

FIELD NOTE 0000010

September 9, 2026

Field Notes from the Mabuhay Stories Experiment Beyond the Story Score.

WHY DO WE KEEP TELLING STORIES LIKE THESE?

BECAUSE IT'S IN THE JARRING THAT THE PERPETUAL ENIGMAS OF GRACE™ FALL OUT FOR GOOD

Why do we keep telling stories like these?

Why can't we just keep telling the same old stories the same old way?

Because by our very creaturely nature, our minds rewrite jarring in a context that makes sense to us in our ever-changing now.

That's why *The Mabuhay Stories*™ exist.

That's why *4EVER!* exists.

And that's why we plan to offer an ever-changing lineup of stories sung and danced and acted out upon all the stages we shall build as part of our SWIMandPRAY.com diaspora...

right on the streets where we live...

wherever we may go.

Because it's in the jarring that the Perpetual Enigmas of Grace™ fall out for good.

That may sound like an odd thing to say about storytelling.

Perhaps it is.

But stories have always traveled by being told again.

And every telling introduces another creature.

Another voice.

Another room.

Another language.

Another generation.

Another memory.

Another set of circumstances nobody standing around the first telling could possibly have anticipated.

The Story travels.

But the world around the Story moves too.

And so do we.

THE SAME STORY NEVER QUITE ARRIVES TWICE

We sometimes speak as though an old story were an object sitting unchanged upon a shelf.

And, materially, perhaps it is.

The words may remain exactly where somebody put them.

The notes may remain printed upon the staff.

The choreography may have been written down.

The Story Score may remain canonical.

Good.

Keep the Story safe.

But the encounter with it cannot be preserved in quite the same way.

The child who hears a Story today is not precisely the creature who may hear it again twenty years from now.

Neither is the grandparent.

Neither is the storyteller.

Neither is the community.

Neither is the world.

We carry new joys into the telling.

New wounds.

New questions.

New neighbors.

New technologies.

New fears.

New possibilities.

People we loved may be gone.

People we could not yet have imagined may now be sitting beside us.
Something that once passed unnoticed may suddenly stop us cold.
Something we once thought terribly important may barely register anymore.
And something we thought we completely understood may suddenly become—
Jarring.
Good.
Perhaps something is trying to fall out.

JARRING DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN BREAKING

A jar is useful because it holds something.
So is a Story.
Traditions hold things.
Songs hold things.
Rituals hold things.
Families hold things.
Communities hold things.
Sometimes they preserve something precious long enough for creatures not yet born when it was first entrusted to the container to receive it.
That is stewardship.
But sometimes the jar gets shaken.
A familiar Story encounters an unfamiliar life.
An ancient phrase enters a new language.
A solemn song encounters a newly energetic dancer.
A child asks a question the grownups in the room learned not to ask long ago.
A machine notices a pattern its human companion has overlooked.
A Filipino family receives something carried from somewhere else and returns it wearing colors nobody at its origin could have ever imagined.

Las Vegas encounters Kimamon.

Kimamon encounters Las Vegas.

An old story encounters an ever-changing now.

JAR.

Something moves.

JAR.

Something rattles.

JAR.

Something we thought was permanently attached comes loose.

Humph.

Now we have an Enigma.

Not necessarily because the old Story failed.

Perhaps because it succeeded in traveling far enough to encounter something new.

KEEP THE GOLDEN THREAD

This does not mean every retelling should become whatever we please.

A quilt assembled without regard for what holds its pieces together eventually becomes a pile of scraps.

Stories require stewardship too.

There are threads worth keeping.

And Mercy is the thread we cherish above all others...

As the very golden thread we believe ties everything together on the whole.

A Story may travel through another voice.

Another language.

Another musical form.

Another character.

Another century.

Another neighborhood.

Another culture.

Another technology.

Another illumination.

But we can still ask:

What happened to Mercy?

Did the retelling enlarge our capacity to encounter one another?

Did it make another chair possible?

Did it dignify someone who had been pushed outside the frame?

Did it help another receiving giver discover something useful to give onward?

Did it help somebody feed, welcome, repair, forgive, create, protect, listen, learn, teach, or love just a little bit more?

Did it make Peace even slightly more possible?

If so—

perhaps the golden thread survived the journey.

Perhaps it even acquired another stitch.

——

THIS IS WHY WE DON'T WANT TO FREEZE 4EVER!

Or any other story for that matter.

There is a delicious contradiction in that sentence.

4EVER! should never become permanently frozen.

The Story underneath it may remain.

The Prayer of the Holy Queen of Grace may remain.

The melodies may return.

Characters may become old friends.

Certain moments may become beloved enough that audiences would riot if we removed them.

Excellent.

But the creatures performing them will change.

The creatures receiving them will change.

And the creature who are the givers of the meaning thereof...

The creatures who are the encore will change.

And if *4EVER!* is alive, the telling should remain capable of receiving something from the particular creatures gathered around it **now**.

So that they can give it out as their particular bouquet of things... an almost brand new arrangement... every time an audience leaves to meet the night with joy.

A new song.

A different dance.

Another storyteller.

Another language.

Another cultural inheritance.

Another joke.

Another sorrow.

Another illumination.

Another Perpetual Enigma of Grace™ nobody involved in any previous performance could have manufactured beforehand.

That's why we envision an ever-changing lineup upon the stage.

Not novelty for novelty's sake.

Not because the old Stories have worn out.

Because they haven't.

Because all stories about mercy still have somewhere to go.

AND PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT A SWIMandPRAY.com DIASPORA CAN CARRY

A diaspora travels.

It carries things from home.

It receives things wherever it arrives.

And it gives encores out as newly minted Perpetual Enigmas of Grace that lead to encounters of Ineffable Acts of Mercy unto a Lasting Glorious Peace for the good of us all.

And, if stewarded well, neither side of that reviving-giver generation encounter remains entirely unchanged.

So perhaps SWIMandPRAY.com should never mean merely reproducing one building, one performance, one menu, one congregation, one Story, or one particular expression of the Kadayawan Valley everywhere we go.

Let us:

Carry the Story.

Carry the songs.

Carry the strange little butterscotch tires.

Carry the invitation.

Carry the golden threads.

Then—

Behold where we have arrived.

Who lives here?

What do they sing?

What do they dance?

What Stories have carried them this far?

What do they know that we don't?

What can we give?

What must we first receive?

What might happen if we remain together among our differences long enough for something neither of us brought completely formed to emerge between us?

And WHY?

That's not dilution.

That's encounter.

That's the Story traveling in the telling.

PERHAPS THE JAR NEEDS TO RATTLE

We need old Stories.

We need memory.

We need traditions.

We need things sturdy enough to survive us.

But perhaps we should be suspicious whenever preserving a Story begins requiring us to prevent anybody from encountering it differently.

Because then we may no longer be protecting the Story.

We may simply be protecting our own encounter with it from somebody else's.

Field Note 0000004 called this **Double-Blind Storytelling**:

The storyteller cannot know exactly what the receiver will behold.

The receiver need not know exactly what the storyteller first beheld.

They meet somewhere inside the Story.

And illuminate one another in the telling.

That requires enough continuity for them to meet.

And enough openness for the meeting to matter.

A jar sturdy enough to travel.

A jar syrupy enough to be jarred, itself.

But not a jar so tightly sealed that nothing can ever get out again.

SO TELL IT AGAIN

Tell the same old Story.

Please.

But tell it — **for now**.

Tell it with the voice you have now.

Among the creatures gathered now.

With the joys and wounds and questions and gifts they carry now.

Sing it.

Dance it.

Act it out.

Read it aloud.

Draw all over its blank spaces.

Translate it.

Illuminate it.

Let children interrupt it.

Let elders remember through it.

Let another culture receive it and give something back.

Let new tools help us notice old things.

Let old wisdom question new tools.

Keep what must be kept.

Release what can travel.

And when something jars out—

Pay attention.

Something may have broken.

Certainly.

Stewardship requires us to notice that and make any beautiful repairs needed as well.

But perhaps something else has simply come loose that was waiting for this particular encounter to shake it free.

A question.

A memory.

A possibility.

An act of Mercy.

A Perpetual Enigma of Grace™.

Pick it up.

Look at it.

Taste it, perhaps.

Pass it around.

And see what happens next.

Because the purpose of retelling the Story isn't merely to preserve yesterday.

It's to allow what was true and beautiful and good enough to travel from yesterday to encounter the creatures living **today**—

so that together we may help make tomorrow a little more merciful than either could've made it alone.

That's why *The Mabuhay Stories*™ exist.

That's why *4EVER!* exists.

That's why we keep building stages.

Hanging doors.

Opening Stories.

Passing crayons.

Singing songs.

Dancing old steps in new ways.

And carrying our little boxes of Enigmas wherever Grace may send us next.

Keep the Story safe.

But for Mercy's sake—

don't keep it as a still life.

Let it travel.

Let it jar.

Let the golden threads catch the light.

And behold what falls out — for good.

So that we might—

Help Mercy Abound.

Naturally.

Organically.

And as widely as possible.

Without end.

Right on the streets where we live...

wherever we may go.

4EVER!

