

Writing Fragments Home

A Play by

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*Thanks for everything Mom.
I love you.*

“We could only pick up fragments of our lives and handle them fearfully, as though the years had made us afraid to know ourselves... I knew that our decadence was imposed by a society alien to our character and inclination, alien to our heritage and history.”

-Carlos Bulosan
America is in the Heart

SETTING:

The San Francisco Bay Area – Late Winter to Early Spring of 2012

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Jay Bulosan – 24, Filipino-American, recent college graduate and aspiring playwright

Mary Gwen Bulosan – 49, Filipino immigrant, Jay’s widowed mother. Hard working nurse.

Actress – Mid to Early 20’s – Any Race

Actor/Ronaldo – Mid to Late 20’s – Filipino-American

ON CASTING:

This is a play about a Filipino-American family; obviously actors who are Filipino/Filipino-American will better understand and represent the nuances of Fil-Am life and culture.

ON ACCENTS:

Mary Gwen immigrated to America from Quezon City when she was 25. She should have a Filipino Accent that reflects both that she’s an immigrant and that she’s been living and working in America for 25 years. I will not write in an accent. Another thing, it should be obvious but in case it’s not... Jay doesn’t have an accent. He was born, raised and schooled in America.

ON JAY AND MARY GWEN’S TONE:

It is important to note that everything Mary Gwen and say to one another comes from a place of love. It can be easy, at times, to read Jay and Mary Gwen’s conversations and imagine Mary Gwen as a mere nag and Jay as cold and annoyed. However, their love for each other is never in question. They become frustrated and hurt by the other but there is always deep love and care in everything they do for each other. Also – they find each other amusing.

LASTLY:

There is a section that requires characters to overlap. I’ve designated when they start the next line with a “ / ”.

If you need to re-type the script in any way for production purposes, please keep to the format in terms of punctuation, spacing between stage directions and lines, or placement of ellipses. I want the director, actors and designers to interpret the script as it is presented on the pages here.

RUNNING TIME:

Approx. 80 Minutes with no intermission

Writing Fragments Home

Scene One: Day One

MARY GWEN's home.

It isn't a gaudy home but it is clear that it is spacious and very nice. Everything is neat and tidy. In fact, a little too much so.

There is a pathway with stairs that lead to the home's bedrooms and a hallway that leads to a kitchen area.

JAY is sitting on the couch, nervous, waiting for his mom to arrive. In front of him are a large suitcase and a duffel bag.

After a moment, MARY GWEN enters, wearing her medical scrubs. She just finished a 12-hour work shift.

JAY stands up and waves at his mom.

JAY

Hi mom.

No response.

MARY GWEN looks at JAY then stretches her neck.

JAY (*cont'd*)

It's me!

JAY moves to the armchair to give MARY GWEN the couch.

MARY GWEN

(Sitting on the couch:)

You should have been a nurse.

...

I told you. *Jay, you should be a nurse. Like me.* I told you, *you would be a good nurse.* But no, hindi, you wouldn't listen. You said *Why can't you support me mom?* So I say *Ok, I support you.* But inside, I know I'm right. You should be a nurse. But you say *support me* so I support you.

My balong.

I support you.

...

I support you...

...

...

JAY

Hello mom. How/are you?

MARY GWEN

Twenty-four!

You are twenty-four Jay. Diba?

JAY

Yes. I am twenty/four

MARY GWEN

When I was twenty-four I was already in my third year at the Makati Medical Center. I was saving for one more year so I can come to America with your dad. Twenty-five your dad and me are in America. Twenty-six you are born. I have a family.

...

What about you? You will be twenty-five next year. What do you have?

MARY GWEN looks at JAY.

JAY avoids eye contact with her.

MARY GWEN (*cont'd*)

What did I pay for you to get down in LA? BA in what?

JAY

In playwrit/ing

MARY GWEN

RN. Those are the best letters.

R.

N.

Registered.

Nurse.

I don't care what anyone says. I don't care about this Facebook. Apple. Googoo. It will all go away. You know what will never go away?

Sickness.

There will always be sick people.

There will always be work for a nurse.

R.

(Pause)

N.

Silence.

Beat.

MARY GWEN (*cont'd*)

I'm tired. What are you doing here balong?

JAY

Hello. How was work?

MARY GWEN

The same.

What are you doing here?

JAY

I just wanted to say hi...

...

I missed you.

I haven't seen you in so long!

MARY GWEN

I know.

What are you doing here?

JAY

Well...

MARY GWEN

Jay.

Silence.

JAY

I was thinking... Maybe... Can I move back home?

(Pause)

Um... Here.

With.... you?

MARY GWEN stares at her son.

JAY smiles.

Silence.

JAY (*cont'd*)

Just for a little bit. Not too long. I promise.

What happened?
MARY GWEN

I've had a tough month.
JAY

What happened?
MARY GWEN

I lost my job.
JAY

How did you lose your job?
MARY GWEN

That's a great question. I guess I just woke up one day and couldn't find it.
JAY

How do you get fired from Barnes and Noble?
MARY GWEN

Fired's a strong word don't you think?
JAY

You got fired from Barnes and Noble.
MARY GWEN

More like a mutual decision to part...
JAY

What happened to your girlfriend?
MARY GWEN

I don't want to talk about/her.
JAY

What's her name?
MARY GWEN

I really don't want to talk about it.
JAY

Sage?
MARY GWEN

Jasmine.

JAY

That's right. Jasmine. I knew it was a plant.

MARY GWEN

I'd rather not talk about her.

JAY

Why not?

MARY GWEN

Because, mom. I don't. Please.

JAY

Silence.

MARY GWEN looks at her son.

She dumped you.

MARY GWEN

MA!

JAY

Diba?

MARY GWEN

OHMYGOD!

JAY

I know these things. I'm not stupid. I know how it works.

MARY GWEN

Ok –

JAY

I did not like her anyways.

MARY GWEN

JAY groans.

It's true!
I don't know what it was about her but I did not think she was good enough for my son.
Maybe it was her face.

MARY GWEN (*cont'd*)

JAY

Please. Stop. I don't want to think about her.

(Beat)

Come on. I'm thinking this could be a fresh start for me. I can write. I have no job and nobody to distract me. I can get back to writing my play.

...

Two months. Tops.

MARY GWEN stands up and stretches.

MARY GWEN

Nurses don't move back in with their parents. Can you imagine what your dad would say if he were still alive?

JAY

Please.

MARY GWEN

Two months.

JAY

Thank you.

MARY GWEN

It's almost my birthday so you would have come for the weekend anyways.

JAY

Exactly.

Beat

MARY GWEN

You can sleep on the couch.

JAY

The couch?

MARY GWEN

The couch.

JAY

Why can't I stay in my room?

MARY GWEN

If you move back in there you'll get comfortable and you won't leave.

No I wo –

JAY

Couch. Or you can sleep on the street.

MARY GWEN

Ok. Couch. Thank you.

JAY

When's your birthday again?

(Beat)

MARY GWEN shoots JAY a look.

Kidding. Relax. It's on my phone.

JAY

I'm going to rest. Don't make a mess.

MARY GWEN

MARY GWEN kisses JAY on the forehead. She looks at his bag.

Where is your button?

MARY GWEN *(cont'd)*

My what?

JAY

Your lucky button from your dad. It's not on your bag.

MARY GWEN

Oh, it's inside it.

JAY

Are you sure?

MARY GWEN

Yeah.

JAY

Ok. You can leave your bags in your room but you stay on the couch.

MARY GWEN

K. Love you mom.

JAY

MARY GWEN

I love you too balong.

MARY GWEN exits to her room.

JAY unzips his duffel bag and takes his writing supplies: a number of matching composition notebooks, a few small notepads and an assortment of pens and highlighters. He sets it all on the coffee table.

JAY takes a deep breath and takes in his childhood home. He stands up, grabs his bags and heads to his room.

Scene Two: Back Home

A week later - 6:30 in the morning.

JAY is asleep on the couch. There's a glass of water on the coffee table.

ACTRESS enters. In JAY's dream, ACTRESS is his ex-girlfriend Jasmine.

ACTRESS has a necklace around her neck and is carrying luggage.

ACTRESS

(As if just walked in on:)

Jay!

Hi!

You're not supposed to be home yet. It's only...

(Checks time:)

I guess you are supposed to be here now. I must have lost track of time.

...
...

So how was work?

What? This? And this? Oh these are... nothing. These are all nothing. They're just – luggage, yes it's luggage. Um. Well, yeah, funny you should come in at this very moment but I've been meaning to talk to you about this...

...

I'm moving out.

What? No. No. No. It's not you it's...

...

Well. Ok. I guess it is you.

It's just, look, you're a great guy Jay. You really are. And the four years we've spent together have been great but...

...

What are we doing Jay? I feel like we've been stuck lately. You have to feel it too. Things aren't the same as they used to be.

How do I put this?

Well, how old were we when we first met? 19. Right. And we started dating at 20.

Back then you were this sweet and driven boy and we pushed each other.

Now we just go through the motions.

I go to the office. You go to Barnes and Noble. Every day is the same.

...

Look, Jay, I'm sorry. I don't know what I'm saying anymore. Forget I said any of that.

No! No! No! I'm not taking it all back just...

...

I'm moving out. Goodbye.

ACTRESS disappears.

MARY GWEN enters the living room. She is getting ready to leave for the day.

MARY GWEN

Hoy!

JAY

What? Who? Huh?

JAY, confused, looks around the room. Eventually, he remembers where he is.

JAY (*cont'd*)

...

...

Mom. Hi.

MARY GWEN

There's no coaster under the glass.

JAY

Oh.

MARY GWEN

You'll ruin the wood!

JAY

Yeah...

MARY GWEN stacks JAY'S notebooks.

JAY (*cont'd*)

Please don't touch those.

MARY GWEN

I'm organizing it!

JAY

I know where it all needs to go. I'll take care of it. Please stop.

MARY GWEN

They are all over the place. Why can't you keep it together?

JAY

I will...

MARY GWEN

(Flipping through the pages:)

Have you even written in/them?

JAY

Dontdothatthosearepersonal!

MARY GWEN

Personal?

JAY

...
Yeah.

MARY GWEN

They are empty Jay.

JAY

I know...
But... they *will* be personal. At some point.

Pause.

MARY GWEN

You know if you want to go back to school to study nursing / I am willing to –

JAY

Oh no...

MARY GWEN

You have to think about your health insurance. What if you get / sick?

JAY

It'sTooEarlyInTheMorningForThis!

MARY GWEN

What? I'm just saying if you decide you want to study nursing, I am willing to pay for it!

JAY

Mom. Thank you for the offer. Again. But please stop. I've made my choice. I want to create something important.

MARY GWEN shakes her head and goes back to packing her bag.

MARY GWEN

You've been here for one week and all you've created is a mess. You better keep everything neat. You know I hate a mess. If you are going to live in my house, you have to keep it clean. If you don't want to do it, I'll do it for you. And if I do it for you, you know where I'll put everything.

JAY

In the garbage.

MARY GWEN

In the garbage. Yes. Good you know. If you don't know how to keep my house clean, you know where the door is.

JAY

(Pointing at the door:)

Yup, right over there.

MARY GWEN

Don't get smart with me.

JAY

Can't help it. I come from a smart family.

MARY GWEN shoots JAY a look but is clearly amused by his joke.

MARY GWEN

Ok, I'm working till 7 tonight. I'll be home around 7:30. Can you cook dinner?

JAY

What?

MARY GWEN

There's lumpia shanghai I already rolled in the freezer, can you fry those? And make sure there is some for me when I get home.

JAY

Yeah I guess so.

MARY GWEN

"I guess so..."

You don't defrost it ok? You just put the stove on medium and put the lumpia in frozen.

JAY

Yeah.

MARY GWEN

Are you listening to me? One time your dad tried to fry it after defrosting it. It all fell apart and went to waste.

JAY

Ok.

MARY GWEN

Ok, bye.

JAY

Bye mom.

JAY kisses MARY GWEN on the cheek.

MARY GWEN

It's nice to have you back Balong.

JAY

(With a sincere smile:)

Yeah.

MARY GWEN

What are you going to do now?

JAY

Um. It's not even seven so... sleep.

MARY GWEN exits.

JAY attempts to organize his things but quickly grows too lazy to do it. He picks up a notebook, flips through the empty pages and throws it back on the coffee table.

JAY collapses back on the couch to sleep.

Scene Three: Editing

Later that day, almost 7:30 PM.

McDonald's bags, food and condiments are scatted on the kitchen table.

JAY is editing a scene from a play he's been working on. As he does so he eats chicken McNuggets. He's been at it for a while. He is in the zone.

JAY reads from his notebook. He sets the stage in his mind.

JAY

Outside the auditorium. Mitch paces back and forth waiting for Sage. He wears a bright red tie. Throughout the scene, Mitch's right arm is up in the air.

JAY does not notice but the ACTOR magically appears with his right arm awkwardly up in the air. ACTOR plays out the scene in JAY's mind.

JAY (cont'd)

After a nervous moment, Sage enters. Throughout the scene, Sage's left arm is up in the air.

The ACTRESS magically appears with her left arm awkwardly up in the air.

JAY (cont'd)

Mitch and Sage see each other. His right arm in the air. Her left arm in the air. It is clear they complete each other and it is beautiful.

It is not beautiful. It looks ridiculous.

As JAY edits, ACTOR and ACTRESS reflect his edits.

ACTOR

Yo!

JAY

What? Yo...

JAY erases and rewrites.

ACTOR

What up!

JAY erases and rewrites.

ACTOR (*cont'd*)

Hi.

JAY

No...

JAY erases.

JAY (*cont'd*)

What's...?

(Beat)

His *left* arm in the air. Her *right* arm in the air. It is clear they complete each other and it is *gorgeous*.

ACTOR and ACTRESS still look ridiculous.

JAY (*cont'd*)

Yes! There it is.

ACTOR

Hey!

ACTRESS

Hi!

ACTOR

Your lecture was great.

ACTRESS

Thanks. I'm so glad you were able to make it.

ACTOR

Yeah, of course. Wouldn't have missed it for anything.
You did great. By the way. I already said that didn't I?
Not that I'm an expert at web usability like you or that my opinion matters or...

...

Yeah. I thought you were great.

END OF EXCERPT