

For **Michele Logarta**, a bird watcher, Manila Bay embodies an omnipotent entity whose constant presence has always been there for her and those who need comfort and inspiration.

Dear Manila Bay,

A friend who grew up in the 1950s remembers daily promenades on Roxas Blvd, known as Dewey then, with his yaya. As they enjoyed the bracing sea breeze you blew in, she would sing the Tony Bennet song The Boulevard of Broken Dreams.

Growing up, I remember being told by teachers that your sunset was the most beautiful in the world.

Manila Bay, you've always been a constant presence, always there for me, for all of us.

You've been witness to our nation's history. You've seen fierce battles fought on your waters. You've watched progress march on.

You've shared your treasures and bounty with the people who depend on you for their livelihood.

For the birds and wildlife, you are home and sanctuary, abundant with sustenance.

Industrialization, urbanization, reclamation, and land conversion are among the forces that threaten you and have caused your pain, degradation, and suffering – changing your face, form and figure.

Indeed, you are much changed from 50 years ago when my friend walked by your side with his yaya singing songs.

Will your face be unrecognizable in the next 50?

As a birder, I had the chance to see parts of you I had never seen before – the wetlands of Las Piñas and Parañaque, the place where the great Pampanga River meets you at Consuelo, Macabebe, and the vast expanse of mudflats at Tanza, Navotas where I saw the Eurasian Oystercatcher, a rare avian visitor to the country. Seeing these parts of you was, to me, pure amazement.

I now wonder: Will the birds continue to winter with you and find rest and food in your mangroves, mudflats, and tidal pools? Will the fishermen have fish to catch? Will we still have your glorious sunsets to enjoy?

I pray that the answer will be a resounding YES.

My promise to you, dear Manila Bay, is to be your champion in whatever way I can and that you will never become a broken dream.

Mabuhay ka, Manila Bay!

With love and hope,
Michele Logarta
Wild Bird Club of the Philippines

