



WHERE WORDS BUILD BRIDGES

by: EMERLYN C. ABRENICA

I stepped onto a foreign shore, with dreams clenched in trembling hands,
The sky was new, the winds unsure, yet hope still softly stands.
In halls of learning far from home, I walked a path unknown,
But every step bore roots of gold — the seeds my land had sown.

Surprised, I saw familiar eyes — warm smiles I used to know,
Filipino hearts in foreign skies, like lanterns in the snow.
But when they spoke, their words were strange, their accents shaped by seas,
Yet underneath each syllable, I heard familiar peace.

Cebuano, Ilokano, Waray — each word, a woven thread,
Kapampangan laughs and Bicol songs, from homes we may have fled.
We did not always understand, but in our tones, a light —
For even in our difference, we found each other right.

Our "Tagalog" became the bridge, the comfort in our day,
A voice that softly held our wounds, then whispered them away.
It told us we belonged somewhere, though we were far apart,
A language not just spoken — but cradled in the heart.

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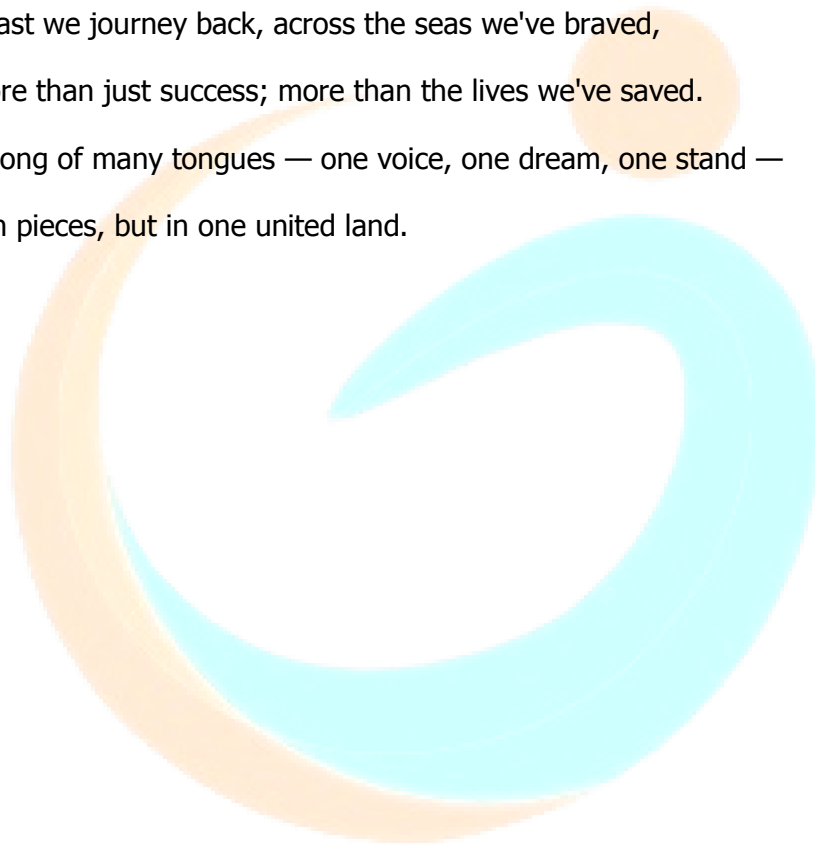
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We gathered not as strangers now, but as one woven soul,
Sharing stories wrapped in laughter, and silence that made us whole.
Our unity was not in place, nor flag, nor face, nor shore —
But in the words we brought with us, from all our homes before.

And when at last we journey back, across the seas we've braved,
We'll carry more than just success; more than the lives we've saved.
We'll bring a song of many tongues — one voice, one dream, one stand —
A nation not in pieces, but in one united land.



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