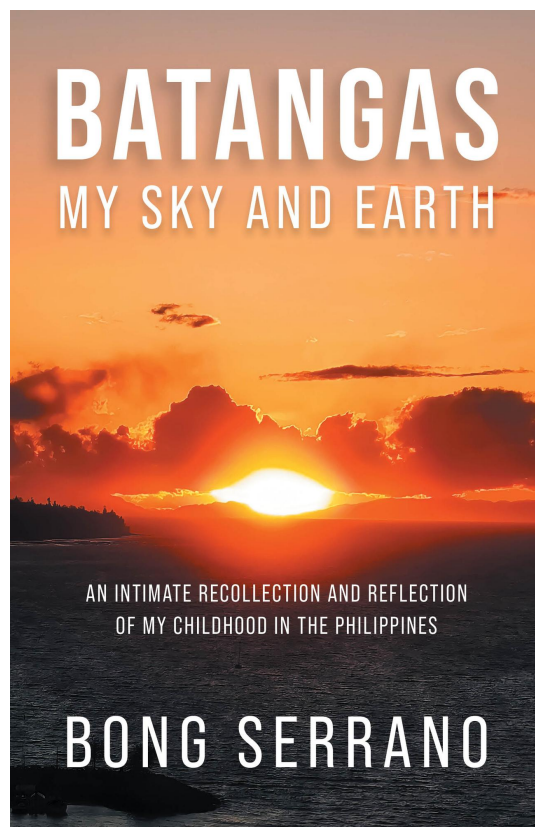


# BATANGAS: MY SKY AND EARTH

An Intimate Recollection and Reflection of My Childhood in the Philippines



When Bong Serrano learned that his older brother, Boying, had cancer, the notes he had jotted down about his childhood took on new meaning. Memories of his time with his family in the Philippines came rushing back. At the center of those memories were the precious moments he'd spent with his Kuya.

Faced with his brother's impending death, Bong asked himself: "What if one day I lose my memories? Who will remember us?" Thus began Bong's yearslong journey of immortalizing not only his childhood but also his country's history and traditions.

Bong grew up in the southern province of Batangas, on Luzon Island. *Batangas: My Sky and Earth* is a celebration of that childhood. This memoir takes you into a world made rich by the intricate descriptions of life in the Philippines in the 1970s and '80s, where the family unit is close, and many households are multigenerational. From family dynamics to church duties to delicious food and the inevitable annual typhoons, Bong invites you to experience his culture from the inside.

Throughout this memoir, Bong honors his childhood home and country and the memory of his beloved brother. The choice to interweave Tagalog throughout this book's pages helps to steep the story in Filipino culture further. A whole village raised this boy, and as Bong looks back on his childhood, the lessons he learned come to the foreground: clarity, forgiveness, tradition, and love.

*"In remembering granular details of growing up, the author evokes a time and place in the tradition of the best memoirs. This book is important not just to a close-knit family but to anyone interested in Batangas in the 1960s and 70s. History writ large this is not, with little commentary about politics, leaders, and the institutional forces that usually populate history books. Portraying culture through the prism of family memories is what makes this genre a unique approach to history."*

~ Howie Severino, Documentarist

Bong Serrano describes himself as a Batangueño, someone who grew up in Batangas, in the Philippines. This, his first book, was a labor of love that he hopes will inspire readers to immerse themselves in a bygone Filipino life and take them back to their childhood memories, wherever they may come from.

Though Bong has lived in Canada for many years, he regularly returns to Batangas to visit family and friends, maintaining those connections he holds dear.

In his free time, Bong loves sharing stories, listening to music, taking long walks along the seawall, cooking adobo, and watching Asian dramas. He lives in Vancouver with his life partner of thirty years.

Connect with Bong on his website at [bongserrano.com](http://bongserrano.com).

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