

Not All

By Clarence M. Batan

English translation of "Hindi Lahat"

Not all Filipino youth that I know
Went to school or are studying.

Not all youth who are studying
Are able to finish their education.

Not all Filipino youth who are
currently working were able to go school;
Not all those who went to school have jobs.

Not all working educated Filipino youth
Are able to practice their professions.

Not all istambay youth that I know
Are lazy and not willing to work.

Not all youth who are looking for work
Are able to find them.

No, not all youth that I know
Like to remain dependent on their parents.

Not all want to see their parents
desperate due to their dependence.

Not all Filipino youth who made wrong decisions
do not want meaningful change in their lives.

Where, when, and how could
These transition crises of
Filipino youth be abated?

It ain't just through personal dispositions to change.

It ain't just by the charity
Of parents and family's welfare.

It ain't just with community's care.
It ain't just through policies and law.

But more salient, is having a
Quality of mind –

Able to process and ponder
The structural defects of these issues –
And that this daybreak of perspective would

Give birth to a new generation of Filipinos
willing to work well with the older generation -

To change the present.

That inequalities in our Philippine society

Though persistent, may be mitigated,

So that the future generation will no more

Tell about the poverty narratives

Of their parents.

Instead, the visions that they would share

Are stories of hope, care and reciprocity.

A narrative where the majority of

Ordinary Filipino families would be freed

From the knuckles of poverty.

Not all social ideals come into being,

But who knows, may be,

the words spoken in this poem

May be touched by a Great Spirit

And breathe life.