



A Filipina mother's story about her enduring dedication and love for her family. She acquired the skills and the trade of dressmaking early in her youth. Her challenges in life made her a strong-willed and steadfast woman.

OSAY, MY INAY: My Hardworking Mother's Life in the Philippines and in America

By Reynaldo M Nova

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Reynaldo M. Nova



OSAY, MY INAY

My Hardworking Mother's Life
in the Philippines and in America

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Tagalog Terms and Translations

Inay—mother; also, Nanay

Tatay—father

Ate—elder sister; also used for older relative or neighbor

Kuya—elder brother

Tiyo—uncle

Tiya—aunt

Lolo—grandfather

Lola—grandmother

Cobrador—solicitor of betting money

Jueteng—lottery betting

Mananahi—dressmaker

Maquinista—dressmaker who owns a sewing machine

Modista—dressmaker who owns a shop

Katiwala—trusted supervisor (from tiwala meaning trust)

Retazos—leftovers of fabrics

Barong Tagalog—Philippine formal dress made of pina or abaca

Kalesa—horse-drawn carriage

Harana—serenade tradition

Aparador—cabinet

Sala—living room

Ganta—a volume measure of about 3 quarts

Ulam—any dish eaten with rice



It is quite accurate to say that for most of us, we consider our mothers, without a doubt, as perfect as we would like to imagine them to be. For some of us, that seemed quite true, that is, until we reached a certain age—in our teens or young adult age. We realized she was not so perfect (like we all are, like everyone else). We would like to retain that wonderful image of her, but we know deep in our hearts that there are some traits of her we'd rather ignore but could not. That rang true for me. Some years later, you begin to notice that these traits had become prominent. Reflecting on her past life now, you realize that they very well manifested themselves. As I share my mother's story, my intention is not to highlight these displeasing and unlikable traits, but to consider them as contrasting qualities to her admirable and likable ones, such as care and compassion, friendliness and cheerfulness, diligence and dedication. The story is not complete without them. I owe most of what I am—my character—to the love and affection my mother showered me with, including every trait that she has.

Now at 96 years of age and increasing in her senility, these unpleasant attributes seem more pronounced. It is upsetting, while you are inclined to treat her like some irritable old lady from your neighborhood nursing home, you forget that she was once the person whom you worshipped and admired most. The fact that she had lots of friends all throughout every stage of her long life proves she had an exceptionally pleasing personality. She is a woman

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that I should always remember as my most loving martyr of a mother. Yes, that is my *Inay* and OSAY is her name.



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