

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

The World is Alive in Love

(Original)

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On my morning walks to school, I enjoy the white fragrant flowers of Sampaguita that calls me to breathe easy in silence. There is also the vivid glossy fire-like beauty of Santan that reminds me of the gift of light I now revel in. The neighbors would wave and smile at me at a distance as they bask in the warmth of their families. Never in my thought, Dave, that this time of my life will arrive. I, your future self, don't worry anymore about the sudden downpour of stray bullets and the dead bodies lying cold on the bloodied roadside. There is no more fear in the heart.

You see, the world is much quieter now. Clouds of dust have settled on the ground, and the wheels of tanks that dragged many lives have rested. After the light summer rain, we do not smell any longer the pungent whiff of gunpowder. There is only the earthy scent of soil that rises with life's promise of growth. At night, we hear the stillness of the world. No more desperate screams of help would wake us up. We find pockets of silence in our hearts as people speak at the right time in place. The wise and the fools already know how to listen to each other—and learn.

As the years unfold like a paper folding, people stop holding guns and start holding hands. In this way, we move forward without insulting the memories of those who sacrificed their lives. We still hear the cries of the ones left to mourn for them. And we owe these people our deep respect and apologies for the lost lives. But the space of anger, hurt, and violence has now turned into a place of peace, acceptance, and healing. No more lives are to be taken away. Wherever I go, there is only the supple breathing of the wind that whispers kindness and compassion.

Looking at your present life, Dave, I see anger, frustration, and relentless apprehensions in your eyes. You wrestle against a dysfunctional fascist government that has bargained the lives of the weak and the poor. You resist being neutral on blatant oppression that swelled countless deaths of the innocent. You insist that leaders should prioritize working on

something to manage a global health crisis instead of focusing on how to silence its dissenters. With the signs of your time, you also realize that your country has become a slave of foreign brutality whose interest is solely inclined to corruption and exploitation. Your voice is militance against the ruling oppressive class. You are grappling with the many sides of your present, Dave. And although in your time the future is still shrouded with mysteries, I know I must tell you this: your rage is valid. But that is not your totality.

As your future self, I must say that I arrive at where I am right now not because of your rage, but because of your voice that speaks the language of love. Dave, never lose hope that there is still kindness in humanity. Your present life is a page of a wintry field that simply waits for the warm embrace of a summer's light. In the world I am in, we only know how to do things out of love. We start and end our days without hurting someone. We build our lives not from anger and hate but from empathy and care. We see each other not as strangers of time but as equals in the family of things. However, this future life of ours will only keep on turning if you, people at the present, will not get tired and surrender to loving one another.

When our present and future selves would meet, Dave, let's walk by the roadside together and see the lining beauty of bougainvilleas that spreads bright colors into the open. We will trace all the marks of our memories that lead us to our paths while relishing the fragrance of Sampaguitas and the rosy glow of Santan. When that happens, there will be no place large enough to contain our happiness, and the world will surely wave at us alive.