

## **Creative Writing Portfolio**

MetWest High School

Oakland Unified School District

Megan Torio, age 18

Youth Speaks Residency Program

September 2014 - May 2015

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### **Dear Momma**

By: Megan Torio

Irene Manansala Torio

*aking Inay*, my mother

like many others

is beautiful

from head to toe

from her inner layers

to her cuticles

ma, your cuticles

i see you work on them everyday

---your nails.

you concentrate to make them look *perfect*

only to come to me after and say

*anak, my hand is getting old*

a compliment about her looking 18 fills her smile

and my mind begins to think

damn, she's 48 now

and her body works just like a machine

it keeps operating through jams that become neglected until

someone's need needs to be perfected, and so

they fix her

they fix her language because they can't understand

tagalog programmed into her hardware



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they fix her arrows so instead of pointing up  
they point down  
make her work harder, till she runs out of battery  
they recharge her, while impatiently waiting  
for their machine to work again, but the people  
who work her to the bone, they don't understand  
how used to being worked she is

back in the islands  
she started her first job at home  
taking care of her family, taking care of chores  
cooking, picking fruit, sweeping  
washing 3 bathroom floors  
she worked in a house filled with 12  
poverty level at the lowest in her neighborhoods  
she never thought she would make it to america  
and looking at her now  
she's just a poker player  
waiting to fold  
to me it seems it was her life that she sold  
especially when she finally came to america

September 19, 1995

it was the first time, that she saw the skies light up then turn to gray  
a few years later 9/11 came our way  
I remember her telling me to cherish life  
because the same disaster can happen to us



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anywhere at anytime

i hadn't listened to rest of her lecture

sometimes i don't listen at all

and I know her and I have had our days

but for her, another day to live

is the reason why i pray.

Ma, I love you

no need to feel insecure

its your perseverance

that's beautiful, plus so much and many more

no need to get up early

just to do your make up

you're only getting 5 hours of a sleep a day

you've had enough

enough of our yelling and harsh comments about your repetition

you deserve the skies and up

and all the recognition

from the food you provide

and been cooking for us

seventeen years of your life

inay, let me tell you one more time

you're beautiful

**beating** the stop lights

**every** time you're rushing to work

**and** the patience you provide

**usually** when I fuss at something you don't wanna buy



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to the numerous times I've held your hand as you cried  
i kept to myself that my heart broke every time  
feeling your pain as every tear fell  
under your chin to the floors you have cleaned  
left footprints all over them to your demean  
I know I've walked away from you  
but my heart  
and thoughts  
have always stayed with the difficulties we've faced  
and pulled through  
mother, I look up to you  
feeding a family of 3  
sometimes only 2  
paying every single bill  
with jobs that you wish you could undo  
you gave me life.  
reminded me that i have a future to pursue  
I apologize, for this poem is overdue  
but no more words ma  
only on going actions will begin to show you  
my gratitude

