

HEAVY BURDEN, HOLLOW BODY

by:

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Each existing organism birthed from nature's womb possesses an asset of beauty and potential within. Each blessed life has a role to fulfill a piece to partake. A cycle of contribution that yearns to be completed, patiently waiting for another to help the circulation avoid its end.

Butterflies are awed on by all, their wings stand as their best feature, the center of attraction – the star of the show, as each pair of wings reveal a strikingly unique pattern. Color, shape, spots, ombres – a trade mark is given to those bugs who've changed, grown, and matured into authenticity. Though, it didn't just take a mere blink, a single click, and a flick of a wrist for their transformation. It took a whole deal of time, work, and nutrition. Like a car with an empty tank, like a flower desperate for water, a caterpillar starved of leaves could never reach its full form – its full potential.

Malnutrition has been one of the leading causes for the Philippines regression caused by the constant disregard of those in the position of influence and power. For a country whose enriched with natural resources, a dark truth lies beneath regarding the lives of its people. It's been stated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) that 27% of Filipino children suffer from malnutrition. Ranking 2nd worldwide, just behind Africa whose only 2% higher.

Mercedes, Bicol. A capital for aquatic wealth but with a slithering ironic truth. A town blessed with bounty contradicts the livelihood of its townspeople. Four in 10 children are said to be malnourished and unfortunately, Bicol has been concluded to have the worst cases of malnutrition compared to all country regions.

Angela, at 19 years old still suffers from the curse of malnutrition, bed - ridden and frail. Her skin wrapped around her bones, accentuating its dips and details. Her family relies heavily on fishing, leaving them without a meal. Unable to leave her bed for three months, she met with death soon after the interview was conducted.

Stories from those parents who are forced to work abroad, taking care of others' children rather than their own, truly flicks a switch in our hearts. The case of Mang Ciriaco falls similar. A market stevedore, Mang Ciriaco grabs abundant amounts of fish, able to fill to the corners of his nets, but as quickly. Leaving his family to run on empty stomachs. His hard work pays others rather than his own family waiting like hatchlings, mouth gaped open desperate for food. It pains Mang Ciriaco to give up his earnings rather than serve it to his own family. His catches count to dozens, but the same couldn't be said for his profit. He earns 30 pesos at most, leaving him with nothing left for essentials.

Essentials, not only does it range from materials for survival, but also bodily nutrients. Which greatly lacked with Mang Ciriaco's children. Joey, his six - year old son only weighed of a three - month old. Whilst his son Jeremy only weighed that of a two - year old despite being 14. His lungs have been found to slowly fail due to his severe case of malnutrition.

As children, we've all been scolded to not drink coffee, myths were even told to scare us in avoidance. This might not be the case for all, though those cases might come across as shocking. Babies who are vitally dependent on milk, their bodies scavenge for the protein that it consists. Babies, given caffeine.

Caffeine, a last resort for parents scrapping to survive. Their newborns not knowing what milk tastes like. Stomachs who've only ever knew coffee, running on no nutrients but instead sleep depravity.

Deprived. Their bodies have been deprived.

Young, old, no matter that. Their cases all line up that of the same. Running on a diet processed food, instant noodles have been the “everyday” of the poor. Affordable and convenient, filling and hot. It gives them fuel but also a chance.

A chance is desperately needed for these overlooked issues. As the quantity of poverty increases, government officials turn a blind eye, for the more who falls poor, the more normalized. These malnourished children in extreme poverty are the next expected generation. A generation of which has very little opportunities.

Each existing organism birthed from nature’s womb possesses an asset of beauty and potential within. But it not aided, will never grow into the hidden form awaited by all. A cycle they’ll contribute to will lack when a hand decreases. The very system falls to circulate as their wing don’t develop, as the pollen’s left unharvested. A burden they must carry – incompetency on top of a hollow, frail body.

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