

(Equipment adjusting Airport boarding announcement starts. It is muffled and hard to hear. The announcement ends, but the sounds of the airport still seep into the track)

Okay, so... (sigh) This is going to be... Well, I don't know. I never thought I would be making a "what I did over vacation" assignment at my age. But then again, I also thought I'd be done with school by now. But whatever.

For this vacation, my parents and I are going back to the Philippines to see family and... And I guess do some sort of sightseeing type events. But you should know... (sigh) Okay look, if you haven't done a trip like this, you may not understand it. We go to the Philippines as a family to spend a few weeks there to try to make the cost of the plane ticket worthwhile and also it's the only time we get to see our family, every other year or so. Which means, that we cram in as much domestic bliss as we can. And that sort of thing will take priority over all the other touristy stuff you can do around the islands.

I don't know what you expected me to document when you made the offer, but if that's the case, I probably should have been more open about what this trip is actually going to look like. Namely, a lot of cooking, a lot of sitting around the house, not so much hiking and touring and swimming and all those sorts of things.

But I did give you my word that I would give some sort of documentation of my trip, per the assignment and as a bit of appreciation for excusing my absence from class. Seriously, my parents would have never let me come on this trip if it would have hurt any of my grades. Or my grade. And well, okay, I... I know I won't always sound like it and sometimes I roll my eyes when I talk about my visits home, but I do appreciate it. I did want to go on this trip really badly, and it would have broken my heart if I couldn't.

This is a beautiful place to be, complications aside, but more than that, I love my family, and I love being around them, even though it's hard to be in this family sometimes. It's hard being away from everybody. It's hard to get out there. It's hard to find a way to pause my life long enough to make a trip possible. And it's going to be hard to explain what I've been up to these past few years. I mean, the "wala boyfriend?" thing was never great, but then again my parents didn't want me to get married young, so it worked out. There's nothing... good about what's coming, the explanations I have to give, the questions I have to face.

But I guess I've got to just rip this bandaid off. Or that's what Dad says. And in theory, I should appreciate the sentiment. I mean he would be an expert. This has never been all that easy of a trek for him in the same way that it's never really easy to visit the in-laws. But somehow he's made it work.

Okay, I've never been good at introductions. As all my essays probably show. I understand though that it is important to set the scene. So currently, I am in the airport with my parents, getting ready to board a flight to Manila. My uncle will be waiting there to meet us and to take us back to the province my mother is from. There will likely be more people, but you never know who's coming until they actually get in the car. Also this trip is probably going to be the hardest one I've ever taken. Not just because my hip makes long periods of anything difficult and airline seats. But I have no clue what I'm going to do about everything, what I'm going to tell them or what they're expecting. I mean, it's been five years since the accident, and I know I was expecting to be a lot better by now, but the healing process goes as it goes, and unfortunately I think it's come to a stop. We'll see, though. We'll see about everything. And I will resume recording when I have seen. Something. I guess.

(Sound fades out)

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