

# The Wide Ionian Sea

One-Act Play in English

Palanca Entry 2010

## *Synopsis of* **The Wide Ionian Sea**

Thirty-something Ilonggo poet MENTOR meets confused college student TELEMAKHOS in an internet café. Mentor brings Telemakhos home and educates him on literature and art. It becomes a complete seduction. Telemakhos moves in with Mentor.

Inspired by the youth beside him, Mentor embarks on a bold project of writing the 100 Erotic Sonnets in the Hiligaynon. On the other hand, Telemakhos, who had hoped that

some poetic inspiration would rub off on him while he lives with Mentor, feels smaller as Mentor makes advances on his project. Feeling more lost than ever, Telemakhos leaves Mentor.

Six months later, the 100 Erotic Sonnets become a literary success. Telemakhos visits Mentor who begs him to come back. Telemakhos explains why he cannot, and why he left in the first place. He also confronts Mentor's reductionist philosophies.

In the end, Mentor, the broken-hearted teacher, soothes the broken child with a literary lullaby.

# THE WIDE IONIAN SEA

A one-act play

## Characters

MENTOR	35 year-old writer
TELEMAKHOS	19 year-old student

## Setting

The time is the present. The action takes place in a town in Iloilo, Philippines, over the course of one year.

## Note to the Director

The play occurs in 27 cinematic takes. To simulate a film, various viewing angles, jump cuts, retakes, and other techniques should be used. Scene changes may be conveyed with lighting and sound effects.

*Prologue*

A spotlight rises on a naked young man, center stage.

TELEMAKHOS

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to our play. The story you are about to see is a reenactment of actual events that took place in the Philippines, on the island of Panay, in the province of Iloilo, in a town that, to protect the guilty, I will call Ithaca, like the Greek isle in the wide Ionian Sea. I cannot use real names because the persons represented here are still, thankfully, very much alive. Providing that I maintain their anonymity, they have agreed to allow me to tell their story, for the telling of human experience is an honorable endeavor in our brief existence in this world.

The man called Mentor in the play bears the same name of the character in Greek mythology. He is in truth my real life mentor – teacher, adviser, counselor and trusted friend. I love him very much.

I am Telemakhos, named after Odysseus's son who was entrusted to Mentor when Odysseus went off to serve in the Trojan Wars. This is our story – mine and Mentor's, which takes place in memory on the island of Panay, in the province of Iloilo, in the town we shall call Ithaca.

BLACKOUT

*Scene 1*

Night. MENTOR's study. There is a sofa in the center of the room and a table stage left, with a typewriter, lamp, books and papers upon it. The room is ringed with large bookcases, and an antique gramophone occupies one corner. The rest of the house is off left. In the dark, the jingling of keys is heard. MENTOR unlocks a door stage right and enters.

MENTOR

Welcome to my humble abode. Come in.

TELEMAKHOS

(Offstage)

Uh ... hmmm ... uh ... I don't think so. Maybe next time *na lang*? It's a bit late now.

MENTOR

But it's not even dark. And you're here, so you may as well come in. Let me put on the light.

(Turns the light on)

Don't be shy. I won't bite. And I don't swallow people whole. Usually. Unless they insist.

(TELEMAKHOS enters, looks around in awe)

TELEMAKHOS

Wow! So many books.

MENTOR

This is what most people call their living room but since I spend more time reading than what others call living, I have turned it into my reading room. I do not live, I read. Because I love my books, they are the first thing I want to see when I come home.

TELEMAKHOS

It's like a library.

MENTOR

Do you like to read?

TELEMAKHOS

A little.

MENTOR

You are welcome to visit and read here anytime you want.

(Beat)

How old did you say you are again?

TELEMAKHOS

Nineteen. And you?

MENTOR

A tad older. How old do you think I am?

TELEMAKHOS

Forties?

MENTOR

Whoa! You hit me hard. I'm only thirty-five, *'noh?*

TELEMAKHOS

Could be.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 2

TELEMAKHOS

(Looking around)

*Baw*, so many books. It's like a library, *bah*.

MENTOR

Do you like to read? You are welcome to read here any time. Who is your favorite author?

TELEMAKHOS

I have many. Ayn Rand. Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Tennessee Williams.

MENTOR

"My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as the heroic being, with his own happiness as his moral purpose in life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."

TELEMAKHOS

Huh?

MENTOR

Ayn Rand. Her philosophy of rational self-interest. Do you believe that?

TELEMAKHOS

Maybe ... I guess ... Why not?

MENTOR

Ayn Rand also said that the role of art is to transform abstract ideas into physical form.

TELEMAKHOS

Are you talking about Ayn Rand's objectivism?

MENTOR

She believed in an objective reality that is outside our own self and imagination. She believed that human beings connect to this reality through our senses. Very Platonic.

TELEMAKHOS

And people acquire objective knowledge by measuring and validating concepts against some standard. I've read about that. But what does it mean?

MENTOR

What of hers have you read?

TELEMAKHOS

Truthfully? I never got past the middle of *The Fountainhead*.

(MENTOR shakes his head, amused)

BLACKOUT

*Scene 3*

TELEMAKHOS

(Looks around)

Wow! So many books. It looks like our school library.

MENTOR

You are welcome to read here anytime you like. Who is your favorite author?

TELEMAKHOS

I have several. Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Tennessee Williams.

MENTOR

Thomas Lanier, the third.

TELEMAKHOS

Eh, what? Who's the third? You said the third.

MENTOR

Tennessee Williams. His baptismal name was Thomas Lanier Williams, the third.

TELEMAKHOS

So Tennessee was only a pen name? From the name of the state where he was born?

MENTOR

(Shakes his head)

Your grandmother was born in Columbus, Mississippi, if I am not mistaken. Then, the whole family transferred to St. Louis, Missouri. Thomas Lanier studied for a while at the University of Missouri but when he failed ROTC his father refused to continue financing his education.

TELEMAKHOS

(Amused)

He failed ROTC?

MENTOR

Reserve Officers Training Course. To be an officer in the army.

TELEMAKHOS

Yes, I know.

(Beat)

So how did he get the name Tennessee?

MENTOR

At the University of Missouri, your Grandpa Tom joined Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, where he was christened Tennessee by his house brothers because of his thick southern accent. Would you like some tea?

TELEMAKHOS

No, thank you. Thomas Lanier. Tom. Isn't Tom the narrator in *The Glass Menagerie*?

MENTOR

Correct! *The Glass Menagerie* was your grandmother Tennessee's first big theatrical success. The play bore many similarities to his life. Tom is Tennessee; Amanda, his imposing mother; and Laura the stand-in for his sickly sister Rose.

TELEMAKHOS

Ay, that means *The Glass Menagerie* is almost autobiographical? Well, how about you? If you were to write your play in the future, would you also base it on your life experience?

MENTOR

Perhaps.

(Frowns)

Maybe.

(Shrugs)

Why not? According to Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum, it is a noble endeavor to create art, to transform abstract knowledge into a physical form with which others may connect.

TELEMAKHOS

Alisa Zin ...

MENTOR

Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum. Ayn Rand's Russian name before she became an American.

BLACKOUT

Scene 4

MENTOR

*The Glass Menagerie* was your grandma Tennessee's first successful work for the theater. The story bears great resemblance to his life. Tom, the narrator, is Tennessee; Amanda is his mother; and Laura is the stand-in for his sickly sister Rose.

TELEMAKHOS

If you were to write your own drama, would you also use your life experiences?

MENTOR

Possibly. Ayn Rand said it is a noble task to create art, to transform abstract ideas into physical form with which people can connect.

TELEMAKHOS

I want to be able to write some day. Perhaps I can write about how we met this afternoon. This is an exciting experience for me. What's your name again?

BLACKOUT

Scene 5

TELEMAKHOS

(Looks around)

*Baw*, so many books. It's like a library, *bah*.

MENTOR

Do you like to read?

TELEMAKHOS

Yeah.

MENTOR

You are welcome to read here anytime. Who is your favorite author?

TELEMAKHOS

I've got several. Ayn Rand. Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

MENTOR

Gabriel Garcia Marquez. His full name is Gabriel Jose de la Concordia Garcia Marquez.

Gabo for short.

TELEMAKHOS

Huh? And I thought three names was long enough.

(Beat)

I've only read one novel of his: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Yet he set my world spinning.

MENTOR

*Cien Años de Soledad*. The tragedy of the Buendia family in the town of Macondo that covered one hundred years.

TELEMAKHOS

I can't forget the butterflies that followed one of the characters in the novel.

MENTOR

I can't forget the character of Petra Cotes, Aureliano Segundo's lover. Gabo described her as dark skinned, with golden eyes like a fierce panther. When Petra and Aureliano Segundo make love, their livestock also copulate in a frenzy.

(Beat)

Some day, I'll try to write that in poetry.

(Beat)

Or copulate in a frenzy.

## TELEMAKHOS

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* is my favorite book.

## MENTOR

Perhaps, it is also Gabo's favorite. *Cien Años de Soledad* is considered Gabo's masterpiece. The butterflies have also had a great impact on me. I wrote a story with butterflies in the opening and closing scenes. It's my best work of magic realism. Some day I will tell it to you.

## BLACKOUT

Scene 6

TELEMAKHOS

(Looks around)

*Ay abaw*, so many books. It's like a library.

MENTOR

You are welcome to read here anytime.

TELEMAKHOS

Thank you for the invitation. I have to go now. It's late. It was really nice to meet you.

What's your name again?

MENTOR

You don't know me and yet you're leaving already?

TELEMAKHOS

This has been a very strange afternoon for me. I don't normally go with people I don't know.

MENTOR

This has been a very strange afternoon for me, too. I don't normally invite people I don't know into my home.

TELEMAKHOS

I was supposed to meet my girlfriend at the internet cafe. I forgot my cellphone and couldn't contact her so I decided to go online and surf for a while. Then, I noticed you ogling me. I don't know what came over me but when you asked, I decided to go to a movie with you. Then I came home with you. The funny thing is I don't even know your name.

MENTOR

Don't worry. I don't know yours either.

TELEMAKHOS

Huh? Didn't I introduce myself to you three times already? I'm Vin...

MENTOR

(Stops him with a raised finger)

I'm not interested in your name. I'm interested in your personhood. You as you.

(Beat)

You remind me of something. Do you mind if I call you a different name?

TELEMAKHOS

It depends on the name. Do you want to rebaptize me?

MENTOR

I will rebaptize you if you wish. But as I said, I don't force anyone. Do you want me to rebaptize you?

TELEMAKHOS

As long as you don't name me Andresito.

MENTOR

The Jews and Greek philosophers believed that to name a thing was the most powerful act. In the beginning was the word. In the book of Genesis, God merely made utterances and things were created. God gave Adam dominion over all creatures by giving him the power to name them.

(Beat)

I believe I will have some tea. Would you like some tea?

TELEMAKHOS

No, thank you.

MENTOR

(Fixes tea)

The ancient Jews never mentioned the name of God. They devised indirect ways of naming the deity. They were terrified because they did not have power over God. Only God has power. So they invented the Tetragram, four letters to call their God. Y-H-W-H. Yahweh. Perhaps that is where our Hiligaynon '*Yah-wah*' originated. If Yahweh is God; and *Yahwah* is not Yahweh; then *Yahwah* is the Devil. Get it?

(Beat)

In the Christian Testament, the Evangelist John used the logic and philosophizing of the Greeks. "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

TELEMAKHOS

You are so wise.

MENTOR

If you stay with me, you will learn many things. I have secret knowledge and skills, some older than Jesus Christ.

(Beat)

I will baptize you, but I'm not forcing you. I will give you a new name but you must agree that no one but me can call you by that name. For as long as you recognize this name, I will have power over you. Now, do you really want me to baptize you?

TELEMAKHOS

As long as it is not Andresito.

(Beat)

And I don't want to be Tennessee either.

BLACKOUT

Scene 7

TELEMAKHOS

Huh? Haven't I introduced myself to you? I'm Vin ...

MENTOR

(Stops him with a raised finger)

I'm not interested in your name. I'm more interested in you as a person. Would you mind if I call you by a different name?

TELEMAKHOS

As long as the name is not Andresito.

MENTOR

Why the disgust over the name Andresito?

TELEMAKHOS

(Angry)

Because that's the name of my good-for-nothing father. I hate him. He is not a good father. He abandoned us. He left us for his *querida*.

MENTOR

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to dig up your painful secret. I will respect your wishes. I won't call you Andresito. I won't call you Tennessee either. I'll call you Bastos, the Brute.

TELEMAKHOS

Huh?

MENTOR

Joke! I'm kidding.

TELEMAKHOS

(Laughs)

I don't get it.

MENTOR

Uyt, uyt, uyt, he laughed!

(Beat)

Vicente "Itik" Bastos happens to be an important character in my story about marital rape. But never mind, I'll tell you about him later.

(Beat)

I want to call you Telemakhos.

TELEMAKHOS

Telemakhos? Sounds foreign to me.

MENTOR

It's a Greek name. Telemakhos. It's the name of Odysseus's son who he entrusted to his friend when he went off to fight in the Trojan Wars.

TELEMAKHOS

You're talking about something connected to Helen of Troy?

MENTOR

Correct! I feel a fondness for you, Vinz. I'm thirty-five, you are nineteen. I can teach you, guide you, advise you. I can be a mentor to you.

TELEMAKHOS

Mentor?

MENTOR

Mentor, teacher.

(Remembers something)

Hmmm. Why not?

(Smiles)

Hmmm.

TELEMAKHOS

*Baw*, you're grinning like a cat. You are planning something evil, 'noh?

MENTOR

I want you to call me Mentor. That's the name of Odysseus's trusted friend who became teacher and adviser to his son Telemakhos. I will be a trusted friend to you, and a teacher, too. How do you like that?

TELEMAKHOS

We just met. I don't even know your full name yet.

MENTOR

I want you to call me Mentor. But if you really want to know my name ...

(Points to the sofa)

... sit down.

TELEMAKHOS

Maybe next time *na lang*? It's quite late. I need to get going. It's difficult to get a ride.

MENTOR

Sit down.

(TELEMAKHOS sits on the sofa. MENTOR gets paper from the typewriter which he hands to TELEMAKHOS)

MENTOR

Read me this poem.

TELEMAKHOS

Huh? Ahh, hmmm... All right.

(Reads, uneasily at first)

Soneto Erotico Numero Tres

*BULAG KON MAGROMANSA ANG ALIBANGBANG, NAGASALA-SALA  
DAWWALA SIA SANG APUTAN, WALA NAKAHIBALO KON DIIN MAUNA  
KON DIIN MASUGOD SANG HALUK; GINASALALAMA NIYA HURIKAP  
ANG TANAN-TANAN NGA SINIPAD SANG GINAKALAMAN NGA BULAK.*

(With feelings swelling)

*KON KAISA, LUYAG KO NGA HALUKAN MO AKO KASUBONG IKAW  
ALIBANGBANG, LUYAG KO PANGILALAHON SANG IMO MGA BIBIG  
ANG TAGSA KA BAHIN SA AKON LAWAS, LUYAG KO MAGSALIMUANG KA*

*KAG SA AKON KAHUMOT, MAGSALA-SALA NGA DAWWALA-APUTAN.*

You wrote this?

MENTOR

My full name is written under the poem.

TELEMAKHOS

(Silently reads the name)

Your poetry is beautiful. I didn't know you write so well.

MENTOR

(Giggling)

Stop it, stop it. I love listening to praise. Especially when they are over the top.

TELEMAKHOS

No, seriously. Your poem is so erotic. Very visual. I can see the butterfly. It's also very tactile. I can almost feel the flower tickled by kisses. For a moment, I felt like I were a flower!

(Stands and shows his midsection, which is bulging)

Look what your poem has done to me.

MENTOR

Whoa! Is that how my poem affected you? I'm very glad.

TELEMAKHOS

Your poetry is so sensual. So sensuous.

MENTOR

Sen-shoo-wes. Hmm. I like that word.

TELEMAKHOS

Your poetry, from where did you get your words? They are so deep, so amazing. You write Ilonggo very well.

MENTOR

Ooops. You should know better. You are from Iloilo *pa naman*. We, the people, are Ilonggo. Our language is called Hiligaynon. Ilonggo, people; Hiligaynon, language. Get it?

(Beat)

Anyway, where did I get my Hiligaynon? Let me see, if you want to be a writer, you need to master the language you are going to use. I have decided to write in Hiligaynon. So I search high and low for the Hiligaynon words to use. I ask people who use the language – old folks, rural people, street people. I also read writings in

Hiligaynon. Contemporary works and some antiquated stuff. I read the works of Magdalena Jalandoni, Tio Tagoy Mulato, Ramon Muzones, Conrado Norada, Jose Yap, and the new writers of the region.

TELEMAKHOS

You amaze me. You have a beautiful mind. You are so wise. But why is your poem called "Soneto Erotico Numero Tres"?

MENTOR

Duh! Maybe because it's the third?

TELEMAKHOS

You mean there are more?

MENTOR

*One Hundred Erotic Sonnets* in the Hiligaynon. That's my big project for this year.

TELEMAKHOS

You're a writer?

MENTOR

A poet. A creator of erotic poetry.

BLACKOUT

Scene 8

TELEMAKHOS

We just met. I don't even know your real name yet.

MENTOR

If you want to get to know me ...

(Points the sofa)

Sit down.

TELEMAKHOS

Maybe next time. It's very late. I need to get going. You know how hard it is to catch a ride.

MENTOR

(Firmly)

Sit down.

(Like an obedient puppy, TELEMAKHOS sits. MENTOR gets the paper from the typewriter and reads the poem to TELEMAKHOS. While reading, MENTOR hovers over TELEMAKHOS who follows with his eyes)

*KON KAISA, LUYAG KO NGA HALUKAN MO AKO KASUBONG IKAW  
ALIBANGBANG – LUYAG KO PANGILALAHON SANG IMO MGA BIBIG  
ANG TAGSA KA BAHIN SA AKON LAWAS, LUYAG KO MAGSALIMUANG KA  
KAG SA AKON KAHUMOT, MAGSALA-SALA NGA DAWWALA-APUTAN.*

*APANG KON KAISA, LUYAG KO NGA MEDYO HARAS-HARAS KA  
NAGAPANGSAROSO SA TUMAN NGA KAKUNYAG, HUBOG NGA BUYOG  
NGA MASUPOG MAGSUYOP SANG AKON PINAKATINAGO NGA DUGOS.*

(MENTOR sits beside TELEMAKHOS and hands him the paper)

*TUHAY KON MANGROMANSA ANG MAPISAN NGA BUYOG, DAW PIHO  
WALA SANG KAKUYAW, WALA SANG PAGBALABALA, NAHIBALUAN NIYA  
SARANG SIA MAKADIRETSO SA NAGAHULAT  
NGA TAGUANGKAN SANG BULAK.*

TELEMAKHOS

(Applauds)

Wow! You wrote that?

MENTOR

My full name is there beneath the poem.

TELEMAKHOS

(Silently reads the name with his lips)

Wow! Your poetry is beautiful.

(He hugs MENTOR)

Congratulations, Mr. Poet.

(A few beats, then, TELEMAKHOS awkwardly untangles himself from the embrace)

BLACKOUT

*Scene 9*

TELEMAKHOS

You wrote that?

MENTOR

My real name is there beneath the poem.

TELEMAKHOS

(Silently reads the name with his lips.)

Your poetry is beautiful.

(He embraces MENTOR)

Congrats, Mr. Poet.

(Awkwardly untangles himself from their embrace)

Sorry. I got carried away by my emotion.

MENTOR

You don't have to apologize. I am pleased with what my poetry does to you. Poems are meant to elicit a strong emotional response. So you can truly connect with the physical manifestation of an abstract thought. Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum.

TELEMAKHOS

The Russian name of Ayn Rand.

MENTOR

Thank you for honoring my poem. I am happy that you like it.

(Hugs TELEMAKHOS too tightly. A long embrace. Then, with awkwardness, TELEMAKHOS tries to untangle himself but MENTOR will not release him)

BLACKOUT.

*Scene 10*

Flashes of lightning as TELEMAKHOS and MENTOR take each other's clothes off in the dark. While frantically making love, they recite the English version of the POEM with orgasmic moaning.

MENTOR

(In throes)

THE BUTTERFLY MAKES LOVE IN BLIND FRENZY

TELEMAKHOS

(In throes)

BURSTING RESTLESSLY, IT DOES NOT KNOW WHERE FIRST TO KISS

MENTOR

BUT CLUMSILY CARESSES EVERY PETAL OF ITS TICKLISH MATE.

TELEMAKHOS

THE BUMBLEBEE MAKES LOVE CONFIDENTLY

IT ISN'T SHY AND DOESN'T HESITATE

MENTOR

IT KNOWS HOW TO ZOOM STRAIGHT  
TO ITS HUMMING LADY'S WAITING WOMB.

TELEMAKHOS

SOMETIMES I WANT YOU TO KISS ME LIKE A BUTTERFLY  
YOUR LIPS SCRAMBLING LIGHTLY OVER EVERY PART OF MY BODY  
INTOXICATED BY MY FRAGRANCE.

MENTOR

OTHER TIMES I WANT YOU A LITTLE DEBAUCHED  
LUST DRIVEN AND AGGRESSIVE

MENTOR AND TELEMAKHOS

LIKE A DRUNKEN BUMBLEBEE GREEDILY SUCKING MY NECTAR.

MENTOR

(Orgasmic)

Ohhh! Telemakhos... Ohhh!

TELEMAKHOS

(Orgasmic)

Mentor ... Mentor! Ohhh, Mentor!

BLACKOUT.

*Scene 11*

Six months later. AT RISE, MENTOR is typing. There are changes in the room. Perhaps, some new throw pillows, or a new painting.

MENTOR

(Types)

*Ulag...la..baw... sa...hi..rup...la...ron...nga...pa..pel*

(Reads)

*SA PAGBASA MO SINING AKON SULAT, KUNTANI MABATYAGAN MO  
ANG KAINIT SANG BALATYAGON NGA NAGAHULAT-HULAT SA IMO  
KUNTANI, MAGBALIK KA SA GILAYON, HUGOT MAGHAKUS SA AKON.*

*LUYAG KO HIKAPON KA LIWAT, HALUKAN KAG PALANGGAON  
LABAW PA SA AKON PAGDIHON SINING BINALAYBAY SANG KAULAG  
LABAW PA SA PAGPAKIGHIRUP SANG MAPALARON NGA MAKINILYA SA  
PAPEL.*

*Hmmm. Labaw pa sa pagpakighirup sang mapalaron nga makinilya? Labaw pa sa  
pagpakighirup sang mapalaron nga tinta sa papel. Tinta kag papel!*

(Jingling of keys is heard offstage as TELEMAKHOS unlocks the door and enters)

MENTOR

Hi, sweetheart.

(TELEMAKHOS is tired and cross. He does not answer but lies on the sofa)

Hello? Honey? Are you tired, baby?

(Rises, approaches TELEMAKHOS)

What's wrong? Are you hungry? Wait here. I cooked your favorite.

(MENTOR exits to the kitchen. Speaks from offstage)

While you were out, I was able to write another poem. I am closer to my quota of a hundred. A hundred erotic sonnets in the Hiligaynon. How about you? How is the story you are writing?

(MENTOR returns with a plateful of pancit canton and a bottle of soda)

Pancit canton, sweetheart.

TELEMAKHOS

Instant?

MENTOR

Of course not! I cooked real pancit canton. *Completo recados*. With lots of tiger prawns and mushrooms.

TELEMAKHOS

Tatay came back and it looks like Nanay is ready to take him in just like that. It made me so angry. I don't know what to do anymore.

MENTOR

What do they expect you to do?

TELEMAKHOS

Nothing.

MENTOR

What do you want to do?

TELEMAKHOS

I don't know. I don't know anymore.

MENTOR

Is it possible you don't plan to do anything about that at this time? They don't expect something from you. Why stress yourself? Relax. Try and enjoy my pancit canton.

(MENTOR feeds TELEMAKHOS, then gives him the fork to feed himself)

Would you like me to read my latest poem while you eat?

MENTOR takes the PAPER from the TYPEWRITER and reads to TELEMAKHOS who continues eating)

Just eat, listen, and relax, okay? You are the inspiration for this poem.

(Beat)

Soneto Erotico Numero Setenta'y Tres.

(Clears his throat, then reads)

*Sa paghirupay sang maki ...* Wait, I forgot to correct this one. You see, I first used the image of typewriter and paper just because I was typing. Then, towards the end of the poem, I decided it would be more romantic to use the image of pen and paper. I like the image of poetry handwritten. Perhaps by a fountain pen on parchment paper.

(Beat)

Okay, I'll start again from the beginning. Soneto Erotico Numero Setenta'y Tres...

(Reads)

IN THE COOL INTIMACY OF INK AND PAPER  
I TRY TO RECAPTURE YOU, BELOVED.  
YOUR FRAGRANCE LINGERS IN MY NOSE  
I TASTE YOUR TONGUE IN THE BACK OF MY THROAT  
THE MEMORY OF YOUR MOANING RINGS IN MY EARS  
CALLING ME TO WORSHIP.

SOMETIMES I BELIEVE THINGS I CANNOT UNDERSTAND  
LIKE FEELING YOU HERE ALTHOUGH I AM ALONE TODAY.  
THERE IS A COOL BREEZE THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW  
BUT I AM SWEATING  
AS I ONLY DO WHEN YOU ARE NEAR.

WHEN YOU READ WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN  
WILL YOU FEEL MY ANGUISH ANTICIPATING YOUR RETURN?  
WILL YOU COME IMMEDIATELY AND HUG ME TIGHT?

I LONG TO TOUCH YOU AGAIN, KISS YOU, MAKE LOVE TO YOU.  
BUT ALL THERE IS IS THIS FRAIL MEMORY OF DESIRE

MURKY INK MAKING CRAZY LOVE TO PAPER.

(Bows)

What do you think?

TELEMAKHOS

Good. Nice.

MENTOR

What's wrong, honey?

TELEMAKHOS

(Screams)

What do you mean 'What's wrong?' I said, 'Good. Nice.' What more do you want? You want me to jump up and down? You want me to give you a round of applause? You want me to break into a dance?

BLACKOUT

*Scene 12*

MENTOR

So, what can you say about my poem?

TELEMAKHOS

Good. Very nice.

MENTOR

What's wrong, honey?

TELEMAKHOS

Nothing. I'm just tired.

MENTOR

Do you want me to massage you?

TELEMAKHOS

Aren't you tired? You've been working at the typewriter all day.

MENTOR

For you, I cannot be tired.

TELEMAKHOS

Okay, you can massage me later. I need some time to digest my food but massage should be good. Thanks, Mentor.

(MENTOR takes the dirty dishes to the kitchen. TELEMAKHOS stretches on the sofa)

BLACKOUT.

*Scene 13*

In the dark, TELEMAKHOS and MENTOR are heard.

MENTOR

Honey, you still want me to massage you?

TELEMAKHOS

Yes, please.

MENTOR

Then, get up and move to the bed.

TELEMAKHOS

Can't we do it here, please?

MENTOR

Hmmm. The bed would be more comfortable.

TELEMAKHOS

I'm not in the mood.

(LIGHTS up on TELEMAKHOS on the sofa and MENTOR standing beside him)

BLACKOUT

*Scene 14*

TELEMAKHOS lying on the sofa, MENTOR standing beside him.

MENTOR

Go to the bedroom. I'll massage you on the bed so you can be more comfortable.

TELEMAKHOS

I'm not in the mood.

MENTOR

I'm just going to massage you.

TELEMAKHOS

I know you. You start with massage, and then ... Massage me here, please.

MENTOR

It's your choice. You know my principle. I don't force anyone.

(One last try)

Honey, are you sure you don't want to move to the bed?

(Ignored, he surrenders)

Okay, let me get the oil.

(MENTOR exits to the bedroom and returns with a blanket, candle and bottle of oil. TELEMAKHOS is asleep on the sofa)

Honey, get up for a minute. Lay this sheet over the sofa so the oil won't stain.

(TELEMAKHOS gets up like a zombie. MENTOR covers the sofa and TELEMAKHOS lies back down. MENTOR lights the candle and plays "Un bel di vedremo" from *Madama Butterfly* on the gramophone. The music continues under. MENTOR turns off the lights and returns to TELEMAKHOS)

Honey, get up one more time and let me take your shirt off.

(TELEMAKHOS rises again like a zombie. MENTOR takes TELEMAKHOS's shirt off. TELEMAKHOS lies back again. MENTOR starts massaging TELEMAKHOS and begins to recite a poem)

Soneto Erotico Numero Treinta y Tres.

I RUB THE OIL YOU GAVE ME ON YOUR SKIN  
UNTIL YOUR BODY GLISTENS IN THE LIGHT OF MY CANDLE

YOU BURP THE CIRCLES I PRESSED  
ON YOUR PULSES, YOUR ARMS, YOUR FLESH.

(TELEMAKHOS moans)

“AAAHHH!” YOU MOAN AS MY HANDS CALL UP  
BLOOD FROM THE DARK MYSTERIOUS RECESSES  
TO THE SURFACE OF YOUR SKIN.

I REMEMBER THE MUSIC OF HIGH TIDE  
GIVING IN TO THE WATER’S COURSE  
THE SIGHING OF THE SEA PULLED BY THE WAXING MOON.

AT THE HEM OF MY FAVORITE SHEET, YOUR NAKED BODY  
GLISTENS, BEGGING ME TO STAY  
THEN I UNDERSTAND IT IS YOU WHO TOUCHES ME.

(MENTOR takes off his shirt. He is becoming aroused)

YOU BLESS THE DRY PLACES, YOU ARE THE RAIN  
THAT WATERS THE PARCHED CACTUS  
YOU DRENCH PLACES TOO LONG UNTOUCHED BY WETNESS.

*IKAW ANG MAGABENDISYON SA MAMALA NGA MGA LUGAR, ANG ULAN  
NGA MAGABUNYAG SA KAKTUS NGA UHAW,  
IKAW ANG MAGATANDUG SA MGA LUGAR NGA WALA PA NATANDUG  
SANG IBAN.*

(MENTOR embraces TELEMAKHOS and puts out the candle)

BLACKOUT.

*Scene 15*

Music from *Madama Butterfly* continues. MENTOR is typing. At the end of the aria, MENTOR dramatically types a final period, takes the paper and as the “Humming Chorus” from the opera begins, MENTOR reads his finished poem like a prayer.

MENTOR

(Reads, prayerlike, in time with the music)

*KON INDI KO MASALAPUAN ANG NAWONG SANG DIOS  
SA NAGAKURI-IT MO NGA GUIYA SAMTANG GINAKAON KO IKAW  
KON INDI KO MABATIAN ANG BALAAAN NGA PULONG SANG DIOS  
SA IMO MGA UGAYONG KAG MGA MITLANG NGA NAGAKALASANDAD  
SA PAGGUA GIKAN SA IMO MGA BIBIG SA TUMAN NGA KALIPAY...*

IF THE FACE OF GOD IS NOT IN YOUR FACE  
TWISTED IN DELIGHT WITH MY TONGUE BURIED DEEP WITHIN YOU  
IF GOD'S HOLY WORDS DO NOT ECHO  
IN THE MOANS TUMBLING CLUMSILY FROM YOUR MOUTH IN THE  
THROES OF ECSTASY  
IF GOD DOES NOT DELIGHT IN YOUR SWEATY SMILE

WHEN YOU HAVE COME TO GLORY ON THE MOUNTAIN PEAK  
IF GOD DOES NOT APPLAUD US  
COPULATING DELIRIOUSLY LIKE DOGS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD  
BLIND TO THE JUDGING EYES OF THE WORLD  
CAN I THEN HAVE ANY FAITH IN GOD-LOVE?

*KON INDI KO MAPANAN-AW ANG DIOS NGA NAGATUMBU-TUMBO  
KAG NAGAPAMALAKPAK SA TUMAN NGA KAKUNYAG KON KITA  
NGA DUHA MAGHIRUPAY NGA DAW MGA IDU SA TUNGA SANG DALAN  
NGA WALA NAGAKABALAKA, WALA SANG LABOT SA KALIBUTAN  
KON SIN-O MAN ANG MAKAKITA KAG MANGLIBAK, PAANO MABUG-OS  
ANG AKON PAGTUO? PAANO AKO MAGPATI NGA ANG DIOS, GUGMA?*

(MENTOR presses the page to his heart, closes his eyes and sits back, absorbed in  
the music)

BLACKOUT.

Scene 16

Six months later. In the dark, “Con onor muore” from *Madama Butterfly* is heard. LIGHTS RISE on MENTOR sitting on the floor beside the gramophone, crying.

There are more changes in the room. Perhaps, some plants, a new painting. As Pinkerton sings the last “Butterfly! Butterfly!,” there is a knock on the door.

MENTOR dries his eyes before getting the door.

MENTOR

(Surprised)

Telemakhos! What a surprise. You remember me after how many ... six, seven months? It's a good thing you never lost your way here.

TELEMAKHOS

I could hear your screaming opera from the street. How could I not find my way? It's a good thing your neighbors don't stone you for your loud music.

(They sit)

MENTOR

They're used to me by now. You yourself said that because I play my music over and over, even my neighbors get a little culture. You even coined a phrase for their learning process. What was that again? Sophistication by injection?

TELEMAKHOS

Sophistication by association. I was the one who got the ...

(Stresses)

... sophistication by injection. It can't be denied that you've influenced so many people with your eccentricities, Mentor. I'm a living testimony to that. Before I knew you, I had no inkling about opera. But being with you for six months, I even learned to sing Maria Callas's "Un bel di" by heart. Want to hear it?

MENTOR

I missed you.

TELEMAKHOS

Me, too. And I've missed your books, your opera music, your pancit canton, your massages, your "mini" (indicates the quotation marks with his fingers) lectures, your poetry. You are the only one I can talk to with any sense.

MENTOR

Come back home to me.

TELEMAKHOS

Do you think it never crossed my mind? Sometimes, I feel so lost and alone. I begin to long for the times when we were together. We were so happy together. It was never perfect but we were happy. True, we had disagreements, we quarreled. Sometimes, you were the asshole, sometimes, it was me. But we never reached the point of killing each other. We never got to the part where we chased each other with the kitchen knife.

(Beat)

When I remember our happy times together, I become resentful because you spoiled me. You showed me beautiful things, you made me feel I can be loved unconditionally. You spoiled me rotten, you made me experience the beautiful and sweet things in life. You enchanted me. When I left you, I started to be insomniac. I couldn't sleep anymore.

MENTOR

Come back to me.

TELEMAKHOS

(Shakes his head)

I need to go away. I need distance to find myself. You are a good man, Mentor. I love you. And I have never doubted your love for me. But sometimes, your love can choke to death.

MENTOR

I can change for you.

TELEMAKHOS

No. It is I who need to change. I am the one who is searching. I still haven't found myself.

MENTOR

I will help you. I can help you.

TELEMAKHOS

I need to discover myself on my own.

MENTOR

Megas Alexandros, before he was Alexander the Great, was trained and tutored from his childhood by Aristotle. It was Aristotle who inspired Alexander to dream of the lands and riches outside of Greece. In the Greek tradition.

TELEMAKHOS

(Interrupting)

Don't lecture me about the Greeks! I came here to express my thoughts and my feelings. To apologize. To confess. To ask for an absolution. I wronged you when I left you.

MENTOR

Come back to me, Telemakhos. Just promise me you won't do it again, and I will take you back. Just give me my pride. Don't make me beg. Show some remorse and I will take you back. I need to see some contrition on your part, I need to see that you really want to come back to me. Even in the church, you need to confess, to be sorry for your sins before you can take communion again.

TELEMAKHOS

That's another of your traits that's irritating. Sometimes, you don't know when to stop. You give lectures even when they are not necessary. In your wisdom and infinite intelligence, you give reasons and explanations for everything. You have all the answers to all the questions. You have a calculated ending for everything that happens, you have a reserved resolution for every situation, a prepared ending for every story. But sometimes, there are no resolutions to things. Sometimes, there are no smooth endings. Sometimes, life just goes on until we are swept into the next situation.

## MENTOR

I do not have the answer to every question, Telemakhos. I do not have the power to dictate the ending for the two of us. I do not have a prepared resolution for our story. There are times when I do not know anything at all. And you are right, sometimes, life simply goes on, sweeping us into a new situation.

## TELEMAKHOS

Sometimes, I need your lectures, your answers, your neat endings to stories, your strength and your certainty. Sometimes, they are a blessing. But sometimes, I just want you to hold my hands. I feel I can only fall asleep when you hold my hands.

(MENTOR embraces TELEMAKHOS. TELEMAKHOS cries)

I have thought of coming back to you but I have decided I must move on. Nothing is happening in my life. Don't get me wrong – I don't blame you. It is me who is lost. Perhaps, I don't have real talent. Perhaps, I don't have what it takes.

(TELEMAKHOS lowers himself to the FLOOR. MENTOR helps him)

You taught me everything: metaphors, language, techniques, inspiration. But while you were composing your *Cien Sonetos Eroticos*, I felt I was shrinking. Instead of being challenged to write, I felt a growing envy. Instead of being happy at your successes in

every poem, I began to resent every line, I began to envy your metaphors and ideas. I felt sick with your success and talent.

(Screams painfully)

I was cruel to you. You introduced me to your writer-friends and I betrayed you.

Perhaps, I really wanted you to discover my affair with Rebecca. Maybe, I really wanted to hurt you that badly. Maybe, I did it because I was so envious of your success.

#### MENTOR

At the start, you told me you didn't know yourself. You had a girlfriend when we met. I still remember how I cruised you in that internet café. I don't know what came over me. Suddenly, I just had the gall to approach you and engage you in small talk. You told me you were waiting for your girlfriend. You waited for sometime, and I was just there sitting beside you. Then, I invited you to a movie. I was surprised by my boldness. But I was even more surprised when you said yes. Then, you came along when I asked if you'd like to see my house. During those early days, I asked you what you really are. You said, maybe you were gay. Or bisexual, at least. You said, you wanted to discover who you really are with me. While we were together, Telemakhos, I never doubted that you were happy with me. We were so happy together.

## TELEMAKHOS

We were happy, indeed, Mentor. Don't forget that. I don't deny, and I am not shy to say that I was happy with you. Perhaps, it was just an itch that pushed me toward Rebecca. Perhaps I just wanted to hurt you because I envy you. I'm sorry.

(Beat)

You told me, in the present generation of writers in Panay that is lorded over by gays, Rebecca is the towering rose. A refreshing change, you said. Rebecca flirted with me, and I took the bait. But it was all sex between us, Mentor. Pure animal sex. She doesn't excite my imagination, her mind wasn't as brilliant as yours. It didn't last long, and I was bored with her. I also was envious of her success. And I loathe the politics of writers because I saw that Rebecca's work wasn't special or brilliant. She just had the right connections. She knows the editors so she's always published in newspapers and magazines. I don't know. Maybe she fucks her way around to get published. As far as I can see, it's all politics. She knows her way around. She knows the powers that be, the people who make or break the literary careers of writers.

(Beat)

Rebecca never had the respect I have for you, Mentor. I worshipped you. Because I knew how you struggled. I saw how you labored with every line that you write. Perhaps most people wouldn't understand your courage to write one hundred erotic sonnets in Hiligaynon.

(Emphasizes)

One. Hundred. Erotic. Erotic! Sonnets. In the fucking conservative Hiligaynon. You were so daring. You knew they wouldn't understand, but you didn't give a damn. You stood by your vision like a holy quest, a singular mission. I am in awe of your devotion.

(Cries loudly)

I want to be like you. If not now, perhaps in the future. But maybe, I don't really have what it takes. I don't have your courage and your talent.

MENTOR

(Comforting)

Shhhh ...

TELEMAKHOS

I feel I am shrinking. I shrink before you.

MENTOR

Shhhh ...

TELEMAKHOS

Hold my hands.

(Beat)

Tell me another story. Tell me what you dream about, tell me of the butterflies in your mind. Lullaby me with your words and wonderful stories.

MENTOR

Shhhh ...

BLACKOUT.

*Scene 17*

MENTOR and TELEMAKHOS on the floor, as before.

MENTOR

I do not have answers to everything, Telemakhos. I don't have the power to determine the proper ending for the two of us. I don't have a prepared ending to our story. There are times when I do not know a thing. And you are right, sometimes, life just goes on and we are swept along by it into the next situation.

TELEMAKHOS

I'm sorry, Mentor. Forgive me. I betrayed you. But if you think I regret leaving you, you are mistaken. I needed to discover myself and find some personal meaning. And I needed to do it on my own. Perhaps I made a mistake taking off with Rebecca, but she wasn't the only reason I left you. I was searching for my soul, myself. And one of the things I needed to find out is if I am really gay.

MENTOR

And what did you discover, Telemakhos?

## TELEMAKHOS

That I can share sexual pleasure with a woman.

(Beat)

I also realized I loved you. But not so strong a love as to surrender my desire to understand and find myself. I love you, Mentor. And maybe, some day, when I have finally found what I am looking for, perhaps I will also find the humility to ask your forgiveness, and return to you. But now I am not looking for a relationship. Not a relationship with a woman. Or a man.

BLACKOUT

*Scene 18*

MENTOR

Come back to me.

TELEMAKHOS

(Shakes his head)

I can't. I need to go away. I need distance. I need to be away from you to find myself. You are a good person, Mentor. I love you. And I never doubted your great love for me. But love can sometimes strangle. You can't help it. You are a genuine mentor, my teacher, my adviser. But sometimes, you forget that your students also need to make choices for themselves. They need to be responsible for their choices. You cannot make decisions for me. And I don't want anybody making decisions for me. I do not want somebody else telling me whether I live my life righteously or not. It's different for you because you already know what you want to do with your life. You decided that you wanted to write one hundred erotic sonnets in Hiligaynon, and you accomplished it. I told you they would crucify you for what you set out to do. But you said "History will ..."

MENTOR

(Remembering his reply)

History will judge me. For now, I want to do what has never been done by others because this is the call I hear. I may err in what I hear. But not in my faithfulness to the call.

TELAMAKHOS

You heard a call. The path leading you to your happiness was clear to you. You listened to the voice in your heart and you succeeded. Everybody now praises your *Cien Sonetos Eroticos*. What acclaim! They rave about your courage and artistic vision. You are a success, Mentor. What about me? Where do I get my lead and direction? I do not hear anything! I do not hear anything! I do not hear anything!

SLOW FADE

*Scene 19*

MENTOR

Come back to me, Telemakhos. Just promise you won't do it again and I will take you back. Just give me my pride. Don't make me beg. Show some remorse and I will take you back. Say you want to come back home to me, and mean it.

TELEMAKHOS

I betrayed you, Mentor. Not once, not twice, and not only with Rebecca. Not only with a woman. I also had sex with other men. I also had sex with one of your gay writer-friends.

MENTOR

Who? John?

(TELEMAKHOS shakes his head)

Alex?

(TELEMAKHOS shakes his head)

Felino?

TELEMAKHOS

(Shakes his head)

What does it matter who I fucked? I betrayed you. Sometimes with people I do not even know who. In moviehouses, under the bridge, in dark places.

(Beat)

I'm nineteen years old. I got plenty of it.

MENTOR

And I am not enough?

TELEMAKHOS

We differ greatly, Mentor. And the difference is wider than the wide Ionian Sea. You believe in monogamy. One love, one relationship. That's fine for you because you have seen so much of the world. You are thirty-five, ready to settle down. Look at the words: settle down. I'm only nineteen. I want to explore. To discover things. I am curious about everything. I want to experiment, to try everything and make mistakes. To learn from my mistakes.

MENTOR

Am I not enough?

TELEMAKHOS

You taught me a lot of things, Mentor. I learned a lot from you. So many useful things.  
But there are realities and truths other than yours.

MENTOR

Like sex?

TELEMAKHOS

Yes, like sex. Let's discuss that... Why does it have to be gay or straight? Why not bisexual? I can have pleasure with a woman or a man. You want some shocking news? I can even have pleasure alone, all by myself.

(Shows his hand)

My good and steady right hand. I can get sexual pleasure in the middle of an orgy with ten gay men! Why do you insist on black and white? Why can it not be gray?

BLACKOUT

*Scene 20*

MENTOR

Come back to me, Telemakhos. Promise me you won't do it again, and I'll take you back. Give me my pride.

TELEMAKHOS

You deserve better, Mentor. There are others who deserve you more. I am a disappointment. I am a bunch of problems. I have to resolve many things for myself. My parents. School. In one semester, after nine more units, I'll graduate with a B.A., but I don't know where to pick myself up after I get my diploma.

MENTOR

Why won't you let me help you? Why don't you accept my offer to help? Why do you resist?

TELEMAKHOS

You have already helped me many times.

MENTOR

I am not counting.

TELEMAKHOS

It's enough that I've talked to you again after a long, long while.

MENTOR

I'm right here for you.

TELEMAKHOS

Don't wait for me anymore.

BLACKOUT

Scene 21

TELEMAKHOS

I said, it's enough that we have talked again.

MENTOR

Why did it take so long? Why did you come now after all this time?

TELEMAKHOS

I felt so guilty about leaving you. I couldn't sleep at night. So many nights, I just stared at the sky. I became an insomniac after I left you.

(Beat)

I read about your *Cien Sonetos Eroticos* receiving an award from the Critic's Circle. I told myself, this is a good opportunity. A good reason for me to visit you. Congratulations for your *Cien Sonetos*.

MENTOR

Thank you.

TELEMAKHOS

My heart twisted when I read the news and reviews. Because I was living with you when you wrote eighty-seven of your one hundred sonnets.

MENTOR

(Nods)

Eighty-seven. I was writing Soneto Numero Tres when you came into my life. And Soneto Numero Ochenta y Nueve when you left me. I could not write for three months when you left me, Telemakhos. I became paralyzed when you left me.

TELEMAKHOS

But like the mythical firebird, you rose from the ashes. Like the phoenix, you resurrected and soared to great heavens with more brilliance and brighter plumage. Happiness for you is an inspiration. And tragedy is artistic fuel. I can see it, from our time together, you will write a play, perhaps a movie. The drama of our lives. The tragedy of Mentor and Telemakhos. Mentor and Telamakhos. What a title! So unique. It sounds foreign. It sounds Greek.

(MENTOR shakes his head)

A play, why not? That's a challenge for you. There is no doubt you can write good stories. You have published many and have gained recognition. And your sonnets have secured your status as a great poet. I would like to see you write a play, Mentor.

MENTOR

I'll write the play if you stay by my side. If you cook pancit canton for me when I am hungry and massage my back when I am weary of typing. If you do all the things I did for you when we were together.

TELEMAKHOS

You don't need me, Mentor. You don't need anyone.

MENTOR

Perhaps. But it would be better if I have my inspiration. I wasn't able to write for three months when you left me. I was paralyzed for three months. I couldn't think, I couldn't type.

BLACKOUT

*Scene 22*

MENTOR

I couldn't write for three months after you left me, Telemakhos.

TELEMAKHOS

But like the mythical phoenix, you rose from the ashes, came back to life, soared to greater heights with brighter, more brilliant plumage. Happiness, for you, is an inspiration. And tragedy is artistic fuel. That's where we differ greatly. I cannot write when I am happy. I am too content. Pain pulls me down to the abysmal depths of hell. When all I want is to be like you.

BLACKOUT

*Scene 23*

TELEMAKHOS

I want to be like you, if not now, then in the future. But maybe I don't have what it takes. I don't have your strength, your daring, and your talent.

MENTOR

(Comforting)

Shhhh ...

TELEMAKHOS

I feel that I am shrinking. I'm getting smaller and smaller beside you.

MENTOR

Shhhh ...

TELEMAKHOS

Hold my hands.

(Beat)

Tell me another story. Tell me about the things you dream of. Tell me about the butterflies fluttering in your beautiful mind. Rock me to sleep with the lullaby of your wonderful words and fantastic storytelling.

MENTOR

Shhh ...

BLACKOUT.

*Scene 24*

LIGHT on MENTOR and TELEMAKHOS on the floor, like Michaelangelo's *Pieta*. MENTOR as the Virgin and TELEMAKHOS as Christ.

SLOW FADE

Scene 25

MENTOR and TELEMAKHOS as before.

MENTOR

*Suno sa panaysayon ni Lola Pansay ng paltera...* According to Lola Pansay, the aged midwife who attended the delivery, the butterflies went crazy when Nanay Rosa gave birth to Lirio, the Mute. It was the only time in her life that the old *paltera* saw such a gathering of butterflies: it seemed as if all the butterflies of Barrio Jardin and the neighboring barrios had assembled to witness the birth. The newborn did not wail when Lola Pansay slapped her buttocks. The midwife tried several times...

SLOW FADE

*Scene 26*

MENTOR and TELEMAKHOS as before.

MENTOR

Lirio ran into her garden and prayed for God to take her human form from her and turn her into a flower. Lirio envied her lilies, for unlike her, they bloomed day after day and never shed even a single tear. In the morning, the petals were drenched not with the tears Lirio had shed the night before because of her husband's brutality but with the sweet kiss of sparkling dew. Lirio wished she could be a lily like them.

SLOW FADE

*Scene 27*

MENTOR and TELEMAKHOS as before.

MENTOR

One especially drunken night, a fit of fierce jealousy overcame Itik Bastos, also known as the Brute. He stumbled home from carousing with his soldier buddies, reeking of liquor, dripping with a beast-like craving to ravage his wife by force and make her pay for his imagined humiliations. Lulled to sleep by her tears, Lirio was startled awake. For a moment she felt darkness drowning her as if she were blind. When her vision returned, she saw an enormous gathering of butterflies outside the window. She was perplexed because such a gathering of winged creatures never happened in the dead of night. Lirio felt a strange mix of bewilderment, fear, and disgust for her husband, who chased her around the house screaming.

(Slow fade, then lights up)

She ran into the garden. He tried to keep up with her but was confused and disoriented with drink. On his way out, Itik, the Brute saw his gun and, without thinking, grabbed it as he chased after a terrified Lirio. He finally came upon her kneeling before her white lilies, her hands pressed together in prayer. Trembling, she looked up at the mindless creature that was her husband and she was shocked as his enormous figure suddenly grew sharp

black horns out of the front of his head and a long ugly hairy tail trailing behind him in the garden. He stood there, face contorted in an ugly sneer, drooling as he aimed his gun at his wife.

(Slow fade. MENTOR continues narration in the dark. Then lights up)

Uncontrollable fear poured like a tumble of words from Lirio's eyes, nose, every pore of her skin and she broke into a cold, cold sweat. Her prayers became more and more fervent. Her tongue moved, spun, curled, and twisted uncontrollably. Suddenly, butterflies poured out of her mouth. Thousands and thousands of them flew from her mouth wildly into the night air. It seemed like all the butterflies in Barrio Jardin and the nearby *sitios* had been summoned. Itik Bastos stopped in his tracks, seized with terror. The unbelievable sight of hundreds of butterflies fluttering out of Lirio's mouth shook him out of his violent stupor. Then, a miracle. Words roared from the mouth of Lirio Apa who, in all of her years had never uttered a sound. Like rolls of thunder, her voice called out, "God, turn me into a flower!"

(Sudden flashes of lightning and thunder rolls)

There was lightning and thunder, lightning and thunder. The sky was on fire and the earth trembled. The butterflies were in a frenzy. They swooped down and surrounded Itik Bastos who was still holding his gun. They slapped his head with their wings. Grains of pollen

and powder descended from their wings and mixed with his sweat, blinding him. Itik went berserk. "You're the devil! You're the devil!" he screamed and aimed the gun at his wife's silent weeping figure. "I will kill you, you devil!" he yelled in a fit of hysteria. Blinded by the butterflies smacking at him and by the sweat of rage pouring down his face, he howled like a crazed animal and pulled the trigger.

(MENTOR stares at TELEMAKHOS peacefully sleeping in his arms)

A solitary shot rang out in the night. The bullet sliced through the warm air aimed directly at Lirio's sweet silent beseeching lips. Before it could hit its mark, there was a flash of lightening and a clap of thunder. *Isa ka lupok ang nagpuog sa kagab-ihon. Nangilat kag nanaguob.* And in an instant, Lirio the Mute, became a lily.

SLOW FADE

CURTAIN.