

For **Isabella Corrales**, **Tinggay Cinco**, and **Aries Soledad**, Manila Bay is personified as an old friend who after meeting the first time was taken away by distance, time and opportunities but still, a treasured friend whose current being has been molded by pain and suffering.

Dear Manila Bay,

How are you? In the past years, I know that you have been experiencing various changes which you, yourself, may have undergone. Most people are not aware of the ongoings in your life which have reached a point that hearing about your condition made me feel disheartened.

In the past years, I have explored your coastlines – from Navotas to Bulaan, Pampanga, Bataan to even as far as the farthest end in the south, Cavite. I have seen your beauty and serenity, from the burst of light at sunrise to the bright colorful skyline during your immortalized sunset. I have sailed in your calm blue waters and yet I witnessed the ruins you have caused during typhoons leading to the destruction due to storm surges, leaving scars of broken homes and concrete.

Memories have been recalled during childhood days by chasing little crabs along Roxas Boulevard in the area of Baclaran. Now as an adult, bamboo poles that lined Baclaran have long disappeared.

In the recent past, traversing northern Manila Bay has awakened my interest once more, this time as a bird watcher. So many lifers were added to birdlist as I traversed your coastline in the northern portion – as thousands of whiskered Terns followed boat loads of small shrimps, Far Eastern Curlews probed mudflats for mollusks or even the beholding sight of 24 individuals of the critically endangered Black-faced Spoonbills were by the beach of the mangrove forest in Taliptip, Bulakan.

Presently, development has reached upon you. What will happen to them? Where will all the fishes go as the government has allowed the dumping of earth upon your waters? What will people eat as the fishes disappear upon your waters? Where will the homeless people go as your shoreline has been reshaped because sand was mined from your depths. Industries have polluted, garbage and plastic have already overtaken your domain. Where have our precious corals or lush mangroves gone?

I have been thinking of various ways of helping you. You have my firm commitment to fighting for your rights to exist. You have been the venue for numerous battles. You have given prosperity to our country through commerce. Never give up on us. Our future will be by how I act today.

Tinggay R. Cinco
Wild Bird Club of the Philippines

