COME NOW, HOME

Written by Maria Isabel Alarilla-Arellano

Illustrated by Don M. Salubayba

Translated into English by Lawrence L. Ypil
One day,
Nanay brought me some news.
She said, “We’re moving house!”
Bigger, more beautiful, better,
more colorful.
The new house that was waiting
for us would be just that.
Wow! I was surprised and overjoyed.
I even jumped up with joy and clapped.
I thought, this was going to be an exciting chapter for me and our big family.
But wait!
I suddenly stopped.
A number of questions entered my young mind.
Will we be able to bring all of our things? Will not something important be left behind?
Will all of us in the family be able to go? Won’t it be too hard to get there and won’t it be too far? And how about my friends? Won’t they get lost on the way to our new house?
Will there be a garden in our new place?

Will there be a playground that’s full of fun?

Will there be a lot of places to explore?

Will it be able to give us everything that we need?
I looked at our house, and checked out every corner. Here I was born and raised. Here did I feel joy and love. Here did I experience community and generosity.
Many typhoons this house has weathered. But all of these it was able to survive.

This is where we found protection, escape, and shelter. Oh, how could I ever leave and forget this place?
That night, I lay restless on my bed. I couldn’t sleep so I felt anxious.

My thoughts were a mess, my feelings mixed. I was afraid, nervous, sad, confused.
Slowly they felt heavy, my eyes.
My tired mind and heart wanted to rest.
But wait!
What is this I see?
Our house took the shape of a man!
I could clearly see his teardrops racing down.
I could clearly feel his deep, deep sorrow.

I hugged him and embraced him affectionately.
Whispering to him, “Here now, Home.”
I knew then what needed to be done.  
I invited him to come with me.  
We would go to a faraway place  
Where no one would be able to follow or see us.
So carrying a few things, we started
The journey even if we were not very sure where we’d go.

But just when we had not gone very far,
Something happened which surprised us both.
A strong wind and a fierce downpour of rain
Suddenly met us on the way.

The rushing waters were terrifying.
We were swept away, as were our hopes.
All I could do was close my eyes out of fear.
I tightened my grip on the home that I loved.
The whole world, it seemed, was turning too fast.
But when I opened my eyes, I found myself still in my bed!
I couldn’t stop my tears from falling. Nanay came and held me close. She said, “Ssssssh... Come now, my child. It’s normal to be afraid of change.

“But don’t worry, because I promise you, There we will be much happier. Just remember that I only always wish for what is best, And what will be good for our family.
“You don’t really need to let go or forget, The happy memories of this home. Instead, gather and take all of them with you, As an important part of your life.

“Child, hopefully you will also remember, The true meaning of home. This is not just a place or a physical concept; This is to be found in the depths of our hearts.”
Nanay’s words made me smile. This is a precious lesson for our lives.

We bring our homes wherever we may go
As long as our love for each other is true!
About the AUTHOR

Maria Isabel “Issa” Alarilla-Arellano wrote “Tahan Na, Tahanan” based on her own experiences, having lived in at least 20 different houses throughout her life. Joining Romeo Forbes Children’s Storywriting Competition for the first time, she considers this book a dream come true.

A graduate of the University of the Philippines, Issa loves to write, especially stories and poems for children. After more than a decade of working as editor-writer of educational magazines, she decided to venture into the advertising world overseas.

She and husband Carlos are presently living in Dubai, UAE.

About the ARTIST

Don Maralit Salubayba was born in Davao from a Batangueña mother and a father from the Quezon province. He grew up in Laguna, and is married to OJ who is part-Ilongga and part-Ibaloi.

His art background is rooted from the Philippine High School for the Arts in Mt. Makiling and at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. A 2009 Thirteen Artist awardee from the Cultural Center of the Philippines, he has also had numerous exhibitions and residencies locally and abroad.

Don is a proud ‘Tatay’ to Amaya and Elias and a loving ‘Kabiyak’ to his wife.
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