

COLUMN: Pangs and Reverie

Three Thirteen

By Princess Marie Aquino

I look at the clock and it says 3:13.

With its loud tick tock it feels like it's screaming at me.

It's 10 AM. The anticipation is rushing in. My heart is pounding. Beads are forming around my temples. 10:15— You're late. I pace around in my light-colored shoes. Dirt has been settling in it. I fix my dress. I put on lipstick. Is it too much? I wipe it off. I look around the paper shop, at pretty things. You're there.

You opened car doors. You would let me enter the theater first and guide me through the crowd. You were quite the gentleman, I remember, but not just for me.

A round of applause. A standing ovation. They say something that touches our hearts. It made me put my hand on my chest. You look up on the stage in awe at the words spoken. But me? I look at you.

The curtains were closed and the doors were shut.

On our way home, you tell me a secret. Or so I think. Because it was something about you that I can keep for myself. A piece of your selflessness. I thought, "How can someone sacrifice so much when he deserves more?"

I let the thought linger. I fall. I fall more. I fall again.

You said goodbye and I thanked you for the day.

Why do we say the same words but never feel the same?

It's 3:13 AM. And everything has changed.

Two months later, 5:56 PM. You're late again.

We were lining up to a huge hall in that school with a sunken garden. We're seeing our favorite poets live for the first time. There were a few familiar faces in the crowd. I thought, 'Were they thinking what I was thinking?' This idea of us, did it really just exist within me?

Sarah told us to be cozy in the dim lights, to settle in our seats, and to snuggle next to the person beside you, for a night of art and love and poetry.

I held back.

I held back, but today I will pour into words what I have been feeling. And I'll say it again: I am thankful for you. Even when I knew you didn't feel the same, I still am.

I am thankful for our moments. I am thankful for our words. I am thankful for seeing beyond you.

I'm not thankful for letting you lead me on for what could've been, should've been, and would've been. What I'm thankful for is your indifference and ignorance to what must have been the start.

I'm not thankful for you letting me believe that there was even the slightest possibility of us when there wasn't. But I am thankful for you and for me, for letting me see in the end that there was never going to be an 'us'.

The clock ticks 11:11. Yet I still wish for you. #