

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

Our Son, Our Song

By: Vim Nadera

Last All Souls Day, we weaned Awit, or Victor Emmanuel Carmelo Nadera III, our advance party, forever.

His white "Manunggul jar" (with his death mask created by sculptors Nonoy Gepte and Tata Funilas at the Arlington Memorial Chapel) was cemented atop our Papa's tomb at the Tayabas Catholic Cemetery which our Mama beautified when she was our hometown's health officer.

It was our cousin Ferdie's brainchild, who came all the way from Kuwait, but with the blessings from his lolas – Rosario Rodillas and Fely Oliveros!

Everything went on smoothly as this Live Journal entry his Ina wrote four years ago: "After Psalma (Psalms) and Wika (Proverbs) came my son Awit, named after Song of Songs. Ironically, he has hearing

impairment. But God has always been good to us and has never failed in making miracles in our lives. On January 19, my husband Vim's 40th birthday, we declared that Awit shall make wonderful music and sing praises to the Lord. Awit also has Global Developmental Delay. At two and a half years, he still cannot talk. He is rather clumsy, finds it difficult to balance himself while walking, cannot jump, and just starting to learn how to run and climb the stairs. Frequently sick since five months old, he would have seizures even with low grade fever. His condition required several laboratory tests and therapy sessions. Despite the disability and illness, and the discomforts of undergoing laboratory tests, Awit is never fuzzy, never a difficult child. Even when sick, he'd smile or simply hug you when not feeling well. He's so loving. His smile brightens every day. He brings joy to



Inspired by Rev. Cynthia Alexander
 para kay Awit Nadera (2002-2008)

everyone he meets. His teacher once remarked "Awit's sweet smile is enough to melt anybody's heart. Being with him makes one appreciate the simplicity and beauty of life." U.P. C.D.C. once considered him "the class teddy bear." Last December 7, during the U.P. Likhaan exhibit opening, upon hearing the Kontra-Gapi music, he went near them. Without any prodding, he clapped, smiling from ear to ear. He later picked two drumsticks and started to play with the them to the beat. Indeed, he's a constant reminder of hope, love, and simplicity the very message Christmas brings. Awit is our Christmas Star."

That piece was supposedly for Unang Hirit's Star ng Christmas Ko.

However, God had other plans.

Awit was rushed to the Philippine Children's Medical Center, without our knowledge. Our first and second College of Arts and Letters's Faculty Follies must go on while Awit was confined.

Two years ago, we were all set for the third -- even when typhoon Reming got us stranded in Naga with Cultural Center of the Philippines' Outreach team partnering with the UNICEF's Art Therapy for Teachers caught in crossfire. Upon our arrival, Awit was all dressed up and Jollibee-ready. He's in bad shape the following day, so was left with Three Queens at home namely Grandma, Granny, and Manang Sianang while the rest of the family watched Dora The Explorer in Glorietta after the Word for the World Sunday service.

The following Monday looked like a regular visit to Dr. Cristan Cabanilla and Dr. Jose Robles at the PCMC.

When he was turned over to its Intensive Care Unit, 'twas in the winter cold.

We as watchers experienced the squatters' life just to be with him for 10 days.

December 13 saw him meet his Maker – 12 days before Christmas!

For five nights, with no partridge in a pear tree whatsoever, during Awit's wake, we survived literally and literarily, by hosting poetry readings, storytellings, and sharings in a room we transformed into a moveable feast!

Ventriloquist Ony Carcamo reportedly shocked his host, Sharon Cuneta, when he told her he's in a hurry because his next gig was in a funeral parlor.

The first day was quite memorable – it was the very first time in the U.P. history when there's no Lantern Parade – so our friends marched towards Araneta Avenue instead.

Once more, Blogotherapy, worked for Ina, a Solid Sharonian: "It's almost 48 hours

since our Awit's demise on December 13, 2006, 11:20 a.m. at the P.C.M.C.'s I.C.U. I asked for a miracle. God delivered him from pain. God granted him eternal comfort, peace, happiness in heaven. God purged our soul of any hindrance towards the understanding of His purpose. Today, I cried in anguish and despair over the loss of Awit. But God, faithful as He is, assured me of His love. Vim encouraged me to write about Awit's death."

Talking about the therapeutic uses of expression, Faculty Follies will be staged again at the U.P. Theater today! What was originally C.A.L.-wide is now Diliman-wide. Billed Hagikhiban 2008: The Boldabil Challenge, this two-hour spectacle will showcase faculty members from the Asian Institute of Tourism as well as the colleges of Architecture, Engineering, Mass Communication, and Music. A project of the Office for Initiatives in Culture and the Arts for the Office of the Chancellor, it has two performances: a matinee at 3 pm and a gala at 7 pm.

Indeed, art is the answer as to how and why we weathered all those storms!

In fact, to heal our wounds, we turned to Cynthia Alexander's version of Kay Laya (which we wrote with Teta Tulay like Kabaka). Speaking of our savior, Cynthia recently celebrated her 10 years of songwriting via a live recording of her Walk Down the Road album. She first gained recognition with the rock group Hayp, for which she won the Best Bass Player Award at the 1989 World Band Explosion in Tokyo. Her first, *Insomnia and Other Lullabies* (1997) won accolades, and the independently produced *Rippingyarns* (2000) swept the 2001 Katha Music Awards as she took home Album of the Year, Producer of the Year, Best Alternative Music Album, Best Album Design, and Song of the Year, for "Intertwyne." She was honored as the first Female Icon at the NU 107 Rock Awards in 2004, and the release of *Comet's Tail* in 2005 garnered her awards for Best Guitarist and Producer of the Year (with Angee Rozul). Interested parties may contact Conspiracy Garden Cafe at 453-2170.

Conspi had its 5th anniversary blowout with Cynthia's big bro Joey Ayala, Gary Granada, Jess Santiago, among others, last December 12, simultaneously with the free concert during the launch of the 12-track *Huling Lagapak ng Kandado* highlighting Axel Pinpin's poetry set to the music of Bobby Balingit.