

THE SON OF ASHES

(A Full-length Drama)

SYNOPSIS:

Ambo is found by the police in Central Park. He is stupefied, staring blankly at a dead snake in front of him. He has been missing for three days. Is it the fabled song of the Corocoro or the seducing hiss of the Oryol that led him to search or escape death?

Ambo was a copra farmer in the lush tropical land of the Bicol province in the Philippines. Dolly, his youngest daughter immigrated and settled in the cosmopolitan city of New York. She is disillusioned by the comfort of living she finds in a foreign land that she dreads the idea of coming home. Back at home in the valley of Iriga, Ambo's eldest daughter, Magda is a simple, submissive abaca weaver who patiently waits for the return of her father. She reminds Ambo and Dolly of the life they left behind.

"I am the son of Daragang Magayon, Handyong is my father" claims Ambo to his daughters that they quickly dismiss as whims of an aging man. Daragang Magayon is the legendary maiden of Bicol's enchanted volcano and Handyong is the leading mythical hero-warrior of their people. Ambo in his final words reveal the continuation of the lost myth of the Bicol region.

Separated by geography, culture and language, two different lives of sisters, are bridged by Ambo's visions, actions and prophecies.

CHARACTERS:

AMBO 77 year old Bicolano. Petitioned by youngest daughter DOLLY to the US. AMBO worked as a copra farmer. He is also the last keeper of the Ibalon myth.

DOLLY 41 year old Bicolana, youngest daughter of AMBO. A very ambitious, colonial minded. She refuses to go home and bring her dying father home to Bicol.

MAGDA 53 year old Bicolana, eldest daughter of AMBO. Simple, submissive abaca weaver. She has a stunning voice.

BILL 55 year old American, husband of DOLLY. Works as a teacher. A very quiet man.

SETTINGS:

New York and the Bicol province. The main setting is a living room with a couch in the middle. There is a television in the front, left part of the stage. On the right side of the stage is a rattan/abaca/native chair where Magda is seated by the window. Throughout the play, she is seated and staring at the window unless directed to enter into the scene.

Whenever AMBO is in a scene outside the home (Central Park, subway or the Hudson river), a drape of white cloth and with projected scenes or spotlight may be used.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

(The scene opens with AMBO entering the stage. He is in Central Park, wandering and searching the surroundings. Heard are different sounds of the night: the night owl screeching, the dogs barking, even the wind blowing. With every sound that AMBO hears, he makes the sign of the cross. He stops in the middle, scratches his head. He tries to walk again.)

Music: Nakadangog ako (that I heard)
Nin huni nin sarong gamgam (the lonely chirping of a bird)
Sa luba ko katurugan, (I thought I was dreaming)

AMBO: Lena, I'm coming home. I've escaped the Oryol.

Music: Bako kundi (But, no...)
Simong boses, Iyo palan (twas your voice, most certain)
Dagos ako bangon (at once, I arose)
Si sakuyang mata iminuklat (my sleepy eyes, I opened)

AMBO: Wait for me Elena!

(The sound of a snake hissing is heard)

Music: Kadtung kadikluman (through the darkness)
Ako ay nangalagkalag (I looked around)
Kasu ihiling ko si sakuyang mata sa itaas
(I raised my searching eyes)

Simong lawog nahiling ko, maliwanag (your face I saw, glowing)

Kadtung kadikluman, Kan mahiling taka

(When in the dark, I saw you)

AMBO: Oryol! You foul creature of the dark! Why do you keep on hunting me!

(The sound of snake hissing is heard)

AMBO: Leave me alone!

(The sound of snake hissing is heard, getting louder)

AMBO: Show yourself!

(The sound changes to a song/music of seduction.

AMBO covers his ears. He continues to walk)

AMBO: You scum! And now you have changed! You, evil creature!

(AMBO stops and finds a snake in his path. Grabs it.)

AMBO: And so we meet again!

(AMBO struggles with the snake.)

AMBO: This time I will kill you! I will make sure that you will not kill me as you did my brothers and sisters!

(AMBO gets the image of the Ina, the Penafrancia from his pockets.)

AMBO: *Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia! La Virgen Patrona de Bicolandia!*

Resuene vibrante el himno de amor Quentona tu pueblo grata

emocion Patrona del Bicol, Madre de Dios se siempre la reina de

nuestra region Patrona del Bicol Gran Madre de Dios se siempre.

La reina de nuestra region! VIVA!

(And slices the snake in half.)

AMBO: Viva La Virgen de Penafrancia!

*(Also from his pockets, he gets a small chili or labuyo
and crushes it in the snake.)*

AMBO: And now, the fire of the *labuyo*! A gift from the blood of the Mayon volcano!

*(AMBO throws the snake in front of him, kneels and
stares at it.*

*The light changes from red to white, red to white, similar to
an ambulance. The sound of the siren is heard.*

Offstage, the POLICE arrives and radios the station.)

POLICE: *(offstage)* There's a man here at Central Park, 60-70 years old.

Upper garments torn. He looks stupefied. No reaction to questions or conversations. He just stares at the dead snake in front of him. Snake's cut in half. He might have killed the snake when it attacked him.

(Lights off.)

SCENE 2

(DOLLY is sleeping in the couch in the living room.

The TV is on with "The Price is Right."

MAGDA is also seen sleeping with a rosary on her hands.

The sound of the night bird singing awakens DOLLY.)

DOLLY: Huh? What is that?

(The sound of hissing snake that awakens MAGDA.)

MAGDA: Dios ko!

(DOLLY returns to sleep. MAGDA starts praying

The sound of the phone is heard, DOLLY answers.)

DOLLY: *(sleepy)* Hello?

POLICE: (V.O.) This is Officer James. Mrs. DOLLY Jenkins?

DOLLY: Yes?

POLICE: (V.O.) We have found your father.

DOLLY: Thank heavens! Is he ok?

POLICE: (V.O.) We found him in Central Park.

DOLLY: We searched everywhere!

POLICE: (V.O.) We found him stupefied staring at a dead snake cut in half in front of him.

DOLLY: Is he hurt?

POLICE: (V.O.) Just a few bruises, a struggle perhaps with the snake. Thank heavens the snake is non-poisonous. Although I do not remember

encountering such a snake before.

DOLLY: What do you mean?

POLICE: (V.O.) According to the wildlife bureau, the snake seems to have originated from Asia and the nearest zoos have not reported any escape of wildlife. Do you, by any chance, have purchased or have kept exotic animals as pets?

DOLLY: Oh, no, my landlord won't allow it.

POLICE: (V.O.) Also, Mrs. Jenkins, he was holding a small statue of something, he may have used it to cut the snake. And we found a few chili in his pockets.

DOLLY: We are not voodoo, officer!

POLICE: (V.O.) I'm not saying that Mrs. Jenkins...

DOLLY: My father is ill, officer. I just want to see him.

POLICE: (V.O.) I understand Mrs. Jenkins...

DOLLY: Where is my father now?

POLICE: (V.O.) We brought him to St. Gregory's.

DOLLY: Thank you officer!

POLICE: (V.O.) Glad to be of help!

(DOLLY ends the call. BILL in his pajamas enters stage.)

BILL: Who was it? Your Father?

DOLLY: It's the POLICE, BILL. They found him. *(Cries)*

BILL, they found him and now he is in the hospital.

BILL: Where has he gone this time?

DOLLY: They found him in Central Park.

BILL: Good Lord!

(DOLLY bursts into tears, BILL pacifies her.)

BILL: Is he ok?

DOLLY: He is.

BILL: Oh, DOLLY...

DOLLY: I don't know what to do, BILL... This is all my fault!

(BILL embraces DOLLY.)

BILL: It's nobody's fault.

DOLLY: Am I a terrible daughter?

BILL: Hush, hush, now don't say that. You're not an inch terrible. You've been a very loving darling to your dad. You have done everything for him. Took him out of hunger and labor. He had a good life here.

DOLLY: Did I neglect him?

BILL: Don't you say that. You gave him everything and did everything. Things like this happen. Though we might not know the reason.

DOLLY: But why is this happening?

BILL: May be your father needs a different kind of care.

DOLLY: What do you mean?

BILL: I mean, I work, you work, AMBO is always left here on his own...

DOLLY: What are you saying?

BILL: There's a hospice nearby.

DOLLY: No, BILL! That is not an option!

BILL: Well, think about it, if AMBO is in the hospice, he'll be better taken care of. What's wrong with that?

DOLLY: Oh, BILL you won't understand!

BILL: What is it that I won't understand?

DOLLY: BILL, we don't send our parents away. We take care of them.

BILL: You're not sending him away. You're just placing him in a secure and nice place to live.

DOLLY: But BILL...

BILL: Do you want all your nights to be like this?

DOLLY: I suppose...

BILL: Think about it. You should call your sister.

DOLLY: I know. Later, after we go to St. Gregory's.

BILL: I'll drive.

(BILL and DOLLY exits the stage,

MAGDA continues praying.

Lights turn off.)

SCENE 3

(AMBO is eating *pili* while watching "The Price is Right." DOLLY enters the stage buttoning her shirt. She then fixes her bag and brings out her make-up.)

DOLLY: Ready Pay?

AMBO: Where are we going?

DOLLY: We'll go to the doctor.

AMBO: Why? I am not sick.

DOLLY: No, Papay you're not.

AMBO: Are you sick?

DOLLY: Pay, I'm never better.

AMBO: Good. Is this the way to Dr. Anito's clinic? I have not seen him in a long time. Remember when you brought me to that Dr. Roberts? *Naku po!* It took me an hour just to explain that I have *almuranas*.

DOLLY: It's hemorrhoids Pay.

AMBO: I am from Bicol, and we chew the *sili* just like we gum!

DOLLY: Pay, you should stop eating those spicy things! It's not good for you.

AMBO: No DOLLY, the *siling labuyo*, is Daragang Magayon's gift to us!

DOLLY: Pay, what are you talking about? That fiery culprit almost cost a fortune. Do you know much those hemorrhoids cost to be removed?

AMBO: The labuyo is what connects us to the volcano, DOLLY. The red

color is the color of the lava and its extreme spice is Daragang
Magayon's burning love for our people.

DOLLY: The Mayon may have the perfect cone but it sure is a killer.

AMBO: Only the the bad are killed. We children are spared!

(DOLLY remains silent, unresponsive.)

AMBO: Good thing there is a *Pinoy* doctor around here. Is he *Ilokano*?

DOLLY: No, Papay, we are going to see Dr. Davis.

AMBO: Why are we going to that doctor? Why not Dr. Anito? He sells those
pastillas right? I haven't tasted one in a while. Are you sure you are
well, hija?

DOLLY: Papay, you don't remember?

AMBO: Remember what?

DOLLY: You were gone the entire night.

AMBO: Where did I go?

DOLLY: We found you on top of a tree.

AMBO: Sus, DOLLY! I'm a *kopra* farmer remember?

DOLLY: I know that too well Papay.

AMBO: See, so why are you bringing me to the doctor? I don't have any
bruise. I don't feel anything bad.

DOLLY: Papay, you're seventy years old. People at fifty can't even climb a
few floors.

AMBO: Hahaha, but I'm different DOLLY! Your father's an *Oragon*! We are
meant to climb trees and mountains. I can even climb the *Mayon* in

less than an hour.

DOLLY: Papay, I have no doubts you can climb trees, but what bothers me is that you were holding a dead bird on one hand and the bloodied image of the *Ina* on the other.

(The sound of a nightbird singing is heard.)

AMBO: Did you hear that DOLLY?

(The sound of the nightbird singing becomes louder.)

DOLLY: Hear what Papay?

AMBO: It's the *Corocoro*! DOLLY! It's been following me. Someone's going to die! Or a storm is coming!

DOLLY: No one's going to die Pay. And it's summer. There are no storms in summer! What *Corocoro*, Papay?

AMBO: *Aswang's* bird! DOLLY! Can't you hear it singing? It means death! Or a storm is coming! Let me out of here! I want to find it and catch it! How did it follow me? I already killed it using the *Ina*. How did it resurrect? How?! How? I could not die yet!

(AMBO becomes agitated, starts searching around the room. DOLLY calms AMBO down.)

DOLLY: Calm down, Papay! We're already here in the hospital.

AMBO: The bird, DOLLY! I already killed it! DOLLY!

DOLLY: Hush, Papay, I'm here, your bunso is here...

(AMBO stands, get the wheel chair behind the couch. He sits and just stares blankly. DOLLY sets up an IV stand.)

SCENE 4

(MAGDA starts weaving a bag of abaca.

DOLLY stands and kisses AMBO on the forehead, AMBO remains unresponsive. DOLLY gets the phone and starts dialing MAGDA's number. The phone rings and MAGDA answers)

DOLLY: MAGDA...

MAGDA: DOLLY! Did you find Papay?

DOLLY: Yes, MAGDA.

MAGDA: *Salamat sa Dios, DOLLY!* Good thing you found him a few days before his birthday. Can I talk to him? I really miss him!

DOLLY: Yes, right...

MAGDA: Oy, DOLLY, where has he gone this time? In the subway?

DOLLY: No

MAGDA: In the river DOLLY? What's it called again?

DOLLY: The Hudson...

MAGDA: That's where you last saw him no? He might have thought it's the
Naga river where the Ina is paraded.

DOLLY: In the Central Park...

MAGDA: Ah... I hope it was not too far. Who found him? I'm sure he went looking for *pili* again.

DOLLY: Papay's birthday.

MAGDA: A week from now. He still strong, *ano*? How old is he again?
(*pause*)
Oh, I can't believe he is 77. I bet Papay can still, carry a sack of rice. Hoy, DOLLY, Papay is as tough as a carabao, no? He may really be *Daragang Magayon's* son.

DOLLY: That's when we'll bring him.

MAGDA: Bring him? Where? What are you talking about?

DOLLY: MAGDA, Papay is sort of catatonic. He is just here awake. He does not talk or move even.

MAGDA: What happened to our Papay?

DOLLY: I really don't know...

MAGDA: You're a nurse, DOLLY!

DOLLY: Sus MAGDA, even the doctors could not explain all these!

MAGDA: But why is he under observation?

DOLLY: They found him just staring blankly at a dead snake in front of him.

MAGDA: A *sawa* DOLLY?

DOLLY: I did not see MAGDA. Although the POLICE found it odd that an Asian snake was found in Central Park.

MAGDA: Just this morning, DOLLY, I woke up with a dead *sawa* in the backyard, DOLLY. It's even cut in half, DOLLY!

DOLLY: Sus, MAGDA, you don't say... Anyway, the reason I called is that I'm letting you know that I'm bringing Papay to a hospice facility.

MAGDA: Hospice facility?

DOLLY: A home for the aged...

MAGDA: No, DOLLY, you should have just bring him home! Here I can take care of him...

DOLLY: Are telling me I'm not good at taking care of our father?

MAGDA: It's not that DOLLY, no, I mean you're so busy and...

DOLLY: Well, I am not going home.

MAGDA: Please DOLLY, It's been fifteen years since I last saw him.
DOLLY, I don't want to see him inside a coffin!

DOLLY: No, MAGDA, don't say such thing.

MAGDA: DOLLY, why is it always no! Please, bring him home!
DOLLY, you have not even been home since you have been there.

DOLLY: Yes, it's been 30 years.

MAGDA: See, DOLLY, maybe it's about time you go home. Bring our father home.

DOLLY: What for MAGDA?

MAGDA: DOLLY, please, I beg of you! Let him go back to his homeland!

DOLLY: Papay is American now! He will die an American man!

MAGDA: No, DOLLY, he was born here. DOLLY, people can die everywhere. But DOLLY, the place of birth, DOLLY, is where a life began.

DOLLY: You said life? What kind of life? A life full of hunger and uncertainty? He has spent the best years of his life in this beautiful

country. If I had not petitioned him, he would have died before reaching seventy! He would have died starving!

MAGDA: Don't say that, DOLLY, please.

DOLLY: Why? Because it's the truth?

MAGDA: We are Oragon DOLLY, we are rooted in this land.

Our ashes become the life that feeds the *Mayon*. DOLLY, without the *bulkan*, our land will be barren.

DOLLY: I do not believe in that crap! If Bicol is truly fertile, then why are we so poor?

MAGDA: DOLLY, we are not poor. We have what we need. We struggle but we survive.

DOLLY: That's the most stupid thing. That's just a poor man's excuse not to become better.

MAGDA: I guess it's better to be poor DOLLY, than without a soul.

DOLLY: Are you telling me I don't have a soul?

MAGDA: Yes, DOLLY, perhaps you sold it to the *Aswang*!

DOLLY: After all that I've done, this is all I get?

MAGDA: I'm sorry. I just got carried away.

DOLLY: *(pause)* Papay does not respond to anything. He just stares blankly.

MAGDA: Oh DOLLY! How does he eat?

DOLLY: He's on IV.

MAGDA: IV, DOLLY?

DOLLY: It's Dextrose, MAGDA.

MAGDA: Papay, is a strong man, DOLLY. He will survive and get well
DOLLY, and come home.

DOLLY: MAGDA, Papay is still under observation and all you care about is
him coming home?

MAGDA: You know Papay, he can be as strong as *Handyong* in his
stories.

DOLLY: MAGDA, those are just stories, tall tales!

MAGDA: But when it's Papay telling them, it seemed real. As if he was
the one who experienced them.

DOLLY: We were children, MAGDA, what do you expect?

MAGDA: Have you tried feeding him *pili*?

(DOLLY and MAGDA ends the call.

MAGDA gets her rosary and prays.

AMBO stands and sits on the couch, opens the television.

DOLLY exits the stage with the wheel chair and IV stand.)

SCENE 5

(This scene is from a recent past before AMBO's catatonia.

AMBO is seated in the couch watching "The Price is Right." Sounds from the show can be heard on set. DOLLY enters the stage carrying two bags of groceries. MAGDA continues with here weaving.)

DOLLY: Papay, I'm home.

AMBO: Oy, you're home!

DOLLY: Yes, Pay, I dropped by the store.

AMBO: Where's the *pili* Dolly?

DOLLY: Papay, there were no deliveries due to the storm.

AMBO: Ha, the storm! *Kadunong* was right you see.

DOLLY: *Kadunong*? It's Hurricane Gordon, Pay!

AMBO: You've forgotten Dolly?

DOLLY: Forgotten what?

AMBO: Ha, *Kadunong* and *Gugurang*.

DOLLY: Pay, I'm running late, let's talk about this later? Ha, Pay? If you like I'll drop by the store to buy you almonds? There's no shortage of almonds here in the US. I'm really running late, my supervisor just called and they need me to relieve for someone on leave. I'll make it up to you, I promise.

(DOLLY kisses AMBO on the cheeks and rushes to exit. AMBO turns the television off and approaches

the table where the pictures are. He picks one frame with him and DOLLY. MAGDA stops her and weaving and gets a box of old letters, she opens it and reads one quietly.)

AMBO: *Kadunong and Gugurang. Ay! You could not sleep without hearing that story. Your Mamay could not stop you from munching away the pili nuts. She would say “Ay Dolly, stop eating! Those are for the market!” And you would just run away, always running away whenever you were reprimanded. And I would tell your Mamay, “Elena, just let Dolly be, it was your fault she loves the pili, dyan mo siya pinaglihi when you were pregnant, remember? Your Mamay would wake me up at three in the morning and I would bring four basketful and she would finish it in less than an hour. But you always loved that story, used to. “Papay, please tell me, what did Kadunong see?” Kadunong is an old man with long silvery hair. Sitting on top of the hill, he could see the vast ocean. Closing his eyes, a vision of things to come flashed before him. Big waves reaching the heavens swallow the entire land. Houses were destroyed. People are being swept away.*

MAGDA: *Dear Papay, I passed all the nursing requirements. Love, DOLLY*

AMBO: *Kadunong saw the creator, Gugurang. Pointing towards the new land they would have to cross.*

MAGDA: *Papay, I'm leaving for New York in three months.*

AMBO: "I have no doubts that your visions are true." said the cheiftain to Kadunong. Join me, let us tell our people.

MAGDA: Papay, give me your blessing. I need to go... I want to go... I'm tired of this kind of life. I don't to die here starving.

AMBO: "Why abandon this place of ours?" cried the people. "This land is blessed and bountiful." Many people were scared and confused. Some asked "Where do we go?"

MAGDA: I will do eveything to bring you here Papay.

AMBO: Others asked "When?"

MAGDA: Papay, I have already sent you the ticket...

AMBO: "When the moon is at crescent we sail to the new island..."

(MAGDA stops reading, looks at AMBO.)

MAGDA: Papay, bring the image of the Ina with you. So you always carry me with you.

AMBO: Before leaving, *Kadunong* molded clay, the shape of the lips as *Gugurang* instructed. At the shore, he used a sling to propel the clay. "Where the stone falls, will be our new home."

MAGDA: Papay! I can't wait to welcome you to the US! This is a dream come true! I have prepared a lot of things for you!

AMBO: *Kadunong* journeyed the seas for days. Until finally, they reached land with flowing rivers and fiery volcanoes.

MAGDA: Papay, here's a box of almonds. You should learn to eat these because it's difficult to find pili here.

AMBO:

While resting under a tree, something fell on *Kadunong's* head. He remembered the lip-shaped clay he threw at sea. When he opened it, he found a nut that tastes like milk. "This is a gift from *Gugurang*. This fruit is a symbol of this chosen land, we will call it *pili*."

(Some pili nuts fall on the stage. AMBO, picks up some pili and eats it. He sits on the couch, MAGDA picks-up the phone and dials a number.)

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

(The sound of thunder and heavy rains can be heard although it is a sunny day outside.

The phone rings, AMBO answers.)

AMBO: Hello?

MAGDA: Papay! I miss you so much! Kamusta?

AMBO: Elena? Elena! Where are you?

MAGDA: Papay, it's me Magda, your daughter in the Philippines.

AMBO: Where are you now? Come back home! I promise I'll keep my word this time. What you saw was a mistake.

MAGDA: What are you talking about Papay?

AMBO: Lena, the girls, they need you? Who will take care of them when I'm away? Please Lena, come back.

MAGDA: Come back from where?

AMBO: I swear I'll be a better husband! Forgive me, please, like I have forgiven you.

(DOLLY enters the stage.)

DOLLY: Who is it Papa?

AMBO: Please Lena!

(DOLLY grabs the phone from AMBO.

AMBO exits the stage.)

DOLLY: Who is this?

MAGDA: Dolly! How are you? Papay mistook me as Mamay.

DOLLY: Oy, Magda! You know how Papay is, sometimes he forgets.

MAGDA: That is growing old I guess.

DOLLY: Did Papay call you?

MAGDA: I called DOLLY, just checking on Papay.

DOLLY: You know it's expensive to call here.

MAGDA: I know. I just missed him. Worried I guess. I could not sleep yesterday when you told me about finding Papay up on a tree all night.

DOLLY: Got me worried as hell, that's why I asked Bill to change the locks and add new ones. I don't want that to happen again. Scared the soul out of me.

MAGDA: I even dreamt of the dead bird and the image of the *Ina* last night, that's when I woke up and never got back my sleep. Plus there was a storm that suddenly came without notice.

DOLLY: What storm?

(The sound of thunder and heavy rains can be heard.)

MAGDA: Dolly, the storm destroyed our roof.

DOLLY: Why is there always a storm? And everytime, there's a storm, the roof just gets flown away.

MAGDA: Dolly, we were also surprised. No one expected a storm to come. But there it came last night, unannounced. That's how it is here in Bicol. Storms are part of our lives.

DOLLY: Why does it have to be part of mine?

(The sound of thunder grows louder, the line is cut, DOLLY and MAGDA puts down the phone.)

SCENE 2

(DOLLY gets the luggage behind the couch and starts to pack AMBO's stuff. BILL enters with AMBO in the wheelchair and IV stand. He leaves AMBO in front of the television. BILL approaches DOLLY, kisses her.)

BILL: I'll wait for you in the car.

DOLLY: Give me five minutes.

(BILL exits stage. DOLLY continues to pack AMBO's things. MAGDA is wrapping a small image of the Penafrancia in a handkerchief.

DOLLY sees the brochure of the hospice and shows it to AMBO.)

DOLLY: Pay, do not worry; this home facility is just like home. You have your own room with cable TV. A young and beautiful nurse will always be there to take care of you. It's just ten minutes away from my work so I'll see you every day.

(Pauses)

I know that look, Papay. But this is the best thing we could do!

(Pauses)

This is difficult for me, Pay, but I can't risk losing you again!

MAGDA already objected.

(The sound of honking can be heard.)

DOLLY: Pay, I'll be back

(Light changes that indicate a fragment from the past.

MAGDA enters the room holding the wrapped image of the Ina, crying.

AMBO, stands and hugs MAGDA.)

AMBO: Hija, why are you crying?

MAGDA: I'm not Papay.

AMBO: Are you packing away those tears for me to bring to New York?

MAGDA: No, Papay. I don't want you to bring my tears to New York.

AMBO: Do you know something that I really want to bring to New York?

MAGDA: What is that Papay?

AMBO: Your song MAGDA, sing for Papay?

MAGDA: Papay, in the U.S., you can listen to your favorite singer Andy Williams sing your song, "The Impossible Dream!" *(Sings)* To dream the impossible dream/ To fight the unbeatable foe...

AMBO: Andy Williams is no match to you MAGDA!

MAGDA: *Asus!* Papay, you're just flattering me.

AMBO: Sing to me, MAGDA, my favorite?

MAGDA: Kadtung kadikluman, Kan mahiling taka
(When in the dark, I saw you)
Namundo kong puso, tulos naugma
(my lonely heart found happiness, swiftly)
Minsan di nahaloy, idtong napagmasdan
(that sight, ever so briefly though,)

Sagkod Nuarin pa man, (Until eternity,)

AMBO: Dai ko malilingawan (I won't forget, ever)
Magpoon na ika sakuyang namutan (Since, to you in love I fell)
Ako nakamate nin kaginhawahan (I felt sweet relief soothing)
Pati an puso kong tagub kapungawan
(my empty heart, in loneliness fill)
Ngunyan burabod na nin tunay na kaogmahan
(now a spring of true happiness, overflowing)

MAGDA: Papay, bring the *Ina* with you!
*(MAGDA packs the pocket-sized image of the ina in
the luggage. MAGDA is beginning to sob again.)*

MAGDA: I am going to miss you Papay!

AMBO: Why miss me MAGDA? There are no goodbyes for us!
(AMBO embraces MAGDA.)

AMBO: *Hija*, I am always with you! Just sing our song and remember our stories.

MAGDA: What stories Papay?

AMBO: Do you still remember *Daragang Magayon*?

MAGDA: Papay, all of Bicol knows *Daragang Magayon*, the lovely maiden which became the Mayon volcano.

AMBO: Ha, you remember, but there is one thing that you hear in the lore of the old.

MAGDA: What is that Pay?

AMBO: That I am the son of *Daragang Magayon*.

(MAGDA kisses AMBO on the forehead. AMBO lays down on the couch and sleeps. MAGDA finishes packing the luggage, she exits the stage with the luggage. Lights off.)

SCENE 3

(AMBO is sleeping in the couch. DOLLY and BILL enters the room with a cake in hand. They start singing "happy birthday." AMBO is awoken.)

DOLLY: Pay, Happy Birthday!

BILL: Happy Birthday AMBO! DOLLY, sit beside him and I'll take a picture.

(DOLLY holds the cake with candles and BILL gets a camera and positions to take pictures.)

DOLLY: Now make a wish and blow all your 70 candles!

BILL: DOLLY, I'll just reheat some food..

(BILL exits stage.)

AMBO: DOLLY, when are we coming back home?

DOLLY: Papay, we have no money yet. I am still paying off debt.

AMBO: You promised we go home this year. It's been years since I left Bicol and I want to go back.

DOLLY: Why Papay? Don't you love it here?

AMBO: This is a beautiful country. I just want to go back to the place of my childhood before my memory completely disappears.

DOLLY: You don't need those ugly memories. You are not living in a shanty anymore. Here, your house is comfortable and clean. It's not like the one you had at home: rat infested, cockroach filled, dust and mites everywhere!

AMBO: The rats... the mites... the dusts... that's our home...

DOLLY: Pay, it's your birthday, can you please stop saying those disgusting things?

AMBO: Sorry, DOLLY, I just miss...

DOLLY: Ok, Papay, after I have completely paid the mortgage, give me two years. We will go back to the Philippines. I'm sorry Pay that I use you to claim benefit for my loans. I promise you we will go back to Bicol...

AMBO: Promise, anak?

DOLLY: *Pangako*, Papay!

AMBO: I have to finish the story before she wakes up.

DOLLY: Pay, what story? Who will wake up?

(AMBO blows his candles. Lights off)

SCENE 4

(The scene opens with AMBO seated on the couch with the telephone on hand. He dials a number, the sound of the phone ringing can be heard. Someone answers the call.)

AMBO: Magda, anak...

RECEIVER 1: Luigi's Pizza!

(AMBO ends the call, dials another number. The sound of the ring tone can be heard. Someone answers the call.)

RECEIVER 2: Fire Department...

AMBO: Magda!

(AMBO ends the call, dials another number. MAGDA's phone rings, she enters the stage and answers the call.)

MAGDA: Hello?

AMBO: Magda, anak, get me out of here!

MAGDA: Why, Papay? Is there something wrong?

AMBO: It's the *Oryol*, she's trying to poison to me!

MAGDA: Pay, is Dolly there?

AMBO: She's *Oryol*, Magda, tell your Mamay it's *Oryol*!

MAGDA: Who's *Oryol* Pay?

AMBO: Tell your Mamay it's all *Oryol's* fault.

MAGDA: Pay, Mamay has been dead a long time ago, before Dolly left for the America.

AMBO: Tell her I should've gotten home early but *Oryol* caught me and me kept me away!

MAGDA: Pay, do not worry, you're away from here now, there is no *Oryol* where you live right now.

AMBO: But there is! I swear, *Oryol* is trying to kill me!

MAGDA: Pay, is Dolly there?

AMBO: *Oryol* left. Please Magda, help me go home. The *machete* needs repair.

MAGDA: You sold your *machete* to your bestfriend Uncle Rico before you left remember?

AMBO: That bastard! He's up to no good! Trying to steal everything from me, even your Mamay... has warned me about him. The blood of *Aswang* lives in him.

MAGDA: Papay, don't worry, tomorrow when you wake up, you will be here in Bicol.

AMBO: Will you cook me *laing*?

MAGDA: Sure, Pay, I will gather *gabi* and *gata* tomorrow.

AMBO: I have not eaten *laing* for a long time now.

MAGDA: I bet you miss it so.

AMBO: Well, you know how I liked it.

MAGDA: Just like how Mamay cooks it.

AMBO: Ah, don't forget the *labuyo*.

MAGDA: How could I... you can't eat anything without it.

AMBO: Sing to me Magda!

MAGDA: What song Papay?

AMBO : *Sarung Banggi*, Magda, the song that you won in the *tanghalan*.

MAGDA: O, Papay, that was so long ago.

AMBO : Please, Magda, sing to me. So I won't forget.

MAGDA: It's your favorite song, how could you forget?

AMBO: You forget when you don't hear or say the words anymore. When I speak Bicolano here, *Dios ko po*, they find me crazy. I think they think of me as German!

MAGDA: Well, you can talk to Dolly.

AMBO: *Oryol* wants me to just be quiet. That's why I keep to myself, when the *Oryol* is around.

MAGDA: Sus, Papay, there is no *Oryol* there, you and the Mayon are worlds apart.

AMBO: Sing to me Magda so I won't forget!

MAGDA: *Asus* Papay. (BEGINS TO SING)

Sarung Banggi (It was one night)

Sa Higdaan (While in my bed)

Nakadangog ako (that I heard)

Nin huni nin sarong gamgam (the lonely chirping of a bird)

Sa luba ko katurugan, (I thought I was dreaming)

Bako kundi (But, no...)

Simong boses, Iyo palan (twas your voice, most certain)

AMBO: *Salamat* Magda. It must be done before she wakes.

MAGDA: What must be done Pay?

AMBO: Throw my ashes at the volcano when I die.

MAGDA: What are you saying?

AMBO: *Daragang Magayon* is my mother and *Handyong* is my father. Scatter my ashes in my mother's grave.

MAGDA: Pay, you're still young. Don't say such things.

(The sound of the nightbird singing can be heard.)

Lights off.)

SCENE 5

(The backdrop of the stage is a white panel that projects a busy New York street. The scenes in the backdrop change as AMBO walks. Although he is alone onstage, he pretends to see and avoid people. The sounds of people walking, automobiles honking, on-going constructions can be heard.)

AMBO: *Dios ko po!* Where am I?

(The sound of people arguing is heard)

AMBO: It's like I'm going around and around and around in circles.

(The sound of two cars crashing follows)

AMBO: *Susmariosep!* Why are people always on the go?

(AMBO approaches someone imaginary)

AMBO: Excuse me...

(pauses)

AMBO: *(Whispering To Self)* "Excuse me" is English... What will I do now? What am I doing here? Where am I? Last night, I was just fixing the roof from the last storm. *Oryol*, no, I saw her again last night! Oh, Elena, forgive me, I did not know *Aswang* would. Oh MAGDA, my darling, sing to Papay?

Music: SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

AMBO: Oh MAGDA! Sing to Papay! I don't want to hear the *Oryol's* voice again! I don't want to stay here anymore! Oh Elena, oh MAGDA!

Wait for me. I promise the *kopra* harvest would be bountiful. She promised when she wakes. The more harvest, the more money we'll have so you could buy new clothes or shoes.

(The sound of roaring thunder is heard)

AMBO: *Hain ako? Tabangan nindo ako. Ighahanap na ako kang agum buda aki ko! Si Oryol! Tabangan nindo ako! (Where am I? Help me! My wife and child are looking for me! The Oryol! Help me!)*

(The sound of the nightbird singing follows.)

AMBO runs in circle on stage)

AMBO: *Corocoro! Show yourself! When I catch you, you will never sing a song of Death anymore!*

(The backdrop changes to the Hudson river.)

AMBO stops and gets excited.)

AMBO: *Ah, the Naga River! All this misfortune is because I do not join the yearly river procession of the Nuestra Senora!*

(AMBO continues walking. The backdrop changes to the image of the Statue of Liberty.)

AMBO: *Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia! La Virgen Patrona de Bicolandia!
Resuene vibrante el himno de amor, Quentona tu pueblo grata emocion
Patrona del Bicol, Madre de Dios se siempre la reina de nuestra region
Patrona del Bicol Gran Madre de Dios se siempre La reina de nuestra
region! VIVA!*

(AMBO removes his clothing in an attempt to dive into the river. The sound of the siren is heard.)

POLICE: (V.O.) This is POLICE officer Turner, we found an old Asian man. He says his name is AMBO. He is stripped swimming in the Hudson. Speaks little English...

ACT THREE

SCENE 1

(This is the scene prior to scene one. AMBO is in the living room watching "The Price is Right." The show theme is playing on the background.)

TV Host: AMBO, come down!

AMBO: Me?

TV Host: Yes you!

("The Price is Right" theme fades, replaced by the sound of snake hissing)

AMBO: *Oryol?*

(The sound of the snake hissing becomes louder.)

AMBO: You foul creature, you!

(AMBO turns the television off.

The sound of snake hissing becomes louder)

AMBO: *Oryol!*

(The sound of two young girls laughing follows. MAGDA is praying the rosary.)

MAGDA: Come home Papay, come home.

AMBO: Is that?

MAGDA: *(singing)* Dagos ako bangon (at once, I arose)

Si sakuyang mata iminuklat (my sleepy eyes, I opened)

Kadtung kadikluman (through the darkness)

Ako ay nangalagkalag (I looked around)
Kasu ihiling ko si sakuyang mata sa itaas
(And when I raised my searching eyes)
Simong lawog nahiling ko, maliwanag (your face I saw, glowing)

AMBO: Elena! MAGDA! DOLLY! Papay is coming home. I have been out in the mountain for so long. *Oryol* has held me back. Now, she's not going to stop my return. My beautiful wife Elena! I know you have been waiting for me.

DOLLY: (V.O.) Look, Papay! I can now open *pili!*

AMBO: MAGDA, DOLLY, my angels, I've seen *Oryol!* She has the most enchanting voice, full of promises.

(A song/music of seduction is playing.)

AMBO: Elena, mahal, forgive me! I'll find and kill *Oryol* once and for all! *Daragang Magayon* has told me how to defeat *Oryol*.

(The sound of a volcanic eruption follows.)

AMBO: I have to do all these before she awakens.

Music: Kadtung kadikluman, Kan mahiling taka
(When in the dark, I saw you)
Namundo kong puso, tulos naugma
(my lonely heart found happiness, swiftly)
Minsan di nahaloy, idtong napagmasdan
(that sight, ever so briefly though,)
Sagkod Nuarin pa man, (Until eternity,)

Dai ko malilingawan (I won't forget, ever)

(The alternate sounds of the night bird singing and the snake hissing is heard.

AMBO finds a snake in his path. Grabs it.)

AMBO: And so we meet again!

(AMBO struggles with the snake.)

AMBO: This time I will kill you! I will make sure that you will not kill me as you did my brothers and sisters!

(AMBO gets the image of the Ina from his pockets.)

AMBO: *Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia! La Virgen Patrona de Bicolandia!
Resuene vibrante el himno de amor, Quentona tu pueblo grata emocion
Patrona del Bicol, Madre de Dios se siempre la reina de nuestra region
Patrona del Bicol Gran Madre de Dios se siempre. La reina de nuestra
region! VIVA!*

(And slices the snake in half.)

AMBO: Viva La Virgen de Penafrancia!

(Also from his pockets, he get a small chilli and crushes it in the snake.)

AMBO: And now, the fire of the *labuyo*! A gift from the blood of the Mayon volcano!

(He throws the snake in front of him, kneels and stares at it.

The sound of the phone rings)

POLICE:

(V.O.) This is Officer James. *(Pause)*

We have found your father. *(Pause)*

We found him here, in Central Park. *(Pause)*

We found him stupefied staring at a dead snake in front of him.

Just a few bruises, a struggle perhaps with the snake. *(Pause)*

The snake is non-poisonous. Although, I do not remember encountering such a snake before. *(Pause)*

We brought him to St. Gregory's. *(Pause)*

(The sound of the night bird alternates with the sound of the snake hissing.

Lights off.)

SCENE 2

(This scene opens with DOLLY sleeping on the couch.

AMBO sits on his wheel chair, still stupefied. The television is on with the "The Price is Right."BILL enters.)

BILL: Hon, why don't you transfer to the bed?

DOLLY: *(Yawning)* Huh?

BILL: I said, transfer to the bed. Else you want to worsen your back. Does he ever close his eyes?

DOLLY: No, not at all. I tried to outlast him but after a quarter of an hour I gave up.

BILL: You could still see him breathing.

DOLLY: Oh yes although he's not eating or drinking.

BILL: And he does pee or anything.

DOLLY: Not a single drop.

BILL: And the last thing he saw was that snake.

DOLLY: Yes, I found out that it was a *sawwa*.

BILL: A *sawwa*?

DOLLY: That's what we call our boas.

BILL: He wasn't bitten or anything?

DOLLY: No, not a wound.

BILL: Your father amazes me!

DOLLY: He is one amazing guy. Especially when he tells his stories. As if he was there, he saw what happened, he lived it.

BILL: My father used to tell me such stories only when he is drunk.

DOLLY: No, my father did not tell the stories when drunk, he would tell us the stories every opportunity he has. Sometimes, Mamay would even beg Papay to stop. He would tell us the stories over and over again.

BILL: That's something. You should have recorded them all and made them into a book.

DOLLY: Those are tall tales.

(The door bell rings.)

BILL: I'll get it.

(BILL exits stage. DOLLY approaches AMBO.)

DOLLY: Pay, I promise, the moment you get well, I'll bring you to...

(BILL enters the stage, carry a small package.)

DOLLY: Who's it hon?

BILL: Parcel from the Philippines

(BILL gives parcel to DOLLY.
MAGDA is writing a letter.
DOLLY opens it, sees the envelope, reads the letter)

MAGDA: Dear DOLLY, *Kamusta na?* I hope that Papay is getting better. The storms keep on coming . It has not stopped in weeks but there is no flood. People have mistaken night from day. The priest even sounded the bell at 3 am thinking it was 11 am. Many crops have grown scales after being submerged in water for so long. I

even tried frying a whole corn thinking it was a fish! When will these rains stop? I was able to harvest a few *pili*, I made some into *panutsa*, I know you like your *pili* sweetened. The unopened ones are for Papay. You know how he likes to open them with his teeth. Also I wrapped everything with a washcloth. I vigiled overnight at the statue of the Ina. Wrap him with it. Too bad I could not send a miracle coconut oil. You know it might spill. Always praying for the best. *Nagmamahal*, MAGDA

P.S. Remember Manoy Rene? Our cousin who is now a priest? Well, he included Papay in all his masses and novenas to the saints.

BILL: Your father can open these with his teeth?

DOLLY: If he didn't open it, he won't eat it.

BILL: I suppose we need to open it for him.

DOLLY: Use the one we use to open chestnuts.

(BILL goes to the kitchen)

DOLLY: Papay, look what I got. MAGDA sent you *pili*. BILL's opening some right now. I know you missed these. I promise Papay, when you get better, I'll buy you more. Oh Papay, please get well! I miss you terribly so...

(BILL enters)

BILL: These blasted nuts simply won't open.

DOLLY: What do you mean?

BILL: Even tried the wrench to crack these things.

(AMBO's mouth opens, BILL sees it)

BILL: For the love of God.

DOLLY: What?

BILL: Your father's mouth just opened?

DOLLY: Oh my!

BILL: You don't suppose...

DOLLY: Don't be absurd.

BILL: No, I have tried everything, these nuts just won't open.

DOLLY: His mouth just opened.

BILL: Talk to him.

DOLLY: Papay! Papay! It's me DOLLY! Are you hungry? Papay?

(BILL picks a nut and motions to put it in AMBO's mouth)

DOLLY: What are you doing?

BILL: Ssshhh...

DOLLY: BILL!

(BILL inserts the pili into AMBO's mouth and cracks it open)

DOLLY: *Santisima!*

BILL: Holy Cow!

(AMBO chews the pili)

DOLLY: Are you sure you've tried everything?

(AMBO continues munching)

BILL: I have! Give me more of those nuts.

(AMBO finishes all the pili)

AMBO: I am the son of *Daragang Magayon*.

DOLLY: *Santisima!* Papay! You are now talking

BILL: Who is *Daragang Magayon*?

DOLLY: She's a myth. Remember the volcano?

BILL: Yes, the one with the perfect shape?

DOLLY: It was said that there once lived a maiden of extraordinary beauty, two men fought over her and she was killed in the brawl.

AMBO: Poor *Daragang Magayon!*

DOLLY: Pay, it's just a story.

BILL: What happened?

DOLLY: They say that her grave grew bigger and bigger and became the famous Mayon.

BILL: Why would he call himself the son of that maiden?

AMBO: *Handyong* is my father.

DOLLY: Pay, *Handyong* is just a story. Pay, your father is Iro, my grandfather and your mother is Iga, grandma. You are from Iriga, Pay! Remember? (*starts to cry*) I'm DOLLY, your baby! Pay, it's me DOLLY, your *pili* invader. Pay, come back. Please return to us.

BILL: DOLLY, stop. That's ok, at least he talked.

DOLLY: Oh, BILL! What is wrong with him?

BILL: Calm down, DOLLY.

DOLLY: BILL, is he still my father?

BILL: Of course he is.

DOLLY: Why isn't he making sense?

BILL: Isn't he? You pretty sure know what he is talking about.

DOLLY: I know the stories but why would he say he's the son of *Daragang Magayon* and *Handyong*?

BILL: He seems to respond to anything that is about your homeland.

DOLLY: What are you saying?

BILL: I'm just saying, perhaps, he'll get recover faster if you bring him home.

DOLLY: You think so?

BILL: I bet you, MAGDA would be very delighted.

(BILL exits the stage. DOLLY get the phone, dials a number. AMBO munches on the pili.)

SCENE 3

(MAGDA's phone rings, she answers.)

- MAGDA:** DOLLY! Did you get the *pili*?
- DOLLY:** Thanks MAGDA, Papay ate everything in one sitting.
- MAGDA:** I told you *pili* would do the trick. Did you like the *panutsa*?
- DOLLY:** Pay, ate them all.
- MAGDA:** Wow, DOLLY! Don't worry I will search *Kabikulan* just to send you more *pili*! I'm sure there are some who were able to save some even during these days of rain. Did you see the washcloth? I went to the basilica in Naga just for the Ina's blessing. (Long Pause)
- DOLLY? Are you still there? DOLLY?
- DOLLY:** And he began to talk...
- MAGDA:** *Por Dios Santo!* DOLLY! Really? This is a miracle! A gift from the *Ina*! What did he say? Can I talk to him? Please DOLLY, I want to hear his voice!
- DOLLY:** After finishing all the *pili*, he stopped talking.
- MAGDA:** Then I'll search for more *pili*! If I have to search the entire Luzon I would! So it's the *pili* who did the trick!
- DOLLY:** MAGDA, he talked yes, but he wasn't making any sense.
- MAGDA:** What do you mean?
- DOLLY:** Yes, he said some words but things I could not understand.
- MAGDA:** Like what?
- AMBO:** I am the son of *Daragang Magayon*.

DOLLY: What was he talking about?

MAGDA: What else?

AMBO: *Handyong* is my father.

DOLLY: I'm losing it MAGDA. I don't know what to do. I'm losing it,
MAGDA!

MAGDA: No DOLLY! You don't give up on Papay! I am here praying
for his fast recovery. Tomorrow I will offer eggs and candles to
the *Po-on*. Papay talking is a good start.

(BILL enters changes the channel.)

Newscaster: Breaking news where are now on site at the volcanic activity
at Mt. Etna, where recently, ash was seen sprouting out...

(AMBO stands from his wheelchair)

AMBO: *Darangang Magayon! Darangang Magayon!*

BILL: DOLLY! AMBO's speaking again!

DOLLY: I got to go now, Papay's...

MAGDA: DOLLY...

(DOLLY puts down the phone.)

Newscaster: Observers have heard the volcano creating violent sounds...

AMBO: My mother! *Darangang Magayon!*

DOLLY: What is happening?

BILL: I don't know... He just started getting hysterical...

AMBO: Volcanoes *Hantik, Isarog,*
Culasi also burst so quick
And was felt simultaneously
The ground quakes convulsively.

DOLLY: Pay, this is DOLLY, your daughter.

Newscaster: Scientist have warned residents living in the area...

AMBO: One floody day, watched by his men,
Mantong did go, his job to do,
Before the waking time was due
One stoke cut *Rabot* into two.

DOLLY: Pay, who is *Mantog*? Who is *Rabot*?

AMBO: The corpse was brought to Ligmanan
Where it was seen by great *Handyong*
Truly shocked him very terribly
That remained in him for long.

BILL: What corpse?

DOLLY: I do not know.

AMBO: For surely he had never seen
A more atrocious living thing
Horrible form which caused a sting
And voice much louder than its ring.

DOLLY: What made him throw this fit?

BILL: I just changed channels.

Newscaster: It is predicted that the volcano would erupt anytime this week...

DOLLY: Turn that thing off...

BILL: Fine, do you think the news upsets him?

AMBO: And here *Cadungung* did stay
The first part of his ancient lay
To leave a continuation way
The occasion of another day.

*(DOLLY starts to cry, approaches AMBO who repeats the
verses whispering)*

DOLLY: Papay, what has happened to you?

AMBO: To leave a continuation way
The occasion of another day.

DOLLY: Please, Papay, I do not want to see you like this! I want to know
what's wrong. Tell me, I beg!

(AMBO stares at DOLLY)

DOLLY: Papay, I am here, I'm listening.

AMBO: The great hero of the Bicol people
Had lost all his strong desire to live
The mighty and the feared *Handyong*
Chose to stare at space for long.

DOLLY: Pay, this is not part of the myth anymore.

AMBO: Then the people built him a shelter
From the sun and the harsh weather
Soon the earth have kept him under
While his sons could not remember.

DOLLY: Remember what, Pay?

AMBO: Then the white men suddenly came
All the natives they tried to tame
And by the church they built a tower
A bell ringing with *Handyong* under!

DOLLY: Which church Pay?

AMBO: On the thousandth ring of the bell
Handyong woke up from his hell
And so the grave of fire and ash
Buried *Casagwa* in just a flash.

DOLLY: The one in the ruins?

AMBO: *Handyong* was now again reborn
From his slumber he felt such scorn
The Bicol people have forgotten
The tales of old become so rotten.

DOLLY: Pay, the myth got lost, it ended with *Handyong* stupefied.

AMBO: *Handyong* saw the beside his shelter
A mountain of beauty and wonder
The slopes are without a blemish
Handyong's despair soon deminish.

DOLLY: The Mayon, Pay?

AMBO: Handyong climbed the perfect cone
And he felt he was never alone
Reaching the tip his sorrow was gone
Looking at *Daragang Magayon*.

DOLLY: Pay, *Handyong* and *Daragang Magayon* are from different stories.

AMBO: Two tragic creatures locked in a stare
For Time was so ruthless to even care
And so in a lover's passionate embrace
Came another son in the Bicol race

DOLLY: Another son?

AMBO: *Daragang Magayon* and *Handyong*
Left the empty sites of their graves
Fleeing they had carried their young
To Iriga inhabiting its dark caves.

DOLLY: Iriga? Pay? That's where you were born...

AMBO: And soon enough their children grew
From their nest they instantly flew
From the womb of *Daragang Magayon*.
I am the son of the great *Handyong*.

DOLLY: Pay, they are just stories!

AMBO: All of my siblings were slewn to death
Only by *Oryol's* evil and fatal breath
I am the last one to survive
I must keep this tale alive.

DOLLY: Pay! Pay! Please wake up from this!

AMBO: Will you keep this tale alive, Dolores?

DOLLY: Yes, Papay, yes...

AMBO: Swear to me you will keep the tale alive.

DOLLY: *Pangako, Pay!*

AMBO: Sing to me Dolores.

DOLLY: What song Papay?

AMBO: Sarung Banggi, the love song of my parents, *Daragang Magayon*
and *Handyong*, Dolores...

DOLLY: Sarung Banggi (It was one night)
Sa Higdaan (While in my bed)
Nakadangog ako (That I heard)
Nin huni nin sarong ganggam (The lonely chirping of a bird)

AMBO: Promise me, bring my ashes to the Mayon!

DOLLY: What ashes Pay! Don't talk like that!

AMBO: I need to return to my mother!

DOLLY: The volcano?

AMBO: Yes, Dolores, I am the son of *Daragang Magayon!*

DOLLY: Pay, I do not understand!

AMBO: My Dolores! The volcano gives birth to ashes everytime it erupts.
Do not bury me, burn me until I become ashes and return me to the
Mayon. Promise me Dolores, promise me.

DOLLY: Yes Papay, I promise.

AMBO: Sa luba ko katurugan, (I thought I was dreaming)
Bako kundi (But, no...)
Simong boses, Iyo palan (Twas your voice, most certain)

DOLLY: Dagos ako bangon (At once, I arose)
Si sakuyang mata iminuklat (My sleepy eyes, I opened)
Kadtung kadikluman (Through the darkness)
Ako ay nangalagkalag (I looked around)
Kasu ihiling ko si sakuyang mata sa itaas
(And when I raised my searching eyes)
Simong lawog nahiling ko, maliwanag (Your face I saw, glowing)

AMBO: Ako nakamate nin kaginhawahan (I felt sweet relief soothing)
Pati an puso kong tagub kapungawan
(My empty heart, in loneliness fill)

Ngunyan burabod na nin tunay na kaogmahan

(Now a spring of true happiness, overflowing)

*(AMBO makes heavy breaths and then loses
consciousness.)*

DOLLY: *(Crying)* Papay! Papay!

BILL: What happened?

DOLLY: Call an ambulance BILL! Please hurry!

(BILL gets the phone and dials 911)

DOLLY: Papay! Papay! Don't leave me!

(Singing)

Minsan di nahaloy, idtong napagmasdan

(That sight, ever so briefly though,)

Sagkod Nuarin pa man, (Until eternity,)

Dai ko malilingawan (I won't forget, ever)

SCENE 4

(DOLLY is seated in an airplane seat. She is holding in her lap an urn.)

Flight Attendant: (V.O.) Ladies and gentlemen, this is Alex Turner and I'm your chief flight attendant. On behalf of Captain Wallis and the entire crew, welcome aboard American Airways, flight EM782, non-stop service from New York to Osaka.

DOLLY: Why isn't there a direct flight from here to Bicol? Why should there be stops? *(Pause)* I can still remember my flight from Manila to New York. I was so excited, filled with many dreams in my head. I was all smile when I first stepped on the airport. I thought, this is my destiny. I am finally leaving the Philippines! I am finally free from Bicol! That first ascend is like being born again, it's like being removed from the earth and separated from the uterus. It was both scary and exciting. A day's worth of travel is like passing through the birth canal then landing... I cried. I am finally born! I never thought I will be boarding a plane again. I never thought of coming home again, but I have promises to keep.

AMBO: (V.O.) Promise me...

Flight Attendant: (V.O.) Our flight time will be of 12 hours and 40 minutes. We will be flying at an altitude of 31160 feet at a ground speed of 2485 miles per hour.

DOLLY: Twelve hours? Why does it have to be half a day to go from here to there?

Flight Attendant: (V.O.) At this time, make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright position. Also make sure your seat belt is correctly fastened. Also, we advise you that as of this moment, any electronic equipment must be turned off. Thank you.”

DOLLY: Do not worry Pay, we are coming home.

(DOLLY kisses and embraces the urn in her lap.

The sound of plane departing is heard.)

AMBO: Ako nakamate nin kaginhawahan (I felt sweet relief soothing)

Pati an puso kong tagub kapungawan

(My empty heart, in loneliness fill)

Ngunyan burabod na nin tunay na kaogmahan

(Now a spring of true happiness, overflowing)

SCENE 5

(MAGDA is standing in the middle of the stage. She is wearing a black dress with her umbrella up. The white backdrop projects a busy bus terminal.

The sounds of people talking, buying stuff, honking and heavy rains are heard.)

MAGDA: I do hope DOLLY's flight is safe. I can't believe I will be seeing her again after all this time. *(Pause)* And Papay... *(Pause)* Papay is in a better place right now. I know that he is with *Ina* right now, and also Mamay. I wonder what are they doing right now? Mamay, I hope you're happy with Papay right now. You waited for him for a long time. I know how it is. You know, I waited for him too. I waited for him like how I waited for these rains to stop. I waited for him like how I waited for these rains to come. Maybe when Papay comes home, you may make the rains stop Mamay! *(Pause)*

AMBO: *(V.O.)* I am the son of *Daragang Magayon*.

MAGDA: I believed you Pay. You were a true son of *Daragang Magayon*.

DOLLY: *(V.O.)* I'm losing it MAGDA. I don't know what to do. I'm losing it, MAGDA!

MAGDA: Oh, Dolores, you almost lost it. You almost lost who you are! We are *Oragon*, Dolores! We are rooted in this land.

(MAGDA recalls a memory.)

DOLLY: (V.O.) *(Crying)* MAGDA, Papay...

MAGDA: What DOLLY?

DOLLY: (V.O.) Papay is dead...

MAGDA: *(Crying)* No, DOLLY, that's not true! Oh Papay! Why did you leave us! Without saying goodbye, no goodbye!

AMBO: (V.O.) Why miss me MAGDA? There are no goodbyes for us!

MAGDA: Soon, Papay, we will be together...

(The sound of heavy downpour is heard, then slowly fades.

People starting to rejoice for the rain stopping.

Ray of bright sunshine lights MAGDA's face)

MAGDA: *Salamat, Ina.* Pay, finally you're coming home.

CURTAIN