

Take Me Home  
By Jeshurun Barrun

My home is the rundown *skinitas* of Manila,  
Run over with playing children, their *tsinelas*  
perpetually patting the pavement.  
Structures torn but the spirit of family and cheer a  
firm foundation.

*thin, alley-like roads between buildings*  
*slippers, flip-flops*

My home is the early morning *panaderyas*,  
the sweet sweet smell of *pandesal* ushering in  
each new day -  
the fresh chance to savor life's tiny blessings.

*bakery*  
*Filipino sweet bread*

My home is my family and my family is my  
grandfather,  
who said goodbye long before I got to say hello,  
who was survived by his 12 younger siblings,  
who each had their own children  
who each had their own children,  
My million *titos* and *titas* and *lolos* and *lolas* and  
*mga pinsan* who make family reunions seem more  
like village fiestas  
full volume and full of embraces

*uncles, aunts, grandfathers, grandmothers, cousins*

My home is in my language –  
“*Nanay, Tatay gusto kong tinapay...*”  
“*Anak, maghugas ka ng pinggan*”  
“*Mahal kita*” –

*“Mother, Father, I want bread...” (opening lines to a*  
*children’s rhyme)*  
*“Child, wash the dishes”*  
*“I love you”*

The tones and accents taking me back  
to the sound of *skinitas*  
to the scent of *pandesal*  
to the warmth of my *titas*  
*to my home*