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12 Philippine Women Writers, by Bonifacio

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12 Philippine Women Writers. Edited by Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1994. 120 pages.

Frailty, thy name is woman!
Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.

We owe many of our stereotypes about women to Western classical literature. Shakespeare's lines are memorable, but they have helped form our prejudices against women. University of the Philippines professor and playwright Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio helps us dispel some of those prejudices with the stories she has compiled and edited. The stories in this collection provide insights into the unique worldview of Asian women.

In selecting the stories for this collection, Lapeña-Bonifacio had two considerations, as she tells us in the Preface. First, the stories must be told from a woman's point of view. Second, they must "fall into a skein of one continuing yarn—that of a woman's growth from childhood to old age."

The first criterion is fulfilled, not only because the protagonists in these stories are women, but also because they are written by some of the most illustrious Filipina fictionists of our time: Kerima Polotan, Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Edith Tiempo, and Ninotchka Rosca, to name just a few.

The second criterion is evident in the themes of the different stories. A mother rages after the molester of her little daughter. A teenager thinks she is dying because she has menstruated. A second wife fears that she is living in the shadow of the dead first wife. An old lady laments the reality of aging and death. These stories educate us about what goes on in the very heart of a woman. Lapeña-Bonifacio will not be frustrated in her hope that these stories make us "just a little less confused, if not a little more caring."

This is a book that will promote healthy feminism, which is the sensitivity to and understanding of women which our society so desperately needs.

Aristotle Dy, S.J.

My Own Bout with Cancer and Other Last Essays. By P. N. Aprieto. Edited by Andres Cristobal Cruz. Quezon City: Giraffe Books, 1995. 174 pages.

After reading *My Own Bout with Cancer*, one is filled with gratitude and respect for the author for sharing his encounter with the disease. It gives a valuable inside story into the experiences of those afflicted with the disease and encourages the rest of us to be more aware, not merely of the affliction but more importantly, the internal dispositions of a person who experiences it. This book is a collection of essays by P. N. Aprieto from his column "Signs