point and the old men all reach for some quarters in their pockets to pay Wahat who takes out his pipe and lights it.)

MANONG SANTOS: Wahat, you know how I feel about that pipe of yours...I'm going home...

(Manong Santos puts back his cue on the rack and walks out. Manong Wahat puts out his pipe.)

MANONG WAHAT: Santos...c'mon...see it's out...Santos...

TINO'S BARBERSHOP.

(AL ROBLES comes in and interrupts. He is a disheveled, bearded dragon of a young man in plaid shirt and jeans - a complete contrast to the manongs. He is confident and cocky in demeanor. A camera hangs from his neck. Manong James, the guitarist continues playing.)

AL: Good morning, Manongs...

TINO: Good morning, Robles...is today the day?

(Tino is sweeping the floor as the other men stop their playing to wait for Al's answer. He takes out a notepad and reads from it.)

AL: Yes, listen to this... 'A haircut will not last. Much like the wind with its song, nor the rain with its tears...It will not last...'

(The quartet resumes playing, drowning the poet out.)

MANONG JOE:

**Where else can you eat  
Being far away?  
A warm tasty treat  
Home-cooked everyday...**

AL: (smiling)

Don't you guys want to hear the end of it...

MANONG JOE: That is exactly what we want to hear...the END of it!

(The PA-RUM-PUM roll of the cymbals. Laughter. They stop playing.)

TINO: So you didn't just come in here to bore us with another one of your poems...

AL: (He starts to read again.)

'A haircut will not last...'

(The old men roll their eyes and continue jamming. Tino resumes sweeping the floor.)

AL: Okay, okay...Jeez...I just wanted to remind you to be on your best behavior today...

(They all stop what they are doing to look at him.)

AL: That student from Berkeley is coming today...

MANONG ROBERT: What student?

AL: The one who is scouting for a place they can use as a classroom.

MANONG JOE: Classroom?

AL: Yes, classroom...

TINO: *Dito?* In Manilatown?

AL: As a means of connecting with their culture, she said they usually hold classes in the communities...it's part of their curriculum.

MANONG ROBERT: Manilatown? Really?

MANONG JOE: He better hurry...

(PA-RUM-PUM.)

TINO: What's so interesting about Manilatown anyway?

AL: That's what I keep asking myself...Well, she's also interested in interviewing you guys...Why? It's a mystery...

MANONG JOE: Well, why can't she just ask you? You know more about Manilatown than...she?

(Now he gets their attention. Al smiles.)

MANONG JOE: Go ahead, we're listening...

AL: (reading)  
'A haircut will not last...'

(Al is enjoying this as the old men get exasperated listening to him.)

AL: She called me up last night to confirm...and I want you all to be your charming selves and welcome her with open arms...

(Tino glances out his window.)

TINO: It looks like Manong Frankie is already doing that...

Al: What?!

(Al rushes to the window as the rest follow.)

AL: Oh, no...no...no...

(Al scrambles out of the barbershop followed by the old men.)

### OUTSIDE THE I-HOTEL.

The front of the platform is now converted into the façade of the International Hotel with a floating sign announcing the address.

(Manong Frankie opens the front door and looks out and around as Manong Santos makes his way towards him. Manong Frankie ushers Vicky out and Manong Santos catches him.)

MANONG FRANKIE: Okay, Vicky...

MANONG SANTOS: Really, Frankie... *Isusumbong kita kay Joe*... You know our policy about bringing...her...her kind in our home...

MANONG FRANKIE: And what kind is that...

MANONG SANTOS: You know what I mean...I'm telling Joe...

MANONG FRANKIE: Santos, why don't you mind your own business...

MANONG SANTOS: *Bahala ka!*

(Santos storms into the I-hotel.)

MANONG FRANKIE: *Hwag mong pansinin yun*... Come, Vicky...I'll walk you home...Don't mind him...

VICKY: You don't have to do that, Frankie...

MANONG FRANKIE: Okay *lang*...

(The dapper Manong walks with the young woman.)

OUTSIDE THE STREET.

(Al calls out to Manong Frankie.)

AL: Manong Frankie! Manong Frankie, wait!

(Manongs Felix, Wahat, Joe and Robert approach them along with Al. Manong Frankie tries to ignore them as he panics away.)

AL: Hey! Where are you going? Hello...

(Vicky just stands there, unsure on what to do.)

AL: Hi...Lisa? I'm Al Robles...I wasn't expecting you so soon...

(Al offers his hand and Vicky is quick to play along. She is not in her business for nothing.)

VICKY: Hello, Al...how are you?

AL: I'm fine...fine...You really look familiar to me...have we met before?

VICKY: I don't think so...

AL: So, gentlemen, may I introduce Ms. Lisa Castro from Berkeley...Lisa these are some of the many Manongs of Manilatown...

VICKY: The Manongs of Manilatown...Yes, I've heard so much about you gentlemen. And they were right...

AL: Lisa, this is Manong James, Manong Joe, Manong Wahat, Manong Robert...and I see you've met Manong Frankie...

MANONG FRANKIE: (playing it up)  
Pretty lady, what a pleasure to meet you...

(Manong FRANKIE, the womanizer of the group, takes his hat off and kisses Vicky's hand. Vicky tries to keep her cool. They start walking around.)

AL: So I think we'll start with the International Hotel...there is a big room in the basement that we use for meetings and parties...you can ask the Manongs questions if you like...I'm sure you're interested in why they moved here...

VICKY: Oh...okay...So, Manong Frankie, when did you move here to Manilatown.

MANONG FRANKIE: I move here in 1918 and never left. I was in the Navy, you know, during World War Two...

VICKY: Oh, you're a war vet?

MANONG FRANKIE: Yes, Ma'am...do you want to see my battlescars...?

(Al interrupts, taking Vicky away from Manong Frankie.)

AL: I don't think so...

VICKY: Well, you've seen one battlescar...

AL: Trust me...no...

VICKY: And you, Manong Joe?

MANONG JOE: I moved here in the 1930's...not exactly sure when...I came here to work...

VICKY: Why? I mean why here in San Francisco?

(They all take turns scooping Vicky's hand with their arms and walking in opposite directions.)

MANONG JOE: Why in San Francisco?

VICKY: Why in Manilatown?

MANONG ROBERT: Where else would we move to?

MANONG FRANKIE: Where else could you find such pretty ladies?

MANONG WAHAT: Where else could you belong?

**Where else can you find  
When you feel alone?  
A home to consider  
Your very own.  
A radius of ten blocks  
Then widely known  
As little Manilatown.**

(Lights out. Action freezes.)

INSIDE AN OFFICE.

A conference room in the Milton Meyer and Company office.

(Lights on a conference room where WALTER SHORENSTEIN is listening to a MAN in a well pressed suit. He has a poster of a drawing of a multi-level parking lot.)

MAN:

**What I see is a parking lot  
Over this very spot  
Think of the money we'll be making.**

WALTER:

**What about all those old men?**

MAN:

**Those old men are old men.  
Evict them.**

WALTER:

**And what then?  
I see what will happen.**

MAN:

**What will happen's a parking lot  
Over this very spot  
Think of the money  
That we'll be making.**

(Walter looks at the man.)

MAN:

**That you'll be making.**

(Lights out.)

OUTSIDE ON KEARNEY STREET.

(Lights on as Frankie tries to cut in but Joe scoops Vicky's arm.)

MANONG JOE:

**Where else can you meet  
Walking down the street?  
Good people who greet  
You with smiles so sweet.  
Such friendly, nice creatures  
That you'll retreat  
With them to Manilatown.**

(Frankie tries to grab Vicky's ass. Al sees this and rushes to scoop Vicky away. Frankie smiles as Al gives him a dirty look.)

AL: It was easier for them...there was already a familiarity...

**You can find your identity here.  
A community here...**

(Frankie tries to embrace Vicky who ducks as Wahat scoops her arm.)

MANONG FRANKIE:

**With a welcoming warm embrace.**

MANONG WAHAT:

**You're a part of the family here.  
You'll blend naturally here.  
Like you've always  
Belonged to this place.**

BATAAN LUNCH.

Bataan Lunch is a small diner with a long counter

(They end up in front of the Bataan Lunch.)

VICKY: Hmm...smells great...

AL: Not only does it smell great, it tastes great!

**Where else can you eat  
Being far away...**

(They all enter the diner. They make their way inside the Bataan Lunch where several other Manongs are dining. They let Vicky sit in the center as the cook serves her some food. Frankie bullies his way to sit next to her. She smiles.)

COOK:

**A warm, tasty treat  
Home-cooked everyday.  
The food here that's so good  
Will make you stay  
In yummy Manilatown.  
There's *adobo, lumpiang shanghai...***

AL:

***Pancit canton* that I think is so good  
I could swear my Mom's here.**

COOK:

**The kare-kare you should try  
If you don't mind the tripe.  
Washing it all down with  
San Miguel beer.**

COMPANY:

***O anong sarap!***

VICKY:

**Where else can I find  
When I feel alone  
A home to consider  
My very own.**

AL:

**In downtown Bay Area  
You'll find a home**

MANONGS:

**Away from home.  
What's left of an era  
A one square block area  
We love that's Manilatown.**

COMPANY:

**Welcome to Manila...**

(Santos comes running in, BANGING the door in his haste, carrying a letter.  
Music under.)

AL: Manong Santos? What is it?

(He is almost in tears as he hands the letter of eviction to Al. He reads it as everyone pays attention in the diner. Lights on a choir on top of the platform, made up of the BUSINESS MEN and WOMEN.)

CHOIR:

**We regret to inform you that  
We are evicting you all today.**

MANONG SANTOS:

**See the rumors were true!**

CHOIR:

**Furthermore, we request that you  
Vacate the building by New Year's Day.**

MANONG SANTOS:

**What are we gonna do?**

CHOIR:

**We do hope that you all understand.**

VICKY:

**What's there to understand?**

CHOIR:

**It's an order by law of the land.**

MANONG FRANKIE:

**Fuck the law of the land.**

CHOIR:

**Milton Meyer and Company  
Wishes you all a Good Luck.**

(Commotion.)

MANONGS: (simultaneously)  
*Anong ibig sabihin?*  
What are we going to do?  
I knew it!

(Manong Santos sees Vicky who just waves a quiet hello.)

AL: Hold on...Let me think?

CHOIR:  
**Good Luck.**

(A young woman, the real LISA CASTRO, enters the diner looking for Al.  
Nobody pays attention to her amid the commotion.)

LISA: Good morning...I...

(She approaches Vicky.)

LISA: Excuse me but what is going on?

VICKY: They just got an eviction notice...

LISA: Well, maybe you can tell me where I can find Al  
Robles? Somebody said he was in here...I was supposed  
to meet him...

VICKY: That's him...Are you Lisa Castro?

(Lisa nods, surprised that Vicky knew who she was. Vicky just smiles and points  
to Al.)

CHOIR:  
**Good luck.**

(Lisa approaches Al.)

LISA: Excuse me, Al...I'm Lisa Castro...

(Vicky hears this and makes a slow exit.)

AL: What?

LISA: I'm Lisa Castro...from Berkeley? We spoke on the phone last night...

AL: Lisa Castro?...

(Al looks over as Vicky exits the diner and has a Eureka moment, figuring out where he thinks he knows Vicky from.)

AL: Hey...

(Vicky throws him a kiss before leaving the diner.)

CHOIR:

**Good Luck!**

(Sets change. The wall of the platform turns into the façade of the International Hotel where the Company start putting up streamers and placards declaring – “NO EVICTION! WE WON’T MOVE! A Christmas wreath is put up as the Choir, now as Christmas carolers, continues. Several Manongs, dressed warmly, sit in protest.)

CHOIR:

**Merry Christmas to you!  
And a Happy New Year!  
I am singing to  
Bring you Christmas cheer.  
Songs of holly and snow,  
Santa Claus and reindeer  
To remind you that  
Christmas time is near.  
When the family  
Gathers all around  
The Christmas tree.  
It is where I’ll be  
Wishing that your  
Smiling face I’ll see.  
Merry Christmas to you!  
And a Happy New Year!  
Here is hoping that  
You’ll be home next year!**

(Several people pass by and greet the protesting Manongs.)

CHOIR:

**We regret to inform you  
That we are evicting you all today.**

PASSER-BY:

**Merry Christmas to you!**

CHOIR:

**Furthermore, we expect that you  
Vacate the building by New Year's Day.**

MANONGS:

**And a Happy New Year!**

CHOIR:

**And we hope that you all understand...**

MANONGS:

***Maligayang Pasko!***

CHOIR:

**It's an order by law of the land.**

MANONGS:

***Sa lahat sa inyo!***

CHOIR:

**Milton Meyer and Company  
Wishes you and your family  
A Happy Holiday!**

(The Manongs are all walking around with placards.)

MANONGS: **NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

Scene 3:

January-June, 1969

IN FRONT OF THE I-HOTEL.

There is a floating sign that marks the brick building.

MANONGS: **NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

(They chant as they take their place huddled together. They have attracted several reporters that have taken their picture. A young and handsome BILL SORRO dances onto the stage as Manong Felix is interviewed by one REPORTER. Music under.)

MANONG FELIX: We will not let what happened to the Palm Hotel on Kearney and Washington happen to us. The tenants there were evicted without any relocation plans from the city. They demolished the Palm and now, they are all homeless. We will put up a fight for our rights to our home...

(Lights on Bill.)

BILL: I've always wanted to go to Cuba and now I had a chance as part of the Buchanan YMCA dance troupe.

**Cuba.**

**I was going to Cuba**

**Where I'll tango and rhumba**

**And nothing was going to stop me.**

**Cuba.**

**I will live in Havana**

**Where I'll study to be a**

**Guevarra revolutionary.**

**Then one morning, it was 1969.**

**Just before I left for Cuba.**

**Read reports on old men in a picket line**

**Fighting for their rights to have a**

**Home.**

#### INSIDE AN OFFICE.

A meeting room on top of the platform.

(MEN and WOMEN enter the room with a large table. Introductions are made, among them is the chairman of the United Filipino Association, NESS AQUINO and the chairman of the Milton Meyer and Company, WALTER SHORENSTEIN as the Manongs continue their protest below the platform. Music under.)

MAN: Mr. Walter Shorenstein, this is Mr. Ness Aquino, the chairman of the United Filipino Association.

(The two men connect hands. They all sit down.)

NESS: Mr. Shorenstein...thank you for meeting with us.

WALTER: You made it difficult for me not to...with all the protests and appeals and press...Go ahead...I'm here to listen.

(Lights back to Bill as he dances around. The action on top and below the platform continues.)

BILL:

**Then I left for  
Cuba.  
Fell in love with Havana,  
With the beat of the Conga  
The rum, the cigars and the women.  
Cuba.  
How exciting an era.  
With Fidel's propaganda  
The rallies that birthed Communism.  
Still I couldn't take those old men off my mind.  
In the I-hotel unwelcome.  
And what good was I to them if I'm confined  
On an island miles away from  
Home.**

INSIDE AN OFFICE.

(Lights back on the meeting room. Ness Aquino and his team stand up. Mr. Shorenstein and his team follow and they exchange handshakes.)

NESS: Thank you for your time, Mr. Shorenstein...

WALTER: I will go over everything we went through today and hopefully be able to give you an answer by the end of the week. Is that acceptable to you?

(Ness nods and leads the way out for the members of the UFA. Walter sits down as his team leaves. A tall well-dressed MRS. SHORENSTEIN remains with him. She approaches Walter and her hand traces the line of his suit lapel.)

MRS. S: I'm confident that you'll do the right thing, Dear.

(She leaves her husband alone, sitting in the dark. Lights on Bill. He walks to the front of the I-hotel where the Manongs are still picketing.)

BILL:

**So I left Havana.  
Back to little Manila.**

(Bill changes his costume and grabs a placard.)

BILL:

**Left the cane fields behind  
For the picketing line.**

(Ness comes out to talk to the picketers.)

NESS: This morning, Mr. Shorenstein agreed to a new three-year lease that we will be signing tomorrow...

(There is instant celebration. Bill dances with the Company until the MUSIC evolves into the sound of a Firetruck SIREN. They dance past the I-hotel where a REPORTER is telecasting live on camera. Music under.)

REPORTER: A fire broke out on the north wing of 848 Kearney Street in the early morning. 848 Kearney Street is the home of the International Hotel, a low-income residence for several Filipino and Chinese elderly men. Three people were killed in the blaze in the brick building that is in the middle of a controversial protest regarding its fate. The question now is if this tragedy will affect the negotiations between the Milton Meyer and Company and the United Filipino Association for a new 3-year lease.

(Lights on Choir on top of the platform, dressed as business people again.)

CHOIR:

**We regret to inform you  
That we're not renewing  
Your lease at all.**

(The lights dim and one spotlight shines on a MAN in the choir.)

MAN: As a representative of Mayor Alioto's Advisory Committee to the Office of Aging, we oppose the destruction of the International Hotel unless adequate relocation housing is found.

(Light is back on the choir.)

CHOIR:

**We are sorry that we are  
Disrupting the lives of  
You good people.**

(Lights off the choir and on to Walter Shorenstein who is part of the choir.)

WALTER S.: Progress is a train coming down the track. If you don't get out of the way, you will get run over.

(Light is back on the choir.)

CHOIR:

**And we hope that you  
All understand.**

(Lights off the choir and on to Manong Joe.)

MANONG JOE: This is the home and cultural center for the older generation of the city's Filipino community. Destruction of the I-hotel would mean the destruction and displacement of our community. If they demolish the International Hotel, it would be done over our bodies.

(Lights off Manong Joe and back on the choir.)

CHOIR:

**The eviction will  
Happen as planned.**

(Lights off the choir and on to a WOMAN who is part of the choir.)

ATTORNEY: All tenants must vacate the premises by June 1, 1969. All legal avenues for remaining are closed.

(Lights back on choir.)

CHOIR:

**Milton Meyer and Company  
Wishes you all a Good Luck.**

(Lights off the choir and on the protest. LUISA DE LA CRUZ enters stage left, luggage in hand and stops in front of the I-hotel. She is a charming woman in her 40's. She ponders her surroundings as lights focus on Manong Santos.)

MANONG SANTOS: Why do I want to stay? I have here a good neighborhood, and good and very kind countrymen...old and new friends...I have stayed here so long that I call this hotel my home...

LUISA:

**I have lived  
Halfway around the world  
As a good, devoted wife.  
Now I'm here,  
Halfway around the world  
In a city full of strife.  
And I'm hoping  
In this brave new world**

LUISA: (cont'd)

**That I learn how to survive.  
Living here  
Halfway around the world  
And beginning a new life.**

(The Manongs turn around and resume their protest as Luisa's husband, ALFREDO joins her. Luisa is a little unsure about the move.)

MANONGS:

**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

ALFREDO: Welcome to our new home, Luisa.

LUISA: Are you sure about this, Alfredo?

ALFREDO: It will be okay.

(Alfredo extends his hand and Luisa takes it with a sigh. The Manongs part to let the couple inside the front door as the men and women of the choir on the platform sit around a table. Ness Aquino and his group join the men and women around the table. Both parties exchange papers and signatures as they sign the new three-year lease. Music under. Mr. Shorenstein and Ness Aquino stand up and shake hands.)

WALTER S.: Congratulations on the new three-year lease...provided you build the hotel up to code...

(Light on Bill. He picks up a bag and moves in the I-hotel.)

BILL:

**Six months later  
I moved in the I-hotel  
Paying forty-five bucks monthly.  
Made a difference in my life  
And I could tell  
I was happy to be finally,  
Finally  
Home.**

(Lights out.)

Scene 4:  
1969-1972/peace with a lease

THE KITCHEN IN THE I-HOTEL.

Upstage right of the platform, a kitchen emerges with a long counter and a stove. On top of the stove is a large pot of rice, steaming to perfection.

(Manong Santos is waiting for his rice to cook. Light is on the pot as it simmers. Santos smiles as EMIL DE GUZMAN enters the kitchen, following the aroma. He is a young student in his twenties. He is carrying a box of supplies. Music under.)

EMIL: Good morning, Manong...hmmm...Is the rice almost ready?

(Emil puts the box down then goes near the stove. He attempts to lift the cover of the pot. SANTOS hits his hand with a spoon.)

EMIL: Ow!

MANONG SANTOS: It's almost ready.

**Rice.**

**Eat a bowl of steaming rice.**

**Comfort food, it's no surprise**

**It's a staple diet.**

(Emil holds his hand up.)

EMIL: Well, it's almost lunchtime.

MANONG SANTOS: Is it lunchtime already?

EMIL: (nodding)

All the students are getting hungry, me included.

MANONG SANTOS: Well, Emil, it will be ready when it's ready.

**Rice.**

**Brown or white or sticky, rice.**

**It's as close to paradise**

**As anyone can get.**

(Emil takes some bowls out of the box.)

EMIL: You might have to cook another pot. More student volunteers just arrived.

MANONG SANTOS: More students? *Ilan pa?*

EMIL: Maybe about 14...I'm expecting more...I put up signs all over Berkeley...

MANONG SANTOS: Wow! At this rate, we will be done with the renovation...we will be up to code in no time...

(Manong Wahat comes in, holding a fishing rod and a bucketful of fish.)

MANONG WAHAT: That's if we don't run out of money first...I caught some *isda* to add to our lunch...

(Wahat dumps the fish in the sink and takes out a knife to start cleaning them. Santos is disgusted.)

MANONG SANTOS: Wahat, do you have to clean those fish here?

MANONG WAHAT: Well, Santos, where do you suggest I clean them.

MANONG SANTOS: You know how I feel about fish...

(Wahat lights up his pipe. Santos is more disgusted.)

MANONG SANTOS: And you know how I feel about that pipe of yours...

MANONG WAHAT: Well, do not worry about what I'm doing and concentrate on what you're doing... what's going on with the *kanin* anyway? Everybody's waiting.

(Emil signals for Wahat to stop.)

MANONG SANTOS: The *kanin* will be ready when it's ready!

**Rice.**

**Just add water, boil and steam.**

**It's so simple, it will seem**

**Like another daydream.**

(Manong Frankie interrupts. Emil and Wahat try to stop him with hand signals.)

MANONG FRANKIE: Well stop with the daydream, we're all getting hungry, Santos.

MANONG SANTOS: (losing his patience)

IT WILL BE READY WHEN IT'S READY!

(sighs)

MANONG SANTOS: (cont'd)

**Rice.**

**Simmering perfection, rice.**

**Dinner, breakfast, luncheon, rice.**

**Any time of day.**

**It as nutritious as they say.**

(They all keep quiet for a beat. The pot stops boiling. Santos gives out a sigh. He approaches the pot and lifts the cover.)

MANONG SANTOS: Now, it's...see what happens when you rush me!

(Santos sits down after disappointment paints his face.)

MANONG FRANKIE: Not again, Santos...You are hopeless.

(Frankie leaves Santos, Wahat and Emil alone. Wahat continues to clean the fish.)

MANONG SANTOS: Rice cannot be rushed.

EMIL: It can't be that bad, maybe we can keep cooking it...

(Emil lifts the pot and puts it back down, slowly. Luisa comes in with a bag of groceries.)

LUISA: Hello, Emil...*kamusta?* Hello, Manong Wahat...that's a lot of fish...I'll help you clean them...O, Manong Santos, I see that you already finished cooking the...

(Emil signals her to stop as she lifts the cover of the pot.)

MANONG SANTOS: I'm sorry, Mrs. D...I wasted it again...I hate wasting rice. Joe will get mad. That was his last bag. I was only trying to help...

(Emil starts putting the grocery away as Luisa takes off her light coat. She puts on her apron.)

LUISA: The beauty of cooking rice, is that you can still save it...let me see...I think it will be okay...it's a little overcooked in the bottom and undercooked on top...

MANONG SANTOS: Not enough water again? Too much heat?  
**How do you cook perfect rice?**  
**I could use some sage advice.**  
**Can you share your secret?**

(She takes another pot and a ladle. She ladles the top of the pot into another. Santos stands to observe as Emil takes out a tray and distributes the bowls on it. Music under.)

LUISA:

**The secret to cooking**  
**The perfect rice**  
**Is not as painstaking,**  
**You'll be surprised.**  
**The steps you'll be taking**  
**Are not that backbreaking**  
**That you'll risk forsaking**  
**The cooking.**

(She adds water to the pot, looks at it, adds some more then begins cooking it on top of the stove. Santos, Wahat and Emil observe.)

LUISA:

**Add water and simmer**  
**Until it cooks.**  
**It cannot be simpler**  
**Than how it looks.**  
**Then you won't be grimmer**  
**When there is a glimmer**  
**Of hope, you're a winner**  
**At dinner.**

(Light fades on kitchen and onto the hotel room.)

### I-HOTEL ROOM.

Upstage left of the platform is converted into one of the hotel rooms that was destroyed by the fire.

(Several STUDENTS are working on renovating the room, BANGING, SAWING in unison. )

STUDENTS:

**Rice  
We are starving! We're hungry!  
Working day and night for free!  
There's no rice nor rest  
For the weary!**

(After a beat, Emil comes in with a tray of food.)

EMIL: Kain na!

(He is followed by Luisa and Santos with the pot of rice.  
Everyone stops working and lines up to take some food.)

LUISA/MANONG SANTOS/EMIL:

**Rice.  
Eat a bowl of steaming rice.  
Comfort food, it's no surprise.  
It's a staple diet.  
Rice.  
Brown or white or sticky, rice.  
It's as close to paradise  
As anyone can get.**

COMPANY:

**Such simmering perfection.  
The grain for every nation.  
A staple of nutrition.  
Rice.**

(Lights out.)

INSIDE AN OFFICE.

On top of the platform.

(One MAN is standing around a table of other men, all business-like. There is an easel with a plan for the Yerba Buena redevelopment.)

MAN 1: The Yerba Buena project can displace thousands of people, mostly  
Blacks and Asians.

MAN 2: But it will also increase our city's tax base and generate a lot of income  
through employment and tourism. Just think of what that will do for San  
Francisco.

WOMAN: But Mayor, think of all the residents...

MAN 1: Low-income residents...

WOMAN: Well, we have to relocate them...provide them with alternative housing...

MAYOR BROWN: We can put that land to higher and better use. It will be for the common good of our city. The only question is how do we do it without attracting any more opposition...Mr. Herman?

JUSTIN HERMAN:

**Well, this land is too valuable  
To permit poor people  
To park on it is really insane.  
We can kick out their asses  
Through high rent increases  
Or making it legal by  
Eminent domain.**

And by doing so, they will have no choice but to leave. The beauty of it is, we don't have to pay them market value for those properties either.

(Lights out.)

ON A BEACH.

The front of the platform is converted into a beach scene.

(Mrs. D. brings a picnic basket as the young women lay out blankets. Al is taking pictures with his camera. Frankie is with Vicky who is embarrassed to join the rest. He pushes her to go and Mrs. D. calls her over to join them.)

LUISA/WOMEN:

**We're having a picnic  
This summer day.  
Away from the hectic-  
Ness of each day.  
The view is so scenic  
Across the bay  
That we all get homesick  
But that's okay.**

(Upstage left, the men are together by a pier over the water. Manong Wahat, smoking his pipe, is showing Emil how to bait a line.)

MANONG WAHAT: *Ganito...*

(Emil observes and follows the old man as they throw their line over the pier.)

EMIL: Then, what?

MANONG WAHAT: Then, we wait...

(Emil seems impatient.)

EMIL: For how long?

MANONG WAHAT: Patience, my dear...for however long it takes...and just enjoy the day...

**The weather is perfect.**

**The fishing, fine.**

**And what is our object**

**But hook and line.**

**No matter the prospect**

**We're sure to dine**

**For everything perfect-**

**Ly goes just fine**

**With rice.**

COMPANY:

**We are hungry, we're starving**

**We are happily waiting**

**For the time to feast**

**Out our famine...**

(Light on Bill Sorro who seems pre-occupied as he plays Frisbee with his three children – DESU, DAPHNE and DANAE. He misses a catch.)

DANAE: Dad...

BILL: Sorry...

(He picks the Frisbee up as Manong Frankie joins him. He throws it to his son. The throwing and catching continues.)

MANONG FRANKIE: O, are you ready?

(Manong Frankie tries to relax him. He is eyeing his girlfriend GIULIANA who is among the women setting up. Music under.)

BILL: (nodding)  
I think so...

MANONG FRANKIE: Are you *nerbyos*?

BILL: A little.

MANONG FRANKIE: It will be okay. Do you have the *singsing*?

(Bill catches the Frisbee and nods. He goes through his pockets, panicking.)

BILL: Yes...I...

(Desu approaches him. The boy takes the ring out of his pockets.)

DESU: Dad, were you looking for this?

BILL: Yes...

(He tousles his son's hair after breathing a sigh of relief. He pockets the jewelry box.)

MANONG FRANKIE: So *anong hinihintay mo? Go.*

BILL: I was going to wait for the right moment.

MANONG FRANKIE: Remember to say *mahal kita.*

(Bill nods.)

MANONG FRANKIE: Go!

(Bill takes a deep breath and collects his children.)

BILL: Kids...

MANONG FRANKIE: Be sure to kneel.

LUISA: I think we are ready...*KAIN NA!* Let's eat!

(Bill approaches his girlfriend.)

BILL: Ahm...Before we eat, I have an announcement.

(Everybody stops what they were doing to listen. Manong Frankie beams with pride as Bill kneels down and takes out the jewelry box from his pocket. All the WOMEN SIGH. Giuliana touches her heart in surprise. Vicky joins Frankie and they all watch the proposal.)

BILL: Huli, since that first day in the canefields in Cuba, I have loved you...

***Mahal kita* with all my heart.  
And nothing in this life  
Will keep us apart.  
For ever since you came around,  
My better half  
In you I found.  
*Mahal kita* with every breath.  
And I will cherish you  
In good times, in bad times, til death  
I'll be with you through all my years,  
To share the laugh-  
Ter and the tears...  
For everytime I see you smile  
My world seems alright.  
*Mahal kita*, you make me whole.  
With every kiss you wake  
My body and soul.  
You are my lover and my friend.  
With you, I'm home  
Until the end.**

I am asking you in front of my children and my family, will you marry me?

GIULIANA: Yes.

(Everybody APPLAUDS as the couple embrace and kiss.)

MANONG FRANKIE: That's my boy!

(There is commotion amid the congratulations as everybody dresses up for the simple wedding that will take place in the I-hotel. Music under.)

#### INSIDE ONE OF THE HALLS IN THE I-HOTEL.

Lanterns drop down and the front of the platform is now a small hall in the I-hotel decorated for a simple wedding.

(The crowd disperses for the wedding of Bill and Giuliana. Al Robles has his camera out and begins taking pictures.)

BILL:

**For every time I see you smile  
My world seems all right.**

JUDGE: You may now kiss.

(They kiss. APPLAUSE.)

BILL/GIULIANA:

**Mahal kita, you make me whole.  
With every kiss, you wake  
My body and soul.  
You are my lover and my friend.  
With you, I'm home  
Until the end.**

BILL:

**For everything in life I know,  
I know because  
Mahal kita.  
Mahal kita.**

(The newlyweds face the company to a roar of APPLAUSE. Music under.)

JUDGE: Ladies and Gentlemen, let me present to you Bill and Giuliana Sorro.

(Cheers and congratulations as rice is showered on the couple.)

COMPANY:

**Rice.  
Throw a pocketful of rice  
For good blessings to arise  
For the happy couple.  
Good luck! Congratulation!  
Best wishes! Salutation!  
We toss your happy union!  
Rice.**

(They toss more rice as the mini band starts to play tango music.)

MANONG FRANKIE: *Mabuhay ang bagong kasal!!!* Hey, they're playing my song!

(Frankie approaches Vicky and extends his hand. She takes it and they start a tango. After a while, Luisa comes running to Al and Emil. She looks frantic as she whispers in their ears. Al and Emil immediately run out. Luisa stops the band while Frankie is in mid-dance.)

MANONG FRANKIE: Hey...*anong nangyari?*

(Everyone focuses on Luisa.)

LUISA: I'm sorry, Bill and Giuliana...Everyone, I found Manong Felix in his room...unconscious. I called the ambulance. Alfredo is waiting for them right now...

(Whispering. Commotion. Lights out.)

Scene 5:  
1973

LUCKY M POOLHALL.  
Left of the platform.

(Several Manongs are playing pool when Margaret comes in. They all stop playing.)

MANONG JOE: So?

MARGARET: Well, hello to you, too, Joe...

MANONG JOE: Sorry, Margaret...Hello...so, *kamusta siya?*

MARGARET: He's okay...

MANONG ROBERT: Just okay?

MARGARET: He's fine...

MANONG WAHAT: (smoking his pipe) Is there any improvement?

MARGARET: No...look why don't you old farts visit him yourself...I'm sure Felix will be so happy...

MANONG JOE: No, thank you, Margaret...

MANONG ROBERT: Hospitals are always too depressing...

MANONG WAHAT: Always full of old sick people...

(The old men resume their game. Margaret looks around.)

MARGARET: I know what you mean...

(She just smiles at herself.)

MANONG SANTOS'S ROOM.

Inside platform.

(The room is a long cubicle that holds a single bed and a small sink. There is a small desk and chair against a wall. There is a KNOCK on the door.)

MANONG SANTOS: Who is it?

AL: It's Robles, Manong Santos...

**Can I come in for a while?**

MANONG SANTOS: *Tuloy, tuloy...*

AL:

**Can I come in, Manong?**

Good morning...

MANONG SANTOS: *Magandang umaga, Robles...Kamusta?*

AL: I'm fine...and you?

MANONG SANTOS: *Mabuti din...*

AL:

**Can I sit and stay a while?**

MANONG SANTOS: Sure...Sit, sit...

(Santos moves to the bed to let Al sit on the chair. The young man takes out his camera and his notebook.)

AL:

**Will you try to make me smile?**

MANONG SANTOS: What is this about?

AL:

**With your stories and your anecdotes?**

MANONG SANTOS: Again?

AL:

**I look forward to your silly, corny jokes.**

MANONG SANTOS: *Talaga, ha!*

AL:

**It's for research and I see  
You could use the company it's true.  
Can I come in for a while?...**

(Lights out.)

INSIDE AN OFFICE.

On top of the platform.

(Mr. Shorestein is sitting on his desk when his SECRETARY comes in.)

SECRETARY: Sir, there is a Mr. Emil de Guzman to see you.

MR. SHORENSTEIN: Who?

SECRETARY: Mr. Emil de Guzman from the International Hotel Tenants Association...they're the ones demonstrating downstairs...

MR. SHORENSTEIN: Send him in.

(The secretary leaves and Emil comes in. They shake hands before sitting.)

MR. SHORENSTEIN: What happened to Mr. Aquino?

EMIL: Mr. Aquino felt that the tenants should be more involved in the cause.

MR. SHORENSTEIN: So, what can I do for you, Mr. de Guzman?

EMIL: As you know, sir, the three-year lease is expiring in a month.

MR. SHORENSTEIN: So that's what the demonstration is for?

EMIL: Yes, sir and we would want to request a renewal.

MR. SHORENSTEIN: Of course. Well, Mr. de Guzman, I will take this up with the board and my lawyers.

EMIL: Thank you, sir.

(Emil stands up and heads out.)

MR. SHORENSTEIN: Mr. de Guzman...

EMIL: Yes, sir...

MR. SHORENSTEIN: There is no need to have a demonstration outside my office every time you appeal...It's giving me a headache.

EMIL: Yes, sir...

(Emil leaves. Music under.)

### MANONG FRANKIE'S ROOM.

(Frankie is grooming himself in front of his dresser mirror when a KNOCK on the door stops him. He checks himself out more time before excitedly opening the door.)

MANONG FRANKIE: Hello...

(Disappointment paints his face.)

AL: It's Robles...

**Can I visit with you now?**

**Can I visit, Manong?**

MANONG FRANKIE: Come in, Robles...*Anong kailangan mo?*

AL: Just saying hello...

**Can't I bullshit with you now**

**With your cool wit I avow.**

MANONG FRANKIE: Hmm...*upo*...I'm kind of...

(Frankie offers him a seat and looks at his watch. Al takes out his notebook.)

AL:

**Please regale me with your epic tales.**

MANONG FRANKIE: ...busy...Not again...

AL:

**Of your conquests with all the sordid details.**

MANONG FRANKIE: I knew it...

AL:

**It's for future referencing.**

MANONG FRANKIE: I'm sure but I'm expecting someone...

AL:

**I might even learn a thing or two.  
Can I visit with you now?**

(KNOCK. Frankie answers the door and it is Vicky. Al understands as he lets Vicky in.)

AL: I guess the answer is no...Hello...we meet again...

FRANKIE: Goodbye.

(Al leaves Frankie and Vicky. Before he closes the door, Frankie grabs Al's hand.)

AL: Don't worry...

(Al gestures he'll keep quiet and waves goodbye as the door closes. Frankie gives Vicky a peck. They sit in bed and start making out. He stops.)

MANONG FRANKIE: I almost forget....

(He takes out his wallet. Vicky stops him. He smiles. Lights out.)

### BATAAN LUNCH DINER.

(The Manongs are having lunch when Emil comes in to join them.)

MANONG WAHAT: So?

EMIL: They are not renewing our lease.

MANONG WAHAT: That asshole!

EMIL: We go back to the monthly rental.

COOK: I had a bad feeling about this.

MANONG WAHAT: So, what are we going to do?

EMIL: We wait.

MANONG WAHAT: For how long?

EMIL: For however long it takes...Patience, my dear...

(Lights out.)

### AL'S ROOM.

(Upstage right, Al is sitting on his desk in what is like a very chaotic room. He is writing.)

AL:

**Manong, I'm afraid the future  
Is catching up at last.  
Manong, and the changes are sure-  
Ly happening too fast.  
How long can we hold on to  
All the memories we know.  
The lives lived long ago  
Are disappearing so...**

(He writes.)

AL: "...*ako ay Pilipino*...I am Pilipino...  
i am Kearny street & the brown feet  
of manongs treading pool hall dreams-  
empty pockets of echoing sadness  
in the pit of lonely carabao bellies-  
...i am international-st. paul-shasta  
royal hotel tomato sardines under warm  
mattresses-*ako ay Pilipino*..."

(Lights out. Music under.)

INSIDE AN OFFICE.

On top of the platform.

(Mr. Shorestein is sitting at his desk as his LAWYER riffles through some papers.)

LAWYER: Before we transfer the property to Four Seas, we will first give the ownership to Transamerica Title Insurance Company who will act as middleman. This insures that you don't pay taxes on the sale, provided you bear the eviction expenses.

MR. SHORENSTEIN: Agreed.

LAWYER: Four Seas will pay the eight-hundred and fifty thousand dollars asking price.

MR. SHORENSTEIN: Great.

LAWYER: Sir, isn't that price low for that property?

MR. SHORENSTEIN: It is, but what Four Seas doesn't realize is that it will take years of litigation before they can actually do what they want with the property. Let them have the headache.

(Lights out.)

OUT ON THE STREET.

(Wahat, pipe in mouth, is walking with his fishing paraphernalia on his way to the piers, Upstage right to left. Al follows after. Music under.)

AL: Manong Wahat...

(Wahat doesn't stop as Al catches up.)

MANONG WAHAT: *Magandang hapon*, Robles...

AL: Good afternoon...

**Can I spend some time with you?**

MANONG WAHAT: As you can see, I'm going...

AL:

**Just a moment, Manong?**

MANONG WAHAT: ...fishing...(SIGHS.)

AL:

**Maybe have a smoke with you?  
Maybe go out fishing too?**

MANONG WAHAT: I...

(They reach the piers. Wahat prepares his fishing rod.)

AL:

**Just enjoy a perfect day like this.  
Something to remember and to reminisce.**

(Wahat hands Al a fishing rod. He throws it over the pier.)

AL:

**It's an afternoon well-spent.  
A potential documentary.  
Can you chat a while...  
Can you visit now...  
Can you spend some time with me...?**

(Al catches a fish. Lights out.)

Scene 6:  
1974/third eviction

TINO'S BARBERSHOP.

(Tino is giving a haircut to Bill who is reading the San Francisco Chronicle.)

TINO: So how is the apartment hunting going?

BILL: Not that great...

TINO: Well, if you want to start a family...the I-hotel is not a place to raise a child...

BILL: I know...it's funny though how my kids love coming here...Huli says that if we don't find one soon, we should just rent another apartment for the kids...

(Bill turns a page and sits up because of something in the paper he reads. He pays attention and rereads it.)

BILL: That should go well with my ex...Oh, God...

(Bill jumps out of his seat and rushes out of the barbershop with newspaper in hand. Tino is surprised.)

TINO: Bill? BILL! *Anong nangyari?!*

### UPSTAGE.

(The Manongs are scattered upstage on either side of the platform, each one pondering an envelope, accompanied by one member of the Choir. They all open one at a time, as each member of the Choir sing, overlapping each other.)

CHOIR:

**We regret to inform you  
That we are evicting you all again.  
Furthermore we request that you  
Vacate the building when we say when.  
This is it, our final demand  
And we hope that you all understand.  
Supasit Mahaguna of the  
Fours Seas Investment Corporation.**

(They all close the letter simultaneously and gather in Tino's barbershop.)

### OUTSIDE TINO'S BARBERSHOP.

(They all speak simultaneously.)

COMPANY: Supasit Who?

*Sino?*

What is this about again?

What is going on?

(Emil, Al and Bill arrive to calm the throng.)

EMIL: Okay...Okay...

MANONG ROBERT: Emil, how could this happen?

EMIL: I don't know...

MANONG WAHAT: We didn't even get a warning...

EMIL: I know...I know...

MANONG FRANKIE: So *anong gagawin natin?*

BILL: We will appeal...

MANONGS/LUISA: (simultaneously, Music under.)

What!

I'm sick and tired...

Not again!

AL: Manongs...Manongs...

(They calm down to let Emil talk.)

EMIL: We will challenge this.

MANONG ROBERT:

**Supasit Mahaguna, who is he?**

EMIL:

**I don't know.**

LUISA:

**Supasit Mahaguna, where is he?**

EMIL: (getting impatient)

**I don't know.**

MANONG WAHAT:

**How is it**

**That we're gonna**

**Get evict-**

**Ed.**

MANONG JOE:

**Don't wanna  
Leave the city.**

BILL:

**We're gonna  
Have to fight.**

MANONG FRANKIE:

**Who's this twit Mahaguna?**

MANONG JAMES:

**What's the deal?**

AL:

**We'll find out.**

TINO:

**And does it  
Mean we're gonna  
Reappeal?**

EMIL:

**We'll find out.**

MANONG FRANKIE:

**FUCKING SHIT!**

LUISA:

**Are we sure that  
It's legit?**

AL:

**This is just a-  
Nother writ  
That we're gonna  
Have to right.**

(Lights out and on to Santos' room and the choir.)

MANONG SANTOS' ROOM.

Inside the platform.

(Santos enters his room, with his mail in hand. He sits on the bed and goes through them. He looks at one envelope, ponders it. He opens it to read it.)

CHOIR:

**We regret to inform you  
That we are evicting you all again.  
Furthermore we request that you  
Vacate the building when we say when.  
This is it, our final demand  
And we hope that you all understand.  
Supasit Mahaguna of the  
Fours Seas Investment Corporation.**

MANONG SANTOS. Oh no...not again...

(Lights out.)

ACT 2:

Time: 1975-2005

Place: On the ten block radius in San Francisco that was once known as Manilatown.

Scene 1:  
1975

THE I-HOTEL COMMON ROOM.

The top of the platform is converted into a conference room.

(There is a meeting with the tenant association and SENATOR MOSCONE. Everyone is listening to the senator.)

MOSCONE: I want to reaffirm my commitment to the tenants of the International Hotel. I am opposed to the eviction. Before any tenancies are terminated, there must first be provided safe, decent and suitable housing within the community and at comparable prices. I will make this one of my personal projects when I become Mayor of San Francisco.

EMIL: What do you propose should be our next move, Senator Moscone?

MOSCONE: I think you are doing a great job, just trying to be seen and heard.

(Lights out as the sets change. The top of the platform is transformed into Manong Felix's room. Music under.)

IN FRONT OF THE I-HOTEL.

(Manong Felix, cane in hand makes his way to the center of the platform, which is his bedroom. The crowd that is gathered around the I-hotel is HUSHED when he peers out the window. APPLAUSE. Spotlight will be on Manong Joe, Manong Santos Manong Robert and Manong Frankie. Music under as he begins his speech. His voice is slurred but understandable on the microphone.)

MANONG FELIX: I am Felix Ayson and I am 77 years old. I joined the U.S. Armed Forces during the first world war. After the war, I became a schoolteacher teaching third grade. American missionaries would always come to visit my school and we would have conversations at recess.

MANONG FELIX: (cont'd)

They would tell me that the U.S. is a democratic government, a land of opportunity, a land of equality. So I decided to come here, selling the land that I inherited from my parents. I was 29 years old when I moved here in 1926.

MANONG WAHAT:

**When I was young,**

MANONG FELIX: (continuing in rhythm with song.)

When I came here, it was the opposite. I was lost. The only thing that saved me were the first Pilipinos who moved into the International Hotel before me.

MANONG WAHAT:

**So full of hope,**

MANONG FELIX: Most of my time and years in America, I spend in this hotel, so it is my home.

MANONG WAHAT:

**I moved to San Francisco.**

MANONG FELIX: My home, for almost 50 years.

MANONG WAHAT:

**And here I lived.**

MANONG FELIX: Whenever there was no work in the country, I come here and find a job in the city.

MANONG WAHAT:

**And learned to cope  
For there was no...**

MANONG ROBERT:

**Strawberries.**

MANONG FELIX: The Filipinos at the International Hotel help me find a job. My first job in 1926 was as a dishwasher...In the summertimes, I would find work in the vineyards of Salinas...in the orchards of Oak Glen...in the farms of Santa Barbara...

MANONG ROBERT:

**I picked them. I packed them.**

MANONG FELIX: Grapes, oranges, watermelon, strawberries...

MANONG ROBERT:  
**Those strawberries...**

MANONG FELIX: You eat it, I've picked it...

(Manong Felix freezes as spotlight shines on Manong Robert who shares his thoughts.)

MANONG ROBERT:  
**From morning til night.  
On my knees.  
I washed them and stacked them.  
Those strawberries.**

MANONG SANTOS:  
**I smelled of fish...**

MANONG FELIX: I would find whatever job there was...

MANONG SANTOS:  
**Most everyday.**

MANONG FELIX: I would travel to work the canneries in Monterey...

MANONG SANTOS:  
**From working canneries  
In Monterey.  
The smell of fish  
Would always stay  
In the back of my throat.  
I'm sick of fish  
If you must know  
From canning sardines  
In Cannery Row.  
It made me wish  
I never lived here...**

MANONG FRANKIE:  
**In 1943.**

MANONG FELIX: In 1943, I was drafted and served the United States of America until the end of the war.

MANONG FRANKIE:

**The draft card came for me.  
I fought the war,  
And earned a star  
For bravery  
And fighting to be free.  
The battle scars I show  
Prepare me now to go  
To battle for  
A different war  
We're waging here...**

MANONG FELIX: I ran an elevator for 12 years until I retired in 1968. Two years ago, I suffered a stroke and a heart attack. And I'm still here.

(APPLAUSE.)

MANONG WAHAT:

**I did survive.  
I'm still alive.  
But what about tomorrow?  
Now I am old...**

MANONG FELIX: I am old. I am tired. I am poor. I don't want to move.

MANONG WAHAT:

**And full of hope-  
Lessness in San Francisco.**

(Company sings the quartet)

COMPANY:

**When I was young  
So full of hope.  
I moved to San Francisco  
And there I lived  
And learned to cope  
For there was nowhere to go.  
I did survive.  
I'm still alive.  
But what about tomorrow.  
Now I am old.  
And full of hope-  
Lessness in San Francisco.**

COMPANY: (cont'd)

**Strawberries.**

**I picked them. I packed them.**

**Those strawberries**

**From morning til night.**

**On my knees**

**I plucked them. I stacked them.**

**Those strawberries**

**Sold in San Francisco.**

**I smelled of fish**

**Most everyday.**

**From working canneries in Monterey.**

**The smell of fish**

**Would always stay.**

**In the back of my throat**

**I'm sick of fish**

**If you must know**

**From canning sardines**

**In Cannery Row.**

**It makes me wish**

**I never lived here**

**In San Francisco.**

**In 1943,**

**The draft card came for me.**

**I fought the war**

**And earned a star**

**For bravery**

**And fighting to be free.**

**The battle scars I show**

**Prepare me now to go**

**To battle for**

**A different war**

**We're waging here**

**In San Francisco.**

MANONG FELIX: I don't have much longer to be on this Earth. I will die with a clear heart which is a wonderful thing. But what of these people here.

(Protesters begin going around with signs.)

COMPANY:

**In San Francisco!**

**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

Scene 2:  
1976

COURTROOM.

The top of the platform is converted into a courtroom.

(JUDGE IRA BROWN enters and sits on his chair.)

MAN: The honorable Judge Ira Brown.

JUDGE BROWN: After 4 days and twelve ballots, the jury still is deadlocked so I am taking over and deciding in favor of Four Seas. I believe there was insufficient evidence that the eviction was retaliatory. Furthermore, I think that the tenants should not have been in the hotel in the first place. I thereby order the jury to decide on a monetary award from the I-hotel Tenants Association to Four Seas.

(Judge Brown strikes his gavel.)

UPSTAGE.

The I-Hotel picket line.

(The Company, holding protest signs march around.)

COMPANY:

**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

(Manong Frankie turns to Emil.)

MANONG FRANKIE: *Ano daw? In Tagalog, please...*

EMIL: We lost but...

(Emil turns to face several journalists.)

EMIL:

**We will appeal when we need to.  
Deal if we have to.  
We'll never settle...**

COURTROOM.

The State Court of Appeals.

(Another Judge sits in.)

JUDGE: This State Court of Appeals denies the request of the International Hotel Tenants Association. The eviction order stays. Undersheriff James Denham will enforce the eviction order as soon as possible.

(The Judge BANGS his gavel.)

UPSTAGE.

In front of the I-Hotel.

(The protests continues as Manong Frankie turns to Emil again.)

MANONG FRANKIE: *Ano daw? In Tagalog, please...*

EMIL: We lost again, but don't worry...

(He turns to face the media.)

EMIL:

**From this ordeal we will get through.  
We'll fight to rescue  
Our I-hotel.**

OUTSIDE THE COURTHOUSE.

On top of the platform.

(Undersheriff James Denham is being interviewed on camera.)

UNDERSHERIFF DENHAM: I will not be enforcing the eviction order as long as the tenants are appealing in court.

INTERVIEWER: But Mr. Denham, wasn't that a ruling by the State Court of Appeals...that you enforce the eviction order?

UNDERSHERIFF DENHAM: Yes, but as I learned from the International Hotel attorney, Gilbert Graham, they are appealing this case to the State Supreme Court.

UPSTAGE.

In front of the I-Hotel.

(The protests continues.)

COMPANY:

**We won't move!  
They have to drag us all away.  
Just to prove  
To them that we are struggling to stay.  
Arm in arm at war  
Everyday for our  
Home, our I-hotel.  
NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

(Lights out upstage.)

LUCKY M POOL HALL.

(A group of men carry the pool table outside as Luisa helps Margaret pack up. Manong Robert is sweeping the floor. There are boxes around.)

MARGARET: I never thought I would see this day...Santos was right all along...

LUISA: Maybe if we have a collection every month...after all, this is everybody's second home...

MARGARET: No...they raised the rent to get us out...besides, I can't do that to all the old folks here...It makes me ashamed of my own people...

(MEN come in to carry the last of the boxes.)

LUISA: What are you and Manny going to do now...?

MARGARET: I don't know, but we will survive...we've gone through worse since we met...I will miss this neighborhood. We moved here because it was safe...we were accepted here...Do you know that people would spit on the ground every time we walked around the city...It became so bad that Manny would usually walk behind me just so we don't seem to be together...

MANONG ROBERT: Manny was braver than me...I was too afraid...

LUISA: You too, Manong Robert?

MANONG ROBERT: I should have married her...I often wonder where she is now...

(He continues sweeping, sadly lost in thought.)

MARGARET: I turned my back on my own people because they were not broad-minded enough to accept a Filipino marrying a white woman...Did you know that Bill's father was jailed for marrying his mother...I hate my own people for that...

(Robert dustpans the dirt and throws it in a tin trash can. Luisa approaches Margaret who looks at the empty hall that once was the Lucky M.)

MARGARET:

**And then there was the Lucky M.  
The pool hall called the Lucky M.  
A place where everybody  
Was happy and young again.  
So much of our lives have disappeared.  
And block by city block have been cleared.  
Manilatown is gone as I have feared.  
What happened to this old neighborhood.  
Remember it as much as you could.  
Because those days are sadly gone for good.**

(She turns off the light one last time. She turns the OPEN sign on the door to CLOSED before leaving with Luisa.)

OFFICE.

On top of the platform.

(There is meeting between the HOUSING AUTHORITY and the newly-elected Mayor Moscone.)

MOSCONE: Eminent domain.

MAN: Eminent domain?

MOSCONE: Yes, eminent domain. This is the only way that Four Seas will allow you to buy that property.

MAN: But don't we usually use eminent domain to get rid of the poor to develop property for public use?

MOSCONE: Yes, but this will be revolutionary! So the idea is for the city to lend you, the Housing Authority some money for community development for the purchase of the hotel from Four Seas. After repairing the building code violations, the tenants would then apply for a loan to buy the property from you. That is if the Board of Supervisors approved the loan.

MAN: But Mayor Moscone, what makes you think that Four Seas would agree to this?

MOSCONE: They don't care about anything else than the money. For the right price... This is not only practical but legal. You, the Housing Authority, will be fulfilling the public purpose of providing low-income housing by selling the building to a private corporation, the I-hotel Tenants Association. At the same time, you won't be alienating private businesses nor will you use taxpayer's money as it will be paid back.

(beat)

MOSCONE: Of course, this has to go through all the proper channels...luckily, we have time on our hands as the State Supreme Court is postponing the decision of the eviction order.

UPSTAGE.

In front of the I-hotel.

(The protests continues.)

COMPANY:

**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**  
**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

(Manong Robert sits in the middle of the protest as the lights fade around him and focuses on him. He picks up his guitar and begins playing.)

MANONG FRANKIE'S ROOM.

(The room is crowded with pin-ups of women on the walls. Manong Frankie sits on his desk, leafing through his album of women. The action in front of the hotel continues. Bill KNOCKS on the door and enters.)

BILL: Good afternoon, Manong Frankie...

MANONG FRANKIE: *Magandang hapon*, Bill...

BILL: *Kamusta?* How are you holding up?

MANONG FRANKIE: I'm a little tired from protesting.

(Bill sits on the bed behind the old man. He notices the album.)

BILL: I see you have the ladies out...

MANONG FRANKIE: Oo, I look at them to help me cope.

BILL: All those beautiful women.

MANONG FRANKIE: They remind me of my youth, when I was young and strong.

BILL: I thought Vicky did that to you...

MANONG FRANKIE: Vicky reminds me that I am old and weak...

(Bill smiles as the old man starts pointing at the different photos to Bill.)

MANONG FRANKIE: This one was in Shanghai...this one was in Sweden...this one was in Hawaii...this one was in Germany...

BILL: Was there one in particular?

MANONG FRANKIE: There is always one in particular...

(He leafs through the last page and takes out a picture which he hands to Bill. Music under.)

BILL: *Maganda...*

MANONG FRANKIE: Her name was Esther. I left her in 1918. I thought I could bring her here. She waited for me for years...writing to me for years... until the letters stopped.

(He takes out a box of letters and takes one to show to Bill. He reads the letter, which is in *Tagalog*, softly as Manong Frankie looks at the picture.)

BILL: *Mahal kong Esther...*

MANONG FRANKIE:

**Whenever I'm holding back tears  
Of loneliness then your face  
Reappears.  
So near me,  
I almost can feel your breath.  
I miss you.**

(Lights out on Manong Frankie's room except for a small spotlight on him. Lights on Manong Santos' room. Santos' room is very clean and everything is in its place.)

MANONG SANTOS' ROOM.

(Manong Santos is in bed, sick. Al Robles is taking his temperature with a thermometer in his armpit. He sits down on the lone chair in the room and reads it. Music under.)

AL: A hundred point 6.

MANONG SANTOS: I knew it. I hate being sick.

AL: I'll ask Mrs. D. to bring you some soup.

MANONG SANTOS: What about dinner, Robles? I'm supposed to help with dinner?

AL: You are staying in bed and resting.

(Manong Santos mopes like a little kid. Al smiles at him.)

MANONG SANTOS: I hate being sick.

(Al stands up to leave.)

AL: I'll check on you later. Let me tell Mama D. ...

MANONG SANTOS: Robles...

AL: Yes?

MANONG SANTOS: Can you...can you stay here for a while? I hate being alone when I'm sick...

AL: Of course...

(Al sits back down.)

MANONG SANTOS: It's when I feel the loneliest...when I'm alone...(Beat.)  
I didn't use to be alone, you know...

AL: I know.

MANONG SANTOS: She was supposed to follow me here...but...

AL: I know. You should get some rest.

(Manong Santos nods as Al heads out the door.)

AL: I'll check on you later.

MANONG SANTOS:

**Whenever I'm lying awake  
Every night.  
I toss and turn and I ache  
Til the light  
Of morning  
Breaks through my room  
And you're there, beside me.**

(Light focuses on Manong Santos and Manong Frankie.)

MANONG SANTOS/MANONG FRANKIE:

**Whenever I call your name  
It's like a summer day  
That warms my heart  
Like a breeze  
From Manila bay.  
Whenever I'm feeling alone,**

MANONG FRANKIE:

**I think of you...**

MANONG SANTOS:

**I think of you...**

IN FRONT OF THE I-HOTEL.

(Manong Robert continues to play guitar as the protesters go around him. Light is on him.)

MANONG ROBERT:

**I think of you...**

(The protest freezes as a young white woman, SARA, enters UPSTAGE left. Light on her. She is pretty and dressed in a vintage style of the 30's. Robert stops playing the guitar and stands up.)

MANONG ROBERT: Sara...

SARA: Robert, do you love me?

MANONG ROBERT: Yes...of course...what kind of a...

SARA: My Father found out about us...he said he was going to report us...

MANONG ROBERT: How?

SARA: It doesn't matter...I want us to elope...

MANONG ROBERT: What?

SARA: I want us to elope...and move somewhere...

MANONG ROBERT: Where?

SARA: I don't know, New York...it doesn't matter...

MANONG ROBERT: Sara, have you thought about this?

SARA: He'll stop us from seeing each other...

MANONG ROBERT: I could go to jail...

SARA: No...not if we move somewhere...Oh, Robert, please...let's just go somewhere...I don't care where...please...

(She starts crying.)

MANONG ROBERT: Shh...okay...okay...let me think...

(Sara sniffles.)

MANONG ROBERT: Okay...let me get some money together...uhm...  
We can go to Seattle for now...I have an uncle there...Uhm...why don't  
you go home and pack your things...Ahm...I'll meet you at the bus station  
later...at 5? Does that give you enough time?

(Sara nods.)

MANONG ROBERT: Okay...how about your father?

SARA: He'll still be at work...

MANONG ROBERT: Okay...So 5 o'clock, then...

(She nods and smiling, she exits as Manong Robert sits down. After a beat, she comes out Upstage Right with a suitcase. Light on her. Manong Robert picks up his guitar and starts to play.)

IN FRONT OF THE I-HOTEL.

(Manong Robert continues to play guitar as the protesters go around him. Light is on him.)

MANONG ROBERT:

**Whenever I'm holding back tears  
Of loneliness then your face  
Reappears.  
So near me,  
I almost can feel your breath.  
I miss you.**

(Sara looks around then at her watch.)

MANONG ROBERT:

**Whenever I'm lying awake  
Every night.  
I toss and turn and I ache  
Til the light  
Of morning  
Breaks through my room  
And you're there  
Beside me.**

(She realizes that she has been stood up and begins to tear up.)

MANONG ROBERT:

**Whenever I call your name  
It's like a summer day  
That warms my heart  
Like a breeze  
From Manila bay.  
Whenever I'm feeling alone  
I think of you...**

MANONG FRANKIE:

**I think of you...**

MANONG SANTOS:  
**I think of you...**

ALL:  
**And I'm suddenly  
Home.**

(Lights out.)

COURTROOM.

(Lights on Judge Ira Brown of the Superior Court.)

JUDGE BROWN: I can't seem to get rid of this case, no matter what...Okay...This third stay of request from the International Hotel Tenant's Association and Sheriff Hongisto is denied. I believe that there is enough manpower in the sheriff's office to carry out this eviction. Furthermore, if Sheriff Hongisto and Undersheriff Denman refuse to carry out the eviction tomorrow, December 15, 1976, they will be charged with contempt of court. Anything else.

(He BANGS his gavel.)

JUDGE BROWN: Merry Christmas.

Scene 3:  
January - July 1977

IN FRONT OF THE I-HOTEL.

(The protest is feverish as Sheriff Hongisto with his men push their way towards the front door. He nails another eviction notice amid all the chaos.)

COMPANY:  
**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!  
NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

MANONG WAHAT'S ROOM.  
On top of the platform.

(Manong Wahat opens a window and leans out. He has his familiar pipe in his mouth. He grabs a microphone and hushes the crowd.)

MANONG WAHAT: Good evening everyone! Good evening!...Dr. Martin Luther King said he had a dream...I dream that this building will be for poor people, for the senior people. I dream that this building will never move. I dream you people will never move. I dream you are here tonight. I hope this will always be in the bottom of my heart. *Salamat at magandang gabi...*

(APPLAUSE as Manong Santos makes his way upstage left, pass all the protest signs and sits on a bench.)

### PORTSMOUTH SQUARE.

By the children's playground.

(Upstage left, there is a bench by the playground where Manong Santos is sitting, watching the CHILDREN play even in the cold. After a beat, Bill Sorro and Giuliana walk by.)

GIULIANA: Good Morning, Manong...

(Manong Santos is lost in his thoughts. Bill sits with him and taps him.)

BILL: Good morning, Manong...Hey...Manong Santos?

(Manong Santos looks at him.)

MANONG SANTOS: Uy, Bill...hello...Huli, *kamusta?*

(Giuliana sits.)

GIULIANA: Are you okay? Aren't you cold?

MANONG SANTOS: Ah...Oo...No, I come here to sit down and watch the children...they give me comfort...*Tingnan mo...*That little boy there...he's been trying so hard to climb the slide...

(Manong Santos points and Bill and Giuliana look out at the audience.)

MANONG SANTOS: Sometimes all the protesting gets me tired...I come here to have some peace and quiet...

BILL: Well, hopefully, it will be resolved soon...

MANONG SANTOS: I don't know, Bill...I don't want to lose hope but I feel that there is no room for old *Pinoys* in this city...we got another eviction notice...How many does that make now? I've lost count...

GIULIANA: Oh, don't say, that, Manong Santos...don't worry...

MANONG SANTOS: Oh...it's okay...I'm not worried anymore...I've accepted it...I have lived with it for the past thirty years...

**When you learn to let go...  
And move on, you'll survive  
And life will be happy...**

BILL: Hey, nobody's moving on just yet...we are fighting this together...nobody's giving up...Are you coming to Manong Robert's birthday party tonight?

MANONG SANTOS: I guess so...Life goes on, right?

BILL: Doesn't mean we can't have fun...We can't give up...not yet...

MANONG SANTOS: (Laughs)

Hey, look, that boy finally made it...I guess you are right about not giving up...

(Manong Santos topples over from a heart attack. Bill manages to catch him and cradles him on his lap in panic.)

BILL: Jesus! Manong Santos!...Manong Santos!...Huli...

(He turns to his wife who stands up to call an ambulance.)

GIULIANA: Let me call an ambulance...

BILL: Manong Santos...

(Bill keeps shaking the old man. Lights out.)

#### I-HOTEL FUNCTION ROOM.

The front of the platform is converted into the function room where a party is going on. There is a sign – HAPPY BIRTHDAY MANONG ROBERT.

(The quartet is playing as Frankie dances the tango with Vicky among others. After a beat, Emil and Al come in and stops the music. Frankie is angry as his dance is interrupted.)

MANONG FRANKIE: What now?

AL: We have some sad news...

(Lights out.)

### INSIDE THE KITCHEN.

(Luisa comes in with Giuliana. Both women are carrying empty trays. There is a large pot on the stove which is full of rice. Both ladies gather some bowls and fill them up with rice.)

LUISA: It was a nice turn out.

GIULIANA: I thought so...I was worried that nobody would show up...I didn't realize that he had no family...

LUISA: We were his family...

(Luisa stops and looks at the pot of rice. She remembers Manong Santos in the kitchen. She gets teary. Giuliana rubs her back to console her. She resumes filling the cups.)

LUISA: How is Bill? He seems to be taking it really hard...

GIULIANA: I know...I'll bring him some food. He'll be okay...

(They finish.)

LUISA: Shall we?

(Both women exit. Lights out except for a spotlight on the pot of rice.)

### INSIDE AL'S ROOM.

Al's room holds a desk and is very chaotic.

(Upstage right, Al is sitting at his desk, notebook open in front of him. He starts composing a poem, reading it aloud as he writes.)

AL: "ode to bill sorro."

INSIDE MANONG SANTOS' ROOM.

On top of the platform.

(Giuliana enters with a tray of food. Bill is on the bed, crying quietly. They have been cleaning out the room. Giuliana puts it down on the lone desk in the room.)

GIULIANA: I brought you some food. Mrs. D outdid herself. Her *adobo* is pretty good.

(She sits down on the bed.)

GIULIANA: Honey...you shouldn't beat yourself up about this. Manong Santos had a long life...

BILL: Is that all that it's about?

GIULIANA: A life full of experiences beyond any of our expectations...

BILL: Alone...

GIULIANA: Alone but not lonely...he was surrounded by people who cared for him...people he loved...he had a family here...that's what it's about...  
**Let go...**

(Light stays on Al as he writes/reads his poem.)

AL: "bill sorro cried today..."

GIULIANA:  
**You just have to  
Let go...**

AL: "he cried for his countryman..."

GIULIANA:  
**And move on with  
Your life...**

AL: "for a manong from the Philippines..."

GIULIANA:  
**And strive...**

AL: "who died on his lap..."

GIULIANA:

**To be happy...**

AL: "in the children's playground  
at Portsmouth square..."

GIULIANA:

**When you learn to  
Let go...**

AL: "bill sorro cried today..."

GIULIANA:

**All the anger  
Will flow...**

AL: "in his small room  
at the International hotel..."

GIULIANA:

**And what's left in  
Your heart.**

AL: "because manong santos died..."

GIULIANA:

**Will start...**

AL: "and giuliana sat there..."

GIULIANA:

**Feeling happy.**

AL: "listening to a voice  
cut sharp like a bolo..."

GIULIANA:

**It's not easy, I know...**

AL: "santos who never had a chance  
to see his country again..."

GIULIANA:

**It takes courage to do so,  
To grow.**

AL: "bill sorro cried for santos  
of the international hotel..."

GIULIANA:  
**So let go and be free...**

AL: "santos of Kearney street..."

GIULIANA:  
**What a difference you'll see...**

AL: "santos of manilatown..."

GIULIANA:  
**And how happy you'll be...**

AL: "santos his kababayan..."

GIULIANA:  
**When you grow like a tree...**

AL: "santos of his brown hands  
digging for his roots..."

(Lights out.)

### TINO'S BARBERSHOP.

(Tino is packing up his stuff as he listens to the radio.)

RADIO BROADCAST: Sheriff Hongisto today began his 5-day jail sentence as a result of being found in contempt of court by the Superior Judge Ira Brown after they failed to carry out the eviction of the tenants of the International Hotel on Kearney Street. The tenants of the I-hotel have been fighting to keep their home for almost a decade.

(At the top of the platform, the scene is reenacted with the sheriff entering jail. Tino carries a box outside and closes the door on his barbershop for good, another victim of the evictions. Several people are outside to wish him good luck.)

TINO:  
**This used to be my barbershop.  
In here was my old barbershop**

TINO: (cont'd)

**A place so full of mem'ries  
And stories for all.  
So much of our lives have disappeared.  
And block by city block have been cleared.  
Manilatown is gone as I have feared.  
What's happened to the old neighborhood.  
Remember it as much as you could.  
Because those days are sadly gone for good.**

(Mang Tino turns the close sign and shuts the door to the barbershop for good. He walks offstage as the protesters take center stage.)

COURTROOM.

On top of the platform.

(Judge Brown BANGS his gavel one final time.)

Scene 4:  
August, 1977

IN FRONT OF THE I-HOTEL.

(Upstage, there is a line of people, linked arm in arm in front of the façade of the I-hotel, lit in shadows suggesting night.)

COMPANY:

**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**

(They separate and merge to give the appearance of a barricade five people deep as three rooms are lit up, one in the cube and downstage left and right.)

MANONG FELIX'S ROOM.

(Manong Felix is on his bed. Luisa opens the door. She is carrying a tray of food. She puts the tray down the lone desk and sits by Manong Felix.)

LUISA: *Kamusta*, Manong?

MANONG FELIX: *Ha?*

(The old man grabs his hearing aid and puts them on.)

LUISA: I brought you some food...You didn't come down for dinner...

MANONG FELIX: I wasn't hungry...

LUISA: You need to eat...

MANONG FELIX: I am not hungry...

LUISA: It's *tinolang manok*...

(beat)

MANONG FELIX: Mrs. D...*Natatakot ako*...Aren't you scared?

LUISA: Yes...but we still have to eat...

MANONG FELIX: I don't think I can take any more of this...

LUISA: Well, not on an empty stomach...

(They smile at each other and she serves him some food which he starts to eat.)

#### MANONG FRANKIE'S ROOM.

(Bill KNOCKS before entering. Frankie is sulking by his desk.)

BILL: How are you holding up?

MANONG FRANKIE: I am okay...

BILL: Are you sure? Where is your girlfriend tonight?

(Frankie nods.)

MANONG FRANKIE: I told her to stay away...it was becoming dangerous...What is happening outside?

BILL: I'm not sure...it sounds awfully quiet...where are the ladies tonight?

MANONG FRANKIE: They're in a box...

BILL: Why? I would have thought tonight of all nights...

MANONG FRANKIE: I pack them...just in case...I didn't want to lose them...if I had to go fast...

BILL: You are not...we are not going anywhere...

(beat)

MANONG FRANKIE: I am worried, Bill...

BILL: Me too...we need the ladies, don't you think?

(Manong Frankie reaches under his bed and pulls a box out. He opens it and takes out his album. He sets it on the table and Bill and him look at it.)

### MANONG WAHAT'S ROOM.

(Al goes into Wahat's room. It is dark. Wahat is sitting by the window, smoking his pipe.)

AL: Can I come in for a while, Manong? Oh, I'm sorry, were you sleeping?

MANONG WAHAT? Oh, *hindi, hindi...tuloy...tuloy...*

AL: I wanted to check on you before I started my nightwatch...Why are you sitting in the dark?

MANONG WAHAT: Nothing...I was just thinking...

AL: About?

MANONG WAHAT: My life. How I survived here in San Francisco so I could support my family back home. How two of my daughters were able to move to Seattle. And what I'm going to do after tomorrow?

AL: Nothing's going to happen tomorrow...we'll still be here...sitting in the dark...It will be okay...

MANONG WAHAT: I guess I'm luckier than the others...

(beat)

(Manong Felix turns to Luisa.)

MANONG FELIX: *Salamat*...I was hungry...

LUISA: You're welcome.

MANONG FELIX: So, what happens now? We just wait?

(Luisa nods and starts to clean up.)

(Manong Frankie turns to Bill.)

MANONG FRANKIE: *Dapat nag-asawa ako...* then I wouldn't be alone...you think Vicky will marry me?

(He turns the album.)

MANONG WAHAT: I could move to Seattle...

MANONG FELIX: Where will we go, Luisa?

(Frankie takes out a picture.)

MANONG FRANKIE: It's too late...

MANONG WAHAT: *Putangina*, I don't want to have to move to Seattle...why should I? My life is here!

MANONG FELIX: Where will I go?

AL: I know, Manong, that's what we're fighting for...

MANONG FRANKIE: I should have married then I would have a *pamilya* like you...Now, I'm alone, here...

MANONG FELIX: I have nobody...I'm alone, here...

BILL/LUISA: You are not alone...  
**Here, you have yourself a family.**  
**Sons and fathers...**

LUISA:  
**Mothers, daughters...**

BILL/LUISA:  
**Who will listen.**  
**Uncles, brothers**  
**Who will always be**  
**Helping you no matter when.**

AL:

**We will always be there by your side.  
Arm in arm,  
Shoulder to shoulder.  
With the fight for justice  
As our guide.  
Call on us  
And we'll be there.**

BILL/LUISA/AL:

**Arm in arm  
We'll fight  
For our human right  
To our home, our dreams  
And to our freedom,  
Arm in arm.**

(Lights out on the rooms and back on the streets where the barricade of people move across the front of the I-hotel. The police arrive on either side of the stage.)

### OUT ON THE STREET.

(The barricade is thicker, each person arm in arm. Across, upstage left and right are the police in their uniforms holding sticks and ready for a riot. They slowly close in.)

COMPANY:

**We won't just pack up and go.  
Won't back down, we'll show them  
We're not just old men.  
When we fight back, they will know.  
Our actions will slow them  
Down once again.**

POLICE:

**All of their tactics, we'll blow.  
The fact is we'll throw them  
Out and evict them.  
When they attack, then we'll go  
And crack their skulls open.  
Goodbye, old men.**

COMPANY:

**We won't move  
They have to drag us all away.**

POLICE:

**We will prove  
We're seriously evicting today.**

COMPANY:

**Arm in arm we'll fight  
For the right to our home.  
Save the I-hotel.**

POLICE:

**We will move  
We'll have to drag them all away.**

COMPANY:

**We will prove  
To them that we're determined to stay.  
We're an army forming tonight.  
We will harm all those  
Who will cross our plight.  
Arm in arm we'll fight  
For the right to our home  
Save the I-hotel.**

(The song intensifies and counterpoints as the eviction process gets heated with the police and the barricade of people.)

COMPANY:

**Here, you have yourself a family  
Sons and Fathers who will listen.  
Uncles, brothers who will always be  
Helping you no matter when.  
We will always be there by your side.  
Arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder.  
With the fight for justice as our guide.  
Call on us and we'll be there.  
Arm in arm we'll fight  
For our human right  
To our home, our dreams  
And to our freedom.  
Arm in arm.  
Arm in arm we'll fight**

COMPANY: (cont'd)

**For our human right.  
To our home, our dreams  
And to our freedom.  
We won't move so you're not welcome.  
We'll protect our humble kingdom.  
Arm in arm.**

COMPANY: (counterpoint)

**We won't just pack up and go.  
Won't back down, we'll show them  
We're not just old men.  
When we fight back they will know.  
Our actions will slow them  
Down once again.  
All of their tactics, we'll blow.  
The fact is we'll throw them  
Out and evict them.  
When they attack, then we'll go  
And crack their skulls open.  
Goodbye, old men.  
We won't move  
They have to drag us all away.  
We will prove  
We're seriously evicting today.  
Arm in arm we'll fight  
For the right to our home.  
Save the I-hotel.  
When we move  
We'll have to drag them all away.  
We will prove to them  
That we're determined to stay.  
We're an army forming tonight.  
We will harm all those  
Who will cross our plight.  
Arm in arm we'll fight  
For the right to our home.  
Save the I-hotel.**

(The police move into the barricade.)

FIRE ESCAPE.

(A fire escape lowers Upstage Left where the police are. A ladder is leaned on it and Sheriff Hongisto climbs it as the song continues. Other policemen follow up the ladder.)

COMPANY:

**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**  
**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**  
**NO EVICTION! WE WON'T MOVE!**  
**NO EVICT...**

(The Sheriff sledgehammers a window and the loud glass breaking CRASH breaks the song and the arm in arm chain of people.)

MANONG JOE'S ROOM.

On top of the platform.

(The room is dark. Sheriff Hongisto enters the darkened room to the shock of Manong Joe who was sleeping in bed. The Sheriff puts down his sledgehammer.)

SHERIFF HONGISTO: Do you speak English?

MANONG JOE: Yes.

SHERIFF HONGISTO: Hi, I'm Sheriff Hongisto of San Francisco. We are here for the eviction and I'd appreciate it if you would come out so we can empty the hotel. It's time to go.

(Manong Joe is helped up by a couple of Policemen who have entered his room.)

SHERIFF HONGISTO: Thank you.

(The barricade and the police clear the stage as the Manongs are escorted out of the I-hotel front door with a younger protester. Some are carried out. Each character leaves the stage and spotlight is on them as they recount the night's events.)

LUISA: At 6 pm, we had heard that the police were getting ready to come down and start the eviction.

MANONG FRANKIE: They were like Roman legions coming down at us. They were marching in formation, many on horseback.

UNDERSHERIFF DENHAM: We started the eviction late in the evening and we weren't finished until 4 am.

AL: We took on any assignments that were needed. Some were needed to work the phones.

BILL: We called all the people that supported us to come and ring the building...the unions, the Black Panthers...even Reverend Jones and his people helped out...it felt like a war was going to be fought.

POLICEMAN: We gained access by climbing the ladder to the fire escapes and going in a window.

EMIL: I was carried out of the hotel. There were old people in their rooms. They carried us down the stairs and out on the streets.

SHERIFF HONGISTO: We were going room to room. Some didn't want to leave and they would lay down on the floor and refuse to cooperate. We had to put them on stretchers and wheel them out.

MANONG JOE: I do not blame the policemen. I do not blame the sheriff. The judge! The mayor! I know that they are the ones who have a right to stop the eviction. Especially the owner. Before you evict, you should find a place for the tenants. I am crying all the time. It is not right.

MANONG FELIX: I am crippled. I am deaf. I am very old. I'm alone here and they put me out on the street. I will feel solitary and afraid on the street. I want freedom, the principle of American democracy, the richest country in the world. Do you think our mayor has a place for me? No. No, because I was happy here.

(The lights out on an empty stage.)

Scene 5:  
The Following Mornings.

OUTSIDE ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

The platform is converted into the church façade. Outside is a small park.

(Several people are gathered outside the church at dawn. AI BANGS at the church doors.)

AL: Please, open up...we need shelter...

(Manong Wahat collapses and sobs. Emil goes to comfort him. He sits him up.)

MANONG WAHAT: What has happened here, Emil?

EMIL: We will appeal...

MANONG WAHAT: I'm too old to appeal...where is the shelter that Mayor Moscone promised us?

(They feel helpless as they huddle together. They sing to raise their spirits.)

MANONG FELIX: At least we are all homeless together.

**Here, you have yourself a family.  
Sons and fathers,  
Mothers, daughters  
Who will listen.  
Uncles, brothers  
Who will always be  
Helping you no matter when.  
We will always be here by your side...**

(They sit outside the church as PEOPLE walk around to start their day.)

LUISA:

**It's Thursday morning.  
The sun is up.**

(Bill comes with cups of coffee and donuts. He offers some of them as Huli wakes up some of the sleeping manongs.)

LUISA:

**The coffee's brewing.  
He'll pour himself a cup.  
She'll wake the children.  
To what will seem to them  
This ordinary day.  
Before they know it,  
The evening's on its way.**

(Light slowly fades to black then slowly back up.)

IN FRONT OF THE I-HOTEL.

(A POLICEMAN unlocks the barricaded door as the Manongs are allowed to go inside to get their belongings. The back of a green bus protrudes from Upstage Left with the words on it. Luisa goes in with them. Music under.)

POLICEMAN: You have an hour to gather your belongings.

MANONG WAHAT: Just an hour?!

POLICEMAN: Sir, you have an hour...

### SEVERAL ROOMS.

The rooms in the abandoned I-hotel.

(Several rooms in disarray are visited by the Manongs and Luisa, disappointment and disgust painting their faces. They go through their ransacked stuff as Luisa continues her song.)

LUISA:

**Thank God it's Friday.  
The workweek's done.  
Got through it okay  
It's time to have some fun.**

MANONG WAHAT: *Putangina!* They stole my fishing rods...

LUISA:

**Another weekend.  
To sort, to clean, to mend.  
The living has begun.  
Without a warning,  
Another week is gone.**

(Lights slowly fade to black then comes up again.)

### IN FRONT OF THE STANFORD HOTEL.

The front of the platform has a sign that says 'STANFORD HOTEL'.

(The Manongs are crowded in front of their new residence, each one carrying a piece of luggage. They enter the hotel one at a time.)

LUISA:

**And the months fly by  
Til December's here.  
Then the winter turns to spring.**

(Manong Frankie comes out of the hotel and hurriedly walks Upstage left.)

JAIL.

A Visitor's Center.

(Manong Frankie sits down and after a beat, Vicky joins him.)

LUISA:

**So you just lived life  
For another year  
Without taking time  
To breathe or laugh or sing.**

VICKY: Hello, Frankie...Thank you for coming...

MANONG FRANKIE: I was worried...When I did not hear from you, I pass by the club...and it was padlocked...*Anong nangyari?*

VICKY: They raided the club last week...I'm sorry I didn't call then...I didn't want to bother you...

MANONG FRANKIE: Are you okay?

VICKY: Yes...Yes, I'm okay...how about you?

MANONG FRANKIE: I'm fine...This is all my fault...I am sorry, Vicky...I know I said that we will live together...

VICKY: Frankie...

MANONG FRANKIE: And I know I said that you can stop working...

VICKY: Frankie...

(Frankie takes her hand. Beat.)

MANONG FRANKIE: I could marry you...make you legal...

(She starts crying.)

MANONG FRANKIE: We can hire a lawyer...I will ask Bill...

(Beat.)

VICKY: I'm getting deported tomorrow...

(He starts crying. She stops, touched by the old man.)

VICKY: Frankie...don't...

(He recomposes himself.)

VICKY: That's why I called you to come...I wanted to spend my last day with you...

(He nods.)

VICKY: We never did finish our dance...

MANONG FRANKIE: I'm almost afraid...something always happens...

VICKY: Something already has...

(She stands up and extends her hand. The old man takes it and they dance to a tango.)

FRANKIE:

**Pretty Lady  
I've been waiting  
For this chance to dance with you.  
I'm already  
Celebrating  
Our night of romance that might ensue.**

(Vicky clutches him tighter.)

FRANKIE:

**I can feel your  
Every heartbeat  
When we're dancing, oh so near.  
It's as if your  
Every heartbeat  
Whispers sweetly words I long to hear.  
For I fall in love so easily,  
Please don't break my heart.**

FRANKIE: (cont'd)

**And it's love at first sight usually  
Once the music starts.  
Think of what you're doing  
When you are refusing  
Me.  
Pretty lady  
What a pleasure  
To have spent this dance with you.  
And just maybe  
In the future,  
I will have my chance  
At a new romance  
When I end up dancing with you.**

(They linger in each other's arms. Lights out.)

ROOM IN STANFORD HOTEL.

On top of the platform is Rm. 123, the new hq of the I-hotel Tenants Association.

(Lights on the meeting room. There is a meeting attended by the Manongs and Emil. The Manongs seem disinterested. Manong Frankie looks depressed.)

EMIL: We have good news...

LUISA:

**So now it's Monday...**

MANONG FELIX: Are we moving back?

EMIL: No...not yet anyway...the Board of Supervisors has decided to include a voters' policy statement on the I-hotel, in the upcoming November 8 ballot.

MANONG WAHAT: What does that mean, exactly?

MANONG FRANKIE: In *Tagalog*, please...

EMIL: They are asking the voters through Proposition U for the city to buy the I-hotel, bring it up to code and turn it over to the Housing Authority to be used for low rent housing.

LUISA:

**It starts again...**

MANONG FELIX: What do we have to do?

EMIL: We have to campaign...we have to rally...

MANONG ROBERT: Not again...

(Commotion.)

EMIL: We have to try...we are not just fighting for the I-hotel but for low cost housing...

MANONG ROBERT: We are old and tired...

MANONG FELIX: Yes, but we have to try...what do we do...

LUISA:

**Just hope that someday...  
You'll get your chance and then  
You'll have a moment  
To look at how you spent  
Your life before today.**

(Emil hands them all placards that say 'YES ON U' and they all put jackets on and start protesting as others join them.)

LUISA:

**Whatever reason,  
Be never sorry.  
So many seasons  
Are left so hurry.  
Begin your life on  
This ordinary day.**

(Manong Felix is being interviewed in the middle of the protest. There is a spotlight on him.)

MANONG FELIX: My life has not changed insofar that I have left the struggle. I have struggled against my enemy for so long and my spirit is so high. I am with oppressed people of all races in the world. Their lives touch my heart and make me cry.

Scene 6:  
1978-1994

BILL SORRO'S HOUSE.

The dining room.

(There is a table for 8 Downstage Right. Bill sits at one end. The Manongs put down their placards and leave the top of the platform to join Bill in his dining room, except for Manong Felix. The spotlight on Manong Felix slowly fades away.)

BILL:

**Here, we gather  
At this table  
Breaking bread  
Drinking beer.**

(Among the guests are Emil, Al, Manong Wahat, Manong Frankie, Manong Robert and Mrs. D. who is helping Huli in the kitchen. Emil hands out some *San Miguel beer*.)

MANONG FRANKIE: *Uy! San Miguel beer! O anong sarap!*

BILL:

**Telling stories,  
Weaving fables  
Of a place  
Not far from here.  
Reminiscing  
While we're missing  
All the people we know...**

(They all raise their beer bottles.)

EMIL: To Manong Felix!

BILL:

**From a time that seemed so long ago.**

(They all take their place on the table and start eating.)

MANONG WAHAT: So, Emil, tell us your good news...

EMIL: Well, since the I-hotel was placed on the National Register for Historic Places, we applied for a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservations...

MANONG FRANKIE: In *Tagalog*, please...

EMIL: (smiling) The money we get from the grant will be used to fund a feasibility study...to see if the International Hotel can be restored for housing use...we are being supported by a couple of Chinatown housing coalitions...

LUISA: So, what is the good news?

EMIL: Mayor Moscone wrote a letter supporting the grant application and it was accepted...

BILL: (raising his beer bottle) Yes!

(They all raise their bottles except for Manong Wahat.)

MANONG WAHAT: So, what now?

EMIL: Patience, my dear...we wait again...

MANONG WAHAT: I am too old to wait...

AL: To Mayor Moscone!

(Everyone raises their beer. They CLINK their bottles three times and GUNSHOTS are heard each time.)

#### MAYOR'S OFFICE.

On top of the platform.

(Mayor Diane Feinstein is sworn to the Mayor's office as a voice-over of her press conference on Mayor Moscone's and Harvey Milk's assassination plays on.)

MAYOR FEINSTEIN: "Today, San Francisco has experienced a double tragedy of immense proportions. As President of the Board of Supervisors, it is my duty to inform you that Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk have been shot and killed...and the suspect is Supervisor Dan White..."

BILL SORRO'S HOUSE.

The dining room.

(Everyone is still seated around Bill's table. A spotlight falls on Manong Wahat who stands up and walks Downstage Left. The light remains on the empty chair.)

BILL:

**Here, we gather  
At this table  
Thankful for this repast...**

SMALL ROOM.

(Spotlight on Manong Wahat who is on the phone, almost shouting.)

MANONG WAHAT: Hello...Emil? Emil?

BILL:

**Sharing mem'ries...**

EMIL: I called Manong Wahat...

BILL:

**While we're able...**

MANONG WAHAT: Hello, Emil? Hi...*Kamusta?*

LUISA: How is he?

BILL:

**To remember our past.**

EMIL: He's okay...

BILL:

**We've been through  
So much together.  
That wherever we go...**

EMIL: He is happy to be back home in the Philippines...

MANONG WAHAT: *Mabuti naman...* I have forgotten how hot it was...Hello?

BILL:

**We keep part of  
Each other  
You know.**

MANONG WAHAT: So, what is the latest?

EMIL: Still concerned about what's happening here...

MANONG ROBERT: What is happening here, Emil?

EMIL: Well, word has it that they are continuing with the demolition tomorrow...

MANONG WAHAT: Hello? Hello...yes...so are you going to have to demonstrate?

AL: And we will be there to stop them.

EMIL: I've already put up flyers...

LUISA: What time are we getting together...?

MANONG WAHAT: Well, make sure you are there early...Remember what happened the last time...

EMIL: We'll try to be there early...

MANONG FRANKIE: Remember what happened the last time...

AL: We know...so tomorrow?

EMIL: We will gather by the chain link fence by 7 in the morning...

MANONG FRANKIE: 7 in the morning!

MANONG ROBERT: *Ano*, Frankie, will that interfere with your beauty sleep?

(They all laugh.)

EMIL: So, we will form our own link around the perimeter of the hotel...

(They all stand up and walk CENTER STAGE, picking up placards along the way. Other people join them. Music under, spotlight on Bill.)

BILL:

**Here we are...**

(Light in the front of the platform where a chain-link fence comes down. Behind it is the wall of the I-hotel.)

OUTSIDE THE I-HOTEL.

The last standing wall is taken down.

(There is a painted wall against the back wall. In front of it is a chain-link fence. There are several people gathered by the fence, silhouetted with placards while they wait for the moment the wall falls.)

COMPANY: SAVE THE I-HOTEL! SAVE THE I-HOTEL!

BILL:

**Always grateful  
For the chance  
To get together.**

(There is a loud CRASH that stops the protest. After a beat, the silhouetted console each other when it happens. After a beat, they all walk away as the sound of DEMOLITION continues. Emil tries to stop them.)

EMIL: We will take this to the Supreme Court...

(He goes to each person but nobody listens.)

EMIL: There was no permit...The permit was expired...Mr. Grange had no right to be here...

(The sound of a BULLDOZER and CRASHING continues, growing louder and louder. Emil tries to shout over the CRASH as he approaches Bill who is the last to leave.)

EMIL: (in anger)  
HIS PERMIT WAS NOT VALID!

BILL:

**Near or far  
We stay hopeful  
That by chance  
We'll see each other**

BILL: It's okay, Emil...we tried...that's all we can do...

(Bill leaves and walks back to his dining table.)

EMIL: His permit was not valid...

(Emil goes back to Bill's dining table and takes a seat.)

BILL SORRO'S HOUSE.

The dining room.

(They are having dinner.)

BILL:

**Once again.**

EMIL: Mayor Feinstein's proposal was rejected by Four Seas...

MANONG FRANKIE: Of course they would...

EMIL: But not to worry, they will have to agree to some proposal eventually...

LUISA: So what does that mean for us?

EMIL: It means more negotiations...

MANONG FRANKIE: And more waiting...of course...they have time on their hands...*Matanda na ako*...I am too old...

AL: Manong Frankie, they'll have to do it or the government will use...

MANONG FRANKIE: *Alam ko...alam ko*...eminent domain...I know...I think they are just wasting time they know many of us don't have...

EMIL: Manong Frankie...

MANONG FRANKIE: But I will wait...I will wait...for as long as it takes...Huli, your *adobo* is perfect tonight...

HULI: Thanks, Manong Frankie...

MANONG FRANKIE: And nothing would complement it better than more *San Miguel* beer...please...

(He raises his empty bottle as a hint. Huli smiles as she stands up to get him another bottle. She sits down and hands the old man his beer. Manong Frankie takes a long drink. Manong Frankie puts his bottle down as a spotlight shines on him. He stands up to leave the table.)

BILL:

**Here we are...  
Always grateful  
For the chance  
To get together.**

MANONG ROBERT: Emil, please tell us you have good news...

EMIL: I'm afraid I don't...All those negotiations and proposals...

AL: But there is a rumor that Four Seas is selling the property...

LUISA: To a Taiwanese company...

(Everybody looks at her.)

LUISA: Leni from the beauty parlor told me...I think the Taiwanese company's name is Pan Magna...

EMIL: And how does Leni from the beauty parlor know this, and I don't, Mrs. D.?

LUISA: Well, she was approached by a representative...they have been asking around, looking for property to buy...They asked her about the hole...and you know Leni, she practically sold the property herself...

(They all laugh as a spotlight shines on LUISA. She stands up to leave the table.)

BILL:

**Near or far  
We are hopeful  
That by chance  
We'll see each other.**

(Spotlight on Bill, Al, Emil and Huli as their old selves come and take their place at the table. Manong Robert remains on his side of the dining table, dozing off.)

BILL:

**Once again.**

AL: We have to find a way to honor them. We need more than a plaque to remember what happened to Manilatown.

BILL:

**Here, we gather  
At this table  
Sated and feeling blessed**  
What do you suggest?

AL: I don't know...but a way to pass on the legacy of the *Manongs* for future generations...

BILL:

**We are older...**

EMIL: A way to show them our heritage, our history...how about a center like the Senior Center or the Kearney Street Workshop...

BILL:

**And survival...**

HULI: That's a great idea...a place where everyone will be welcomed to go through the Filipino-American experience...

BILL:

**Hasn't been the easiest.**

HULI: What should we call it...

BILL:

**But we're happy,  
Somewhat healthy  
And we are here to stay.  
Looking forward to living each day.**

AL: The Manilatown Heritage Center...

EMIL: Yes...No...

AL: No?

EMIL: I mean...how about a foundation...the Manilatown Heritage Foundation. We need it to sustain itself so that when we all go, it will still be around to serve the community...we need to spread awareness...so that what happened will never happen again...

AL: With the center as it's heart...for education, performing arts, culture...a museum of sorts...

BILL: The Manilatown Heritage Foundation...I like that...

ON TOP OF THE PLATFORM.

The Mayor's Office.

(Mayor WILLIE BROWN is standing under a spotlight. Music under.)

MAYOR BROWN: We have approved the latest proposal for development at the former site of the International Hotel. Under this proposal by the San Francisco Archdiocese who purchased the land, the site will be split into three different air parcels so that the low-income housing, the parochial school and an underground garage will own their own sites. St. Mary's parochial school will be built on one end of the block. The new I-hotel will be on the other and a parking garage will be built underground. The Manilatown Heritage Foundation will occupy the ground floor...

(The spotlight slowly fades as the Mayor's proposal blends into the music playing. The company gathers in front of the platform. Spotlights on Bill, Emil and AL.)

EMIL/AL/BILL:

**We look forward to living,  
We're happily living,  
Just thankful for living each day.**

Scene 7:  
August 26, 2005

OUTSIDE THE NEW I-HOTEL.

(The inauguration of the new International Hotel is cause for a big celebration. The crowd gathers around the door of the new International Hotel for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Present are Bill, Emil, Al, now as old as the Manongs they were fighting for. Above the platform are three old men, one playing the violin, one playing the guitar and the other on the microphone, singing one of the most popular Filipino love songs.)

COMPANY: LONG LIVE THE I-HOTEL!  
POWER FOR THE PEOPLE!  
LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE!

OLD MAN:

<b><i>Dahil sa iyo</i></b>	(Because of you
<b><i>Ako'y lumigaya</i></b>	I found happiness
<b><i>Pagmamahal ay</i></b>	To you, this love,
<b><i>Alayan ka</i></b>	I offer.
<b><i>Kung tunay man ito</i></b>	If this love is real
<b><i>Ay alipinin mo</i></b>	then you have enslaved me
<b><i>Ang lahat sa buhay ko</i></b>	Because everything in my life
<b><i>Dahil sa iyo...</i></b>	is because of you.)

(They continue to play the same chords as Al takes his place on stage. He is holding a piece of paper to read.)

AL: "International Hotel –  
In the *mongo* heart  
And *isda* mind of the Philippines –  
Where old and young Pilipinos live,  
Hang and roam around all day  
Like carabaos in the mud:  
eating, sleeping and working.  
Pilipinos scattered all over –  
Brown faces piled high,  
Moving like shadows  
On trees, concrete doorways,  
Pool halls, barber shops.  
Guitar music echoes through –  
Down deep in your *mongo* heart  
And *isda* mind."

BILL:

**Here we are  
Standing here,  
Once again.**

(Former Mayor Willie Brown takes the mike. Music under.)

MAYOR BROWN: Today is a very historic day for today we are inaugurating the culmination of a people's movement that began almost 30 years ago. The fight to save the International Hotel. And today, we stand outside its restored glory that is a historic symbol of a cultural effort that reverberated across the nation...

AL:

**Looking back  
Trying to  
Remember when...**

(Senator Feinstein takes over. Music under.)

SENATOR FEINSTEIN: I was Mayor from 1978 to 1988. My hope at that time was that by 1983, '84, there would be a building.

EMIL:

**Some way back when...  
We were young  
So full of hope  
Surrounded by friends.  
Fighting for  
What we believed in.  
Nothing else mattered.**

SENATOR FEINSTEIN: It's 2005, but there IS a building.

(Applause. Some of Bill's family is present for the inauguration including his GRANDCHILDREN. He gathers them.)

BILL: On this very site stood the original International Hotel which was the last trace of a community that was called Manilatown.

**This used to be Manilatown.  
Back then this was Manilatown.  
Together with the Manongs  
We all called this place our home.**

(One by one, the old Manongs appear.)

BILL:

**It was a happy neighborhood.  
A happy, little neighborhood  
Where everyone knew  
Everyone, and life was simply good.  
Now where is our Manilatown.  
What happened to Manilatown,  
The Manongs that reminded  
Me where I come from.  
This legacy I now leave to you.  
Be sure to keep their memory true.  
Manilatown is now alive in you.**

COMPANY:

**Here we are  
Standing here  
Once again.**

COMPANY:

**Looking back  
Trying to  
Remember when  
Some way back when  
We were young  
So full of hope  
Surrounded by friends.  
Fighting for  
What we believed in.  
Nothing else mattered.  
Just imagine  
How it was  
So many years ago.  
Life was simple  
Everyday was  
Full of promise, so full of promise.  
Now we're standing  
Here again  
But now as old men.  
Looking back  
At the years  
We were young  
Without fears  
Arm in arm  
With our peers  
Once again.**

(Emil walks off-stage and comes back pushing Manong Robert on his wheelchair. The old man looks around, seemingly confused as Emil parks his wheelchair in front of the I-hotel.)

MANONG ROBERT: Emil, *nasaan ba tayo?*

EMIL: You're here...you're home...

(Senator Feinstein cuts the ribbon.)

the end.

03/10/12 – 3d