

## Batangas: My Sky and Earth

An Intimate Recollection and Reflection of My Childhood in the Philippines

by Bong Serrano



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Non-Fiction - Memoir

450 Pages

Reviewed on 09/22/2024

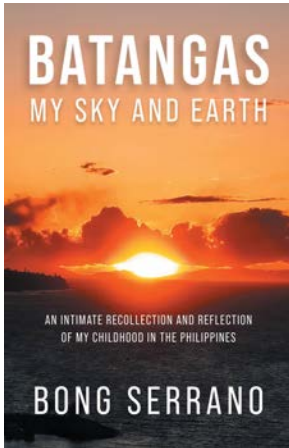
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## Book Review

### Reviewed by Cherubimaris Casino for Readers' Favorite

Batangas is a memoir by author Bong Serrano. The author includes early memories of loving grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and siblings. Serrano describes how his parents met and the deep bond he had with his gifted mother, Inay, a coloratura soprano. Their family home expanded when seven children from his mother's uncle came to live with them. This created an atmosphere of warm hospitality, reflective of multigenerational Filipino culture. The book also delves into spirituality, including the daily observance of the Angelus, the Christmas tradition of Simbang Gabi, and people's unwavering devotion. Throughout the memoir, the author recounts significant milestones, including his time in the college glee club, heartwarming anecdotes from his sisters, and especially the fraternal bond between him and his brother Kuya Boying. The story is not without struggles and Bong writes about the devastating moment when he learned of his brother's health diagnosis. Love, faith, and resilience are strong themes. The memoir is also enhanced by stunning black-and-white photos from the 1940s and onward, accompanied by a glossary of Filipino words, dishes, and traditions.

Batangas: My Sky and Earth offers a vivid portrayal of life in a Filipino household, highlighting the importance of faith, family, and tradition. Bong Serrano's childhood home on P. Pelaez Street was a hub of warmth and hospitality, mirroring the country's values, treasures, and traditions. As a fellow Filipino, I found this book to be a heartfelt tribute to Filipino culture, faith, and family life. It reminds me of my own Kuya and it brought me to tears. I particularly loved how the author's rich storytelling brings the customs and values of the Philippines to life, making it easy to connect with the characters and their experiences. The author's childhood and fraternal bond with his brother is alive on each page. The inclusion of personal photos adds a touching authenticity to the narrative, allowing readers to step into the author's world. It's a true treasure and a delightful, educational read!



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### Author Biography



Bong Serrano is a proud Batangueño, hailing from the picturesque and historic province of Batangas, Philippines. His debut memoir, *Batangas: My Sky and Earth*, not only pays homage to his roots but also takes readers on a nostalgic journey into the heart of Filipino heritage.

Bong completed his undergraduate studies with an academic scholarship at Ateneo de Manila University and was subsequently awarded a student exchange scholarship at International Christian University in Tokyo. After dedicating several years as an international flight attendant and Japanese speaker for American Airlines, immersing himself in diverse cultures around the world, he transitioned to roles as Digital Marketing Director at both a digital marketing agency and a not-for-profit organization for men's health in Vancouver, contributing his expertise to both organizations over a twenty-seven-year career in digital marketing.

Though Bong has called Canada home for many years, his heart remains deeply connected to Batangas, where he frequently returns to visit family and friends. He cherishes the bonds he holds dear and finds joy in sharing stories, listening to music, taking long walks along the seawall, mastering the art of cooking adobo, indulging in Asian dramas during his leisure hours, and, naturally, pursuing his passion for writing and storytelling. Bong resides in Vancouver with his life partner of over thirty years.

Bong is currently immersed in his next project, which involves writing a historical fiction. Connect with him and explore more of his work on his website at [bongserrano.com](http://bongserrano.com).