

## Poetry

# Aubade Beginning with Landfall

by Elvis A. Galasinao Jr.

Thatched roof and bamboo walls of the nipa hut are

tied down to the ground like a canopy tent.

*Whenever I see girls and boys...*

He drives metal stakes into the ground as she

pounds them repeatedly using a hammer.

Tie the ropes, he says.

The wind is howling and *the lanterns on the streets*

are whipping so violently they

bang against the walls.

She makes clove hitch knots

with braided rope

to firmly tighten all sides.

*Wherever there are people,*

sky is cocooned in black and heavy downpour arrives;

water washes over their skin like a molten silver.

He hurriedly

drags her inside and

closes all the windows.

She clasps her hands holding the rosary beads and kneels

toward the window *giving gifts exchanging* prayers of

protection: *Ama namin, iadya mo kami sa kalamidad.*

*Let's light our Christmas trees...*

He strikes a matchstick then holds it directly

under the candle wick

and flips the candle right-side-up

as the wick lights.

*I believe that Christmas is truly in their*

shadows casted by the candle.

*For a bright tomorrow,*

lightning cracks the sky sending heaven's

light through the super typhoon.

*Where nations are at peace,* the bamboo walls creak,

screaming as their limbs strain against the onslaught.

*Let's sing Merry Christmas...*

Floodwater surges around the nipa hut bringing

the soils of riverbed into the village

enough to topple the bamboo stairs.

*And a happy holiday...*

The roof slats of the hut start to

fly into the air,

flying around like a

newspaper in a gale.

The wind screeches around the village

pushing its way in every door.

*Let's sing Merry Christmas...*

Barangay officials shouting on a megaphone

lumikas evacuate lumikas!

*This season* they just huddled together and begged

for His guidance — a holy rosary clasped tight.

*A year ago*, he says.

*May we never forget.*

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