



My name is
Kaisa Ligaya
Soto Sol Cruz.
And this is my
story about...

GROWING UP IN THE PHILIPPINES

Kaisa

in Filipino means "to be one with." My parents said that Kaisa is also a Finnish word for "victory." Ligaya is "joy." Everyone though calls me K.L. or simply, K.

I turned 11 last July and I am in fifth grade. I'm kind of small for my age. Today is a weekend so I'm in my grandfather's house in Paranaque. That is where my father lives, because it's closer to where he works. He is a computer analyst. My *tito* XC, *tita* Cate, Susan, and my grandparents, *Lolo* Tatay and *Lola* Nanay also live there.

On school days, I wake up at 6:00 a.m. I usually wear a shirt and a pair of shorts since jeans are not allowed in school if there is physical education class. A school bus picks me up at home and drives me to school. I go to a school called Community of Learners. My classes begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. After classes, the school bus takes me to my mother's office. She is with Isis International-

Manila. Since her office is near our house, my mother and I walk home together. Oftentimes, we stop by a bakery along the way to buy bread and chocolate mousse which is my favorite. This is how a typical day for me goes.

In my class, the girls are more "reasonable" than the boys. For example, if the girls talk nicely and are always nice to boys, they will tease the girl to the boy whom she's nice to. So our teachers are kind of having a hard time with us because we are too noisy.

I like it when we write stories in class. I think it's really neat. I plan to be a writer when I grow up. Or maybe a computer analyst. I adore Louisa May Alcott, the author of *Little Women* because she writes good books. I also like to read, especially horror and mystery stories. I'm now reading some classics though I'm not really the classic type. Some of these books are really good. Aside from reading and



Bing Concepcion

writing, I also cross-stitch. My mother taught me how. She has done many beautiful cross-stitch patterns on cloth.

If I liken myself to anything, I think I would say that I am like the sea. The sea has many things in it—colorful, and big, and small. Like the sea, there are also many things going on in my head even though I can be quiet. I have different moods, and sometimes like the sea also, you cannot predict my moods.

My mother and I have a special kind of relationship. We are friends, although sometimes we also fight. My mother is kind of my “enemy” when it comes to food. She really likes tofu, veggy meat, spices, Italian seasoning, vegetables, and anything that is healthy. I’m actually the opposite. But I also eat her kind of food although I don’t really like them.

We also don’t agree about my hair. My mother wants to cut my hair short because she says I look

much better when its cut. But I want to grow it long and braid it and do anything I can with it.

There are many great men and women from my country’s past. But the one I admire most is Gabriela Silang who fought for justice during the 1700s, a time when the Philippines was a colony of Spain. Gabriela Silang was a brave woman who loved the people and suffered many hardships.

I think it would be neat to visit some other place like London in England. I would like to learn more about their past and culture, because they are countries far away from where I live. There are only two seasons in the Philippines—the wet, rainy season and the dry, hot season. I want to experience all the four seasons of other countries, but I would not want to live there. The Philippines is my only country. ☺

K.L. Soto Sol Cruz will be, as this piece proves, a writer whom her entire family will be proud of.