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**Lilia F. Anotonio (ed.),  
Tungkos ng Talinhaga**

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Lilia F. Antonio (ed.), *Tungkos ng Talinghaga*. Manila: Talingdao Publishing House, 2002. 163 pages.

The marketability of Filipino publications, according to bookstore surveys in the country, is directly proportional to their authors' canonical status. To sell, they should be fictionists or poets who have "proven" themselves in the field and who display mastery of the language and form.

In this context, *Tungkos ng Talinghaga*, an anthology of almost one hundred poems by ten writers, all from the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature of the University of the Philippines, is a unique collection. It asserts the as yet unsung poet's right to own a plot of land in the literary terrain. The authors in the collection write poetry out of sheer love for the art, nothing more. As the foreword by Virgilio S. Almario states, "nais lamang nilang maipabasa sa madla ang kanilang lihim na hilig" (they merely want to make known to the public their hidden hobby) (p. x). Making a clearing for some of the incipient contributors to Philippine poetry is ultimately what the anthology does.

The book views the process of writing poetry as some form of merry making or "celebration," such as occurs in an agricultural community. The metaphors of sowing and reaping are seen in both the title of the collection and the editor's introduction: "Hangad naming tuklasin ninyo ang kapangyarihan ng mga tula sa kalipunang ito. Inaanyayahan namin kayo sa pagdiriwang at muling paghahasik ng binhi sa linang" (It is our desire that you discover the power of the poems in this collection. We invite you to the feasting [after harvest] and the sowing yet again of seeds in the field) (p. xix). The harvest is rich, as the poems in the anthology cover a gamut of topics. Some poems bespeak a personality who seeks respite from the constant preoccupations of work and their immediate realities, such as Lilia Antonio's "Pakikisangkot," Apolonio Chua's "Sa Mga Gabing di Mapagkatulog, Napagdiskitaha'y Baranggay Tanod," and Eugene Evasco's "Bagahe." The theme that the complexities of relationships are injunctions to be true to the Self emerge in Ruby Gamboa-Alcantara's "Karanasan," Wilfreda Jorge Legaspi's "Trilohiya ng Pag-ibig," and Elyrah Salanga's

"Connection," all fresh in their use of metaphors. The stark tone and diction of Ezzard Gilbang's "Sipat sa Maskara ng Lungsod," Florentino Iniego's "Interseksyon," Jimmuel Naval's "Para sa Naghahanap ng Kabahagi," and Rommel Rodriguez's "Sa Oberpas" emphasize the discontent of the poet isolated from social and economic realities. The most striking piece in this collection is Eugene Evasco's "Sabi-sabi," a stirring presentation of conflicting voices and a playful and ironic use of the language.

It may be said that, in regard to form, some of the poems need refinement. What sets the book apart from other anthologies, however, is precisely its provocative yet humble breaking away from the rigidities of structure so pervasive in this field of Philippine literature. Here are no avowals of formal polish and perfection; and the thought somehow seeps into the psyche of the reader: that poetry is written to be shared and enjoyed, not to be confined within strictures. More of such "bundles of metaphors" should enter the mainstream of Philippine literature, which validates one's personal appreciation and experience of the art.

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