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Of Histories, Erasures and the Beloved: Glimpses into Philippine Contemporary Poetry

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ABSTRACT

To attempt a definition of Philippine contemporary poetry is to confront its historical and literary legacies and upheavals. While it has already been said that the Philippine writing in English is one of the most expansive in Southeast Asia, this assessment remains but a strand in the country's remarkably diverse literary milieu. There is much to be explored in the writings in Filipino — however the term may be contentious in embodying the regional languages that many of the country's writers are now advocating so as to affirm national identity. At the same time, the American literary landscape continues to

dominate the poetics of many young writers as they destabilise long held creative practices.

This essay does not aim to map a cross-section of today's poetic production. What it offers are glimpses of the bursting energies that propel the writings among contemporary poets. Charlie Veric Samuya's *Histories* (2015), Mesandel Arguelles's *Pesoa* (2014), and Genevieve Asenjo's bilingual collection *Sa Gihapon*, *Palangga, An Uran* (2014) are recent releases in English, Filipino, and Kinaray-a. The three languages give a sampling of the richness of Philippine literature in general. As individual works that mark various points in the three writers' career, they impress by the strategies through which they execute their poetic projects. What this essay further offers is a sense of the other voices out there simply waiting to be heard.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

HOW TO CITE

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Dinah Roma is professor of literature and creative writing at De La Salle University, Manila, where she is also the chair of the Department of Literature. Roma is the author of three award-winning books of poetry: *A Feast of Origins* (UST, 2004), *Geographies of Light* (UST, 2011) and *Naming the Ruins* (Vagabond Press Sydney, 2011). She has widely published in international scholarly journals while her poetry has also appeared in foreign and national anthologies and journals.

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