

SYMPHONY

For Mama & Marlowe

Characters:

Past

Gil Perez
Encarnacion

Present

Julian Dominguez
Fr. Maximo Benito

Future

Yna
Silaw

SYNOPSIS

“The universe is a symphony of strings and...the mind of God.”

- Michio Kaku, Theoretical Physicist

Present: Julian has lost his wife and daughter to a fire that consumed everything. Questioning faith, hope, and purpose, he seeks answers from Father Maximo.

Future: At the edge of the sun’s life, Yna, one of the last people left behind on Earth has discovered that the ship bound for another galaxy has exploded. She tries to find another way out of this world, not only for humanity, but more for the sake of her daughter Silaw. In her search, she finds her answer in a man named Gil.

Past: By the walls of Intramuros, Gil Perez, a Spanish guard sent to *Filipinas*, dreams about those he left behind. The next day, he wakes up in Mexico. What people don’t know is that in his sleep, he ventured to another world, another universe, and other possibilities – yet he chose to return.

In a symphony of the past, present and future, the play gives us a glimpse on why, against all odds, we continue.

MOVEMENT ONE

I.

(The stage is split into three: the PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE. The scenes intercut or merge with each plane like sections of the orchestra.)

(PRESENT. In the office of Fr. Max, Julian stands by the window. Amidst his commanding built, Julian's eyes are lost, trying to escape his tragic present. Fr. Maximo sits. He does not move and just patiently listens to Julian.)

Julian: Do you remember when Encyclopedia salesmen would go house to house? I was a kid then. But I remember the man in his crisp white shirt and tie—black, I think? He would bring us a book from the *Child Craft Series* every month. It was only a book per month because we couldn't really afford to pay for the entire set all at once. Installment. Because it was expensive, *nanay* told us to read each book, every sentence, every word, and not just look at the pictures. My brother and I did. And we did, you know, because we liked it.

Peter, I think his name was Peter. *Mang* Peter. He would knock at eight sharp every last Sunday of the month and we'd all come running. I'd always be the first to greet him, open the door with my big bright smile! *Kuya* Peter would talk to *nanay* first, then us. He'd get the book from his bag. This time it was the blue one. We've read the first three books: the red, green, and the violet. Peter told us that the blue one is his favorite. I believed him. I saw it in his eyes. He said that here, in this book, you'll learn about the Universe – about the Infinite.

(PAST. At a port in Spain.)

(Gil Perez, a Spanish native set to sail for distant lands, bids farewell to his wife Encarnacion. Gil exudes both excitement and fear – a bittersweet goodbye as he is set to venture into the unknown, leaving his beloved behind.)

Gil: I shall be back in two years, hopefully. It depends with the *Governador*. My dear Encarnacion, will you wait for me? You will be faithful?

Do not fret for only the sea shall separate us. I shall write to you, always. How I wish that I could be there when our *niño* is born. You will take care of him first, yes? He will grow up with love in your arms and I will sing to

him at night, even from strange lands. The waves will cradle my song and he'll surely hear it when he plays by the shore!

Do not weep. Be happy! Be proud for your husband shall be one of the first to stay in the new world.

They say that the island is full of beauty, magic, mystery. Ah, the stories I shall tell you – the both of you! Endless tales that will consume our nights upon my return.

I shall bring you back the world.

(Gil boards the ship heading for Filipinas.)

(PRESENT.)

Julian: “World & Space”, the book said. There were pictures of galaxies, of other planets, the rings of Saturn, and moons of Jupiter. I read the book until it was night, under the covers with a flashlight. There, under the sheets, it was like I was in outer space. I was an astronaut discovering the known edges of the universe with every flip of the page. There were words I couldn't pronounce: Centauri, Cygnus, Borealis...and with every word unknown, I became even more curious. I was reading and reading, farther

and farther away from this Earth. My flashlight becoming dim. It was then, at age nine – I discovered *the end*.

Our sun can die – will die? Do you know that?

There were pictures on how millions and billions of years from now the great sun shall die. The world shall be consumed. Fire. But before that, everyone, everything would have died. Frozen – because the sun is no longer warm. And finally, the sun will throb. Boom, boom, boom, beating. Heating. Everything. All shall be obliterated. All of us – ashes. Stellar dust.

You and I, Father, gone.

(FUTURE. *In a decrepit observatory.*)

(Yna, one of the last remaining people in the planet looks to the sky. Beside her is Silaw, her young daughter. Mother and daughter are covered with dust, sand, and mud. The winds are strong and they have survived yet another day. The sky looms of tragedy, as the sun becomes weaker - impending flares ahead. Yet, she continues to hope.)

Yna: *(Uncertain.)* There, the ship heads north. Humana. They are going to find a new Earth, my child. And when they do, they will come back for us. They will.

Silaw: Yes. And *he* is there?

(Yna just nods.)

Tell me about “*The Great Heart*”, Yna.

Yna: It’s time to sleep now, Silaw.

Silaw: Just this time. It’s so cold. The story gives me good dreams.

Yna: All right my child – for the sake of *panaginip*.

It was a time of tragedy. There were what you call nations and each one insisted that the land was theirs or that the future was for them alone. Great destruction came from every corner; the skies filled with giant clouds! There was a time when they all had to live below. But then, *The Revelation*. And it was known to all that *Araw* shall die sooner than

expected. You know, I think the sun was broken-hearted after seeing all the pain of the Earth.

(PRESENT.)

Julian: When I had the chance, I would tell Maya bedtime stories. Her favorite was Rip Van Winkle. You know Maya loved to sleep. If she could, she'd sleep all day. And she'd sleep because she'd get all of these beautiful dreams. And when she's up, she'd run to me and tell me all about it, to very last detail – afraid that it would fade away, like most dreams do. And she'd ask me to write about it.

“Papa, I dreamt that I was flying and Mommy was flying too.”

“*Eh* how about me?”, I asked her.

“You can't fly Papa. You wanted too. But you can't”

“Why?” I asked her.

“I don’t know, Papa, but you just can’t.”

(PAST.)

Gil: My Dearest Encarnacion, we have finally reached the Pacific. It is calm. Endless, they say. *But nothing is endless.* Soon, we shall see the promised land. Pedro, another one of the guards, said that he read somewhere that where we’ll go - the sun, the sun never sets. *Filipinas.*

(FUTURE.)

Yna: Everybody thought that the sun would break much later but I guess we don’t *really* know everything. And we accepted that. And that was the first time everybody looked beyond the seas, or the land, the borders and countries, even beyond the skies. And from above, we saw the great heart, this planet - Earth. It took some time but finally everyone united. And they started building the ship, the ship that would carry our histories, our memories, our legacies: humanity.

(Silaw has fallen asleep. Yna looks at her child with content.)

It was beautiful then, Silaw.

(To herself) Though it was forbidden, even impossible, to have you...it happened. He left, aboard one of the last pods, a few days before you were born. But he needed to – for us. He’ll be back.

(Yna looks through the telescope.)

(PRESENT.)

Julian: Oh let me fly, Father. Why can’t God make me fly? If I had wings I could have been there on time.

(FUTURE.)

(Through a worn out device, Yna sends a transmission.)

Yna: *(Scared.)* Humana, this is XX73082, Asiatique domain. I was inspecting the skies, the Centauri region. And I - and I saw yellow - no, red - red clouds behind your track.

(PRESENT.)

Fr. Maximo: *(Careful with his words.)* You haven’t told me about...the incident.

Julian: Incident. You speak of it as if it's something natural. Nothing special.
(Defeated.) And yet, it is – common.

Fr. Maximo: Maybe it will help if you speak about it?

(FUTURE.)

Yna: *(Terrified.)* Humana, please reply. We haven't heard from you for months now. Have you changed course?

(Yna slowly realizes the truth but refuses to accept it.)

What do the red clouds mean?

(PRESENT.)

Julian: *(At the edge of shouting.)* Red. It was just burning red.

I was working that night, that's why I wasn't there. Another deadline to beat. The editor wouldn't let me go.

What do you want to hear? About the fire? How it gutted the house? How they couldn't get out because of the grills? How the grills eventually

melted anyway? What about the fire do I need to *speak about* so that my pain will be taken away? So that they'll come back?

(PAST.)

Gil: My Dear Encarnacion, by the break of dawn, *Filipinas* revealed herself. The sun rose from the breast of the land. I have never seen so many qualities of red. It burns, this land. It burns so beautifully.

(FUTURE.)

Yna: Humana, please tell us that you are still there.
Humana, please give us a signal. You are the last hope! The only hope!

(PRESENT.)

Julian: I rushed from my office. Tony – it was him who called me up. I called Sarah and I heard Maya's voice too. And it was happening so fast. "I can't breathe. I can't breathe. There's smoke everywhere."

I told them I was going there and that they get a wet towel or that they should escape from the hole of the air-con but Sarah said that she can't find it and she pleaded for me to save them. "Save us, Jules. Save us, please." And Maya was

screaming. Papa's coming, Maya. Just wait for me. Sarah said I love you and I told her not to say that because I'll be there and that she should tell it to me when I get there and they'll be safe and sound in my – but the call ended.

I should have said I love you.

(PAST.)

Gil: *(Smiling.)* We step on this new land. Our comrades greet us. I look to the sea, towards home, to you. Today, I know, I know that our *niño* is being born. The wind, they carry his cries. I can hear it, Encarnacion. I do.

(FUTURE.)

Yna: *(Yna accepts that the ship has exploded.)*

You are gone. We are alone. You were supposed to come back for us. We were supposed to create a new world.

(She looks at the sky, then to her daughter.)

We don't have time. There is no more time.

My child, how will you live?

(Then an idea. Yna searches through books and notes and piles of paper. She's searching for another way out. She finds the book.)

(PRESENT.)

Julian: And when I got there, our house, it was all consumed. It collapsed. The embers and ashes rising, fluttering, going up, like fireflies. Flying. Flying. Flying. Up. I wanted to join them. But I can't. Little fragments of light, of before, of them, going there – to the stars?

I am good man. We were good people. We believed. And Maya? Why?

(All realms go dark.)

II.

(PRESENT.)

(A new day. At the office of Fr. Maximo. Julian sits by the window.)

Fr. Maximo: *(From memory.)* He leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.^[SEP]

He guides me along the right paths^[SEP] for His name's sake.

Even though I walk^[L]_[SEP] through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,^[L]_[SEP] for you are with me,^[L]_[SEP]

Your rod and Your staff,^[L]_[SEP] they comfort me.

Julian: Yes, you already said that during the wake. It was raining during the wake.

Fr. Maximo: It is raining now, a gift from God. The seed shall be nourished and will make things -

Julian: *(Irritated.)* Stop.

Fr. Maximo: What do you mean?

Julian: Can we just...can you say something else?

Fr. Maximo: Like what?

Julian: I don't know.

(Fr. Maximo extends his hand to Julian.)

Fr. Maximo: Why don't we pray, *hijo*?

Julian: Stop.

Fr. Maximo: What do you want me to do?

Julian: Talk to me, Father Max.

Fr. Maximo: I can only tell you what I know, *what's in my heart*.

Julian: (*Enraged.*) Stop that!

Fr. Maximo: Stop what, Julian?

Julian: Your codes, the texts, the words. Your words so rehearsed like you've said them over and over again. Your tongue is so fluid with *these* words. They drip without constraint – or heart.

Fr. Maximo: That is not true, Julian.

Julian: Talk to me. Tell me, Father, the truth. Please. I have heard so much. So many lies already. “Hey it’s going to be all right”, “Just trust in the Lord.”, “Don’t worry they are in a better place.”

Fr. Maximo: But know that there is reason for everything.

Julian: There you go again, Father! And what does that do for me, *ha?* Do you dare say to me that there is reason for my wife and child to die so - so useless.

Fr. Maximo: Now Julian -

Julian: - will you still tell me that there is a plan? A greater plan for all of this? If there is indeed one, it is the most vile and cruel plan of God – of your God.

(Pause. Julian closes his eyes and remembers. He sees flashes of the tragedy.)

I only have nightmares.

Have you seen the bodies, Father Max? Of course not. Nobody did. Only me. I was there at the morgue -

Fr. Maximo: *(Whisper.)* Stop it.

Julian: Why? Why should I be the only one to know about this? You should. She trusted you. We did. *(He closes his eyes.)* Now I see the black peeling skin. And Maya...her left hand was clutching the doll I gave her. Her other hand inseparable to Sarah's. Do you know they had to force them apart? And the smell -

Fr. Maximo: Stop it, please.

Julian: Gone are the sweet smells after a bath or before we go to a party. Now all I can smell is smoke. Everywhere.

Fr. Maximo: Stop it!

Julian: No!

Fr. Maximo: Spare me, please. You forget that I loved Sarah too.

(Pause.)

Fr. Maximo: Whenever I could, I would visit them in their house. Sarah, my lovely *pamangkin*, would always be the first one to greet me. She'd present me with one of her paintings. "Tito Father" she'd call me. And then she'd ask me questions about God, or the bible, or why I wore strange clothes. Sarah - she was so beautiful. Let me remember her that way.

Julian: I can't take away these dreams, Father. I hear them screaming. I see fire.

(Beat.)

I have these thoughts when I am alone. No - not even. I have these thoughts when I'm at work. You said I should work so that I can occupy myself. Write again. About what, *ha?* How?

Or that it's best to be with others. I do. I try to be with them. But I hate their stare. I hate it. I know they're doing it. They look at me with pity. You know that look? I've realized that that look is just one step away from the look of revulsion. And I hate their touch - that gentle tap on the back or a soft caress. I feel the words that they really want to say: "I pity you, I'm sad for you but I'm really glad *I'm not you.*"

What I hate most is that I know they're going to talk. No – they talk, they already do. They talk about me during breaks. I catch those glances and they pretend that it's not about me. I'm sure they'll continue the conversation with their families when they get home. They talk about Sarah and Maya, how it happened, how gruesome it was – and everything I hold dear about them now reduced to a conversation for them to pass time. *Sayang*, they will say. That word! They speak as if it all stemmed from genuine concern but I know, I know it is all coming from disgust. Disgusted with the thought that if it should ever happen to them.

And I leave them. I go out to escape them, escape these thoughts. But Father they just get louder and louder. Especially in busy streets, when people just walk and walk and you just see faces. Tired, maybe sad, faces blurring to a mass. And it's just so pointless.

The other day, I got stuck in traffic. Buses and jeepneys cornered me all waiting for passengers. They didn't want to move. And I kept on shouting at them. *Hoy! Hoooy! Hoooy!* They didn't listen. They didn't even look at me. I was there compressed by all of this mess: people, signs, cars, dirt, garbage, noise, heat. And I was just so mad. I was screaming. I wanted to

get away from it all. I don't belong there. I shouldn't be part of that trash.
But then I realized, I was.

I have nothing. I am nothing. Now, I realized that. I think I cried – yes, I did. And the buses and jeeps and other cars started to move but I didn't. Now they shouted at me but I didn't care. I didn't want to go on.

Fr. Maximo: But you did go on. You're here, Julian.

Julian: Yes, I did. And that's the worst part, Father. I went on. Eventually, my hand just found the clutch, my feet left the brakes – and I went on. I don't know why. What for? Where to?

(Dark.)

MOVEMENT TWO

III.

(FUTURE. A new day, beyond the Observatory. In forgotten roads, Yna & Silaw travel.)

(Yna looks at the sky.)

Silaw: Where are we going, Mama? My feet are tired. I'm hungry.

Yna: Here, have some water. Don't finish it all. We don't know where we'll find a pint again. It should only be a few more days. *(Encourages her daughter.)*
You are a strong girl, Silaw! That's why your name is Silaw! An ancient name for -

Silaw: *(Mumbles.)* Yes Yna: "Glare from the light."

Yna: The sun, the light from the sun!

(Yna looks at the sun. She moves to cover her eyes and this reveals the number on her wrist.)

Silaw: Why do you have two names, Yna? You have that number. I remember Tata Trino, when he used to stay with us, he had a number too. I want one.

Yna: *(Coy.)* It's just for grown ups, Silaw. Soon, you will get one. There's nothing special about it anyway.

Silaw: *(Silaw sits down and looks at the sun)* Araw looks different today. He seems quiet.

Yna: (A lie.) He seems perfectly fine.

(Beat.)

Silaw: Yna, the *profetas* told me –

Yna: How they did reach our place? And why were you talking to them? I told you not to talk to other people.

Silaw: But they approached me. I was playing by the ruins when they came. They were so old. Their skin had so many folds, like sand dunes! They said it was time forgotten since they last saw – a child. What do they mean, Yna? How come there are no more children? I have no one to play with.

Yna: You are the last one here. You know that.

Silaw: Why is that?

Yna: Because you're special!

Silaw: The *profetas* said because *I* was forbidden. And that you should be punished if *they* were still here. What do they mean? Is that why I don't have a number?

Yna: Now, don't believe everything they say. They're old and hearts callous from the sands. What else did they tell you?

Silaw: (*Hesitant.*) I told them about your stories...how Humana will return before the sun sleeps and that they'll bring us there. (*Silaw points to the sky.*) We'll have trees again and plenty of food and a pool full of water! But they laughed at me and I got mad at one of the *profetas*. I went up to him and told him that he was crazy. Why would he laugh at Humana? He told me that the sun was already asleep and that we're just counting moons before the nightmares start. He said that it wouldn't matter anyway because we deserved this. And that finally all the tears of *ever since* will be enveloped by the sun. He said that we should join them. That they'll cure us from all the *longing*.

You think I got scared? No, I went up to them - especially to that old man who kept on lying. "I'm not afraid of you", I told him. I rounded my fist and went closer. He took a step but I did not budge. I thought he was

going to smack me with his cane but he just looked into my eyes. He became quiet for a long time. I saw the dunes in face clear out – like how it is after the strong winds. And I also saw his eyes. Then he said that he almost forgot what defiance looked like. He looked up to the sky and touched my head. “Oh child, my child, our child.” he whispered. And they left. Strange men, huh?

What is that word, Yna? Defiance? And is it true? Humana will never return? And where are we going? I miss seeing the stars through telescope.

Yna: *(Uncertain.)* Of course Humana will return!

(Pause.)

Just last night they sent me a message!

Silaw: *(Excited.)* What did they say? Have they – oh please tell me that they have...

Yna: Yes, they have arrived: the Centauri region! To a beautiful planet twice the size of the Earth! And they shall call it...(Yna opens her book.) Encarna!

Silaw: What a beautiful name. I can't wait to go to Encarna!

Yna: Yes, they're waiting for us - us, the vanguards of Earth. Especially you. They are waiting for your arrival! Because -

Silaw: Tell me, Yna!

Yna: Now if I tell you - you must promise never to talk to the *profetas* or to anyone here, okay?

Silaw: I promise!

Yna: Well, they have named one of three moons after you. Silaw, people shall call it Silaw.

Silaw: A moon named after me?

Yna: Yes! Because you are a strong and beautiful girl, Silaw. Every night I send them a message on how each day you become braver – and brighter!

(They both look to the skies.)

Silaw: When shall they come back for us?

Yna: Another part of the message is that they wont come back.

Silaw: *(Shocked.)* What? No? I knew it! The *profetas* were right -

Yna: Oh don't be sad! We shall go there! They told me how to get there! It's a better and faster way!

(Silaw is unsure.)

You don't believe your Yna?

Silaw: It's just that...how can we ever get there? It's so far! There are no more pods here on Earth. You told me the last one flew to bind with Humana just days before I was born.

Yna: But we don't need pods. At Encarna, they found something better than a ship – but only for good, brave little girls.

Silaw: I am brave! And you...you are the bravest one I know.

Yna: Do you remember the stories of Tata Trino? About the traveller of waves.

Silaw: He had so many stories, Yna. He kept on rambling even in his sleep.

Yna: But he knew something, Silaw. *(Yna takes out the book)* This book came from his father's father's father...

And you know what? Tata Trino came from a family of *architects!*

Silaw: That's why he sounded crazy! Acted crazy! Always touching the light...

Yna: I didn't believe him at first. That's why we didn't join him when he left for south. But he swore by these words.

(Between a lie and hope.) Tata was the first one coordinating with Humana.

There was something curious about him. He understood the waves - an expert of its architecture. He has named and classified almost all waves, studying them, trying to unlock the mysteries!

He told Humana that he discovered something. Another way to get there.

Silaw: (*Intrigued.*) Is that why Tata kept on scribbling and drawing these weird figures and maps! I suddenly miss Tata! But he's gone now, Yna.

Yna: I know for a fact that's he's on his way to Encarna. And Humana confirmed it!

Silaw: We should have joined him!

Yna: Yes, but don't worry, he left me his book: *The Teleportation of Gil Perez*. Humana said to follow this *tale*.

Silaw: What does it say? Tell me!

(*The sun begins to set.*)

Yna: *(Looks to the horizon)* Look. There is magic in this land my child. You see those ancient ruins? Near the sea? Hundreds and hundreds of years ago, there stood an ancient city built over a more ancient city. *Ma-yi*, they used to call it.

(PAST. Gil Perez enters. While guarding the gates, Gil proceeds to write.)

Now, visitors came and fell in love with *Ma-yi*. They built buildings and walls and houses and cathedrals. But in the – *(She shows the map in the book)* yes, here - in the *Governador's* House. It was built over a sacred temple of the first people—people who weaved the universe in their clothes. Now the visitors didn't know this but at the sacred ground - that is where they understood the stars.

(PAST.)

Gil: Dear Encarna, the day has been long. I long for your kiss. It has been almost a year since our last embrace. How is my *niño*? Is Julio a good boy?

Yna: There was a man named Gil, Gil Perez.

Gil: Give my love to him. Let him bathe in the sea as my mother
let me.

Yna: One night, he was guarding the *Governador's* House.

Gil: It maybe years before we see each other. It may all be for the
best. By then, we can afford a house and some horses. And I
shall never leave anymore.

Yna: And he fell asleep. A long deep sleep, right under the place that covered
the first people's sacred temple. What he did not know was that that
night, pirates were to come and ravage the town...and he would have
died!

Silaw: Oh no!

Yna: But he didn't know about the **portal**. A passage to the stars!

Silaw: (*Excited.*) To Encarna?

Yna: Yes!

Silaw: *(Looks to where "Ma-yi" should be.)* And is it still there?

Yna: Yes! It is still there. It shall bring us to Encarna – as our visionaries from Humana said, as Tata promised. But we have to get there fast, Silaw. The portal only opens every four hundred and fifty moons.

Silaw: That's why Tata left months ago! *(Exuberant.)* Then we should go now!

Yna: *(Teasing.)* I thought you were tired.

Silaw: Oh no, I'm all fine now. C'mon now! Let's go! To *Ma-yi*, to Encarna!

(Yna looks at the sky then to the horizon. She follows Silaw.)

(Dark – except for Gil, who is fast asleep.)

IV.

(PAST. In a different dimension. The stars, the moons, the galactic clouds, comets and planets – they all swirl.)

(From sleep Gil wakes up in a space unknown. He falls.)

Gil: *(Terrified.)* My dear Encarnacion, I do not know where I am but I am falling, falling yet flying fast. Up to the heavens? But no, it is not white. Black. Black then specks of light. Dust. Grains. Clouds. It is raining. I think it is rain. There are so many colors, more than the reds of the Island, more than the cloaks of our king, more than the glimmering beads of the traders that pass by our town. And they float or fall and travel with me. Do they follow me? Thunderous silence. Lightning. Blasting. Ceasing. I do not know where I am.

It is beautiful. I am scared.

They change shapes. Clouds or bursts from battle? The clouds turn into a shape of a man, is that my son? Then a mother and a young child. They run. Wait for me! Where am I? The wind blows them away.

I do not know what is happening. I am being carried somewhere. There- I know that it is the moon. It is being swallowed - perhaps a mouth, cavernous and deep - of death. Comets. Thousands of wishes. Omen.

(He hears voices, conversations, screams, laughter:) Who is that? Who are you?
Show yourself! Wait for me! Where am I? Now, all I hear is the wind.

There is a lake, or a pond. Bring me there. There are marbles. I try to get some for Julio but they wither away. There is light. It shines bright, radiant like how the golden church spires glow. I see it. I see it now. It is the sun!

No, there are three suns – more, five! A hundred now. Gathering, spreading, travelling away from me. I am, I am, Encarnacion, celestial!

(Gil falls asleep and gently lands on another dimension. She is caught by Encarna – in a blue dress that flows like the sea.)

Encarna: *(Almost a whisper.)* Wake up. Wake up. Wake up, Gil.

Gil: Encarnacion! What are you doing here? How could you - *(He realizes that he is in a different place.)* Where are we?

Encarna: You are with me.

(The lovers kiss and dance in space.)

(PRESENT. At the office of Fr. Maximo, Julian is becomes more defeated as memory surges.

Julian: I see her in her wedding dress, going down the aisle.

Fr. Maximo: I remember that day as well. You wrote about it so well in
your -

Julian: - I wept with her every step. Sarah was coming to me.
Closer, closer, and here.

Fr. Maximo: My little *pamangkin* - all grown up.

Julian: She is the world - the only world I want to live in.

(PAST. Gil is ensnared by Encarna's embrace.)

Gil: *(Dreaming.)* Where is our son? I want to see my Julio.

Encarna: We have no son, my love.

Gil: *(Confused.)* What do you mean we have no son?

Encarna: Here you can have no son – or daughter. Just you and me.

Gil: You and me.

(The lovers kiss and soar in space.)

(PRESENT.)

Julian: And we brought Maya to you.

Fr. Maximo: She was then wrapped in delicate white, sleeping in Sarah's arms. I didn't even want to pour the water.

Julian: She was so calm that day. So quiet. How can the universe be conceived in such a tiny body?

Fr. Maximo: I saw my Sarah in her.

Julian: I have so many stories about them. So many beautiful stories.

(PAST. Gil is in ecstasy but memory still remains.)

Gil: Do you remember the time I first met you? The skies were gray but you were wearing a bright yellow dress. I thought you were dawn – a goddess that has come to shore.

Encarna: No. I do not remember.

Gil: Do you remember the night we first made love? Behind the boats, we rested our bodies on the sand. The moonlight illuminated your skin.

Encarna: No – not the moon, never a moon. No, I do not recall. I am not the past and cannot be the future. Just now, my love. Isn't this perfect? Just now.

Gil: You and me.

(Gil embraces her. They sleep and upon waking, everything repeats.)

(PRESENT.)

Julian: Never have I been so alive – in their presence. That is the only life I know. Now, I only have doubts.

(FUTURE. They have reached the promised city.)

Silaw: Hurry up, Yna! I can see the gates!

Yna: Now don't go ahead without me.

Silaw: Come on! Aren't you excited to get there? We'll be at Encarna and we'll see everyone – and my Papa. I've never seen him but I'll know him when I see him. Let's go!

Yna: Yes, my child. Only a matter of time now.

(All the realms merge:

PAST: *Gil dances with Encarnacion.*

FUTURE: *Silaw and Yna, full of hope, runs to the gates.*

PRESENT: *Julian, overwhelmed by grief leaves Fr. Maximo. He runs home and gets a knife.)*

Julian: We loved going to the beach. When the sun's about to set, she would always say that we are children of the sea. We are the waves trying to leave but always return. We cannot be created! We cannot be destroyed! We only flow. And then she'd hold my hand. Sarah, you're a mystery.

"Don't you ever leave me, okay?"

"Don't worry Jules, we are all water."

"What the...No more wine for you! You need water!"

(Laughing.) How could I understand that, Sarah? Are my limbs water? Are my words water? My thoughts? This loneliness, my longing - water?

Let it rain.

(Julian bleeds. Fr. Maximo enters the house.)

Fr. Maximo: Julian! Julian! What did you do to yourself? Oh Father
Almighty, help us. Help us!

(PAST: Gil traces the body of Encarna. He looks at her and she seems too perfect.)

*(FUTURE: Silaw and Yna find the gate of Intramuros, they enter. The sun sparks another flare.
A sudden burst of bright light. Then it is dark.)*

MOVEMENT THREE

V.

(A new day, at the office of Fr. Maximo.)

(Julian has bandages on his wrist.)

Fr. Maximo: If you truly wanted to end your life you wouldn't have called me.

Julian: Then you shouldn't have come.

Fr. Maximo: That's not what I mean. You have to keep faith, Julian. Be strong for them.

(A long pause.)

Julian: I was reading those books, Father.

Fr. Maximo: What books?

Julian: The ones I had when I was a kid. The Encyclopedia. It was at the old house. I stored some of my things there. In dusty boxes. I was looking for old pictures but I found them instead. I forgot I still had them. Maya would have enjoyed those books.

Fr. Maximo: We should visit them.

Julian: I don't think I can, Father. Not yet.

Fr. Maximo: Julian, promise me never to do that again.

(Julian looks beyond.)

Julian: At the hospital – five people died that day. I asked the nurse. I did. She did not want to tell me at first. But she relented. I guess I looked so desperate. The nurse told me that two of them were in a car crash. The kid – he was

eighteen, he was driving with his brother. The car got hit by a truck. Bam!
The other one, cancer. She was old already. I guess that's fine? Her family
was there but she didn't know because she's in a coma. Maybe she did?
Then I asked the nurse if there were any children. Two. A baby – stillborn.
And a child, beaten by her father. Almost unrecognizable, the nurse said.
The face black, blue, purple, and red.

Why does this world have to exist, Father? Faith, you tell me – believe in
what?

Fr. Maximo: Trust that there is love left. It is mysterious, I know –

Julian: - and I don't want a *fucking* mystery. Death is absolute, regardless if you're
good or bad. It all ends. I am so sick with all of this guessing. Trying to
know what all is this for. Trying to figure out the *plan*. Trying to find out a
reason. Death is there. I know it – you know it.

Fr. Maximo: But it shouldn't be in your hands.

Julian: But this is my life! Why shouldn't I be in charge of my own life? Damn it if I go to heaven or hell. I don't even believe in all of that anymore! No God, not the passion, not Him. I'm so tired.

Maybe it's reincarnation? Maybe it's science? Maybe it's nothing - absolutely nothing.

Fr. Maximo: *(Suddenly)* Then go on! Unwrap those bandages and do it! *(Attacking)* Go Julian, do it! I am tired too - I'm hurting as well. Go do it. If you think that's the way - do it! *(Goes to his desk and gets a letter opener)* C'mon Julian, do it!

(A standstill. Julian just looks at the letter opener.)

(Long pause.)

Julian: *(Weak & desperate)* Father, are you sure there's a plan?

(Fr. Maximo doesn't answer.)

I want to know what you truly think, Father.

(*Julian looks to Fr. Maximo*)

Tell me, are you sure – without any doubt – that there is a plan?

(*A certain calm.*)

Fr. Maximo: I was a young priest then. I was assigned to a very poor *barrio* by the sea.

We had no cathedral, not a church, no chapel but just a hut to celebrate mass. And even that small respite was destroyed by a typhoon. Not only my hut, but almost all of the houses. Nobody knew of our plight because we were so far away, unknown, forgotten. But we rebuilt. We: the fishermen, the women who weaved the nets, and even the young—especially the young. We who had nothing gave every little and everything that we could so that we could rise again. People helped each other not because of me, not because of my words, or the gospel. It was greater than that. It was simpler than that.

And everything stood once more, more beautiful than before. It was Sunday, after mass, I was walking by the shore looking at my *barrio*. I remember that I stood by the sea, the sound of the waves gently crashing,

the cool breeze touching my face. Everything was good; I felt...content, not more joy - but not any less. And I closed my eyes.

The waves, a gentle heartbeat. Continuous, break and crash, here and there, pulsing, and alive. And then that delicate ebb, that moment when all waves are subdued, that second when the *endless* rests, when the infinite sea becomes silent. Then, it was then, I am sure of it - I heard the voice of God.

I smiled, Julian. But after that, I was overwhelmed. Consumed with terror.

Will it ever be better than this, I asked myself?

(PAST. Gil leaves Encarna's embrace.)

Gil: ...I have to go. Hong long has it been?

Encarna: There is no time. No time. No. Aren't you happy here?

Gil: I do not know what this is. An enchantment, the devil's work -

Encarna: I am your beloved.

Gil: Yes, you are her – but not her – without *our* memories, without our past. And not here, not in this land.

(PRESENT.)

Julian: Will it ever be better?

(PAST.)

Encarna: Stay here, stay here with me. Here, we shall never end. The sun will never rise, it will never set.

Gil: I must go home – to her, to my son.

Encarna: Do not go. For if you go, you will die. Your land is dying. Everybody and everything in that land is dying.

(PRESENT.)

Fr. Maximo: Sometimes, I thought that the moment has been surpassed.

(Becomes thoroughly honest) But no, Julian, *not yet*.

(PAST.)

Gil: May it be so that we will end...but it is the only home I know.

Encarna: And it will be a tragedy for you – for everyone. You will know the meaning of age, the feeling of cold flesh, desperation. She will die and you shall bury her. Then, your son will bear children and generations upon generations but they too, all of them, shall suffer.

(PRESENT.)

Julian: *(Afraid.)* Maybe there's a different answer?

Fr. Maximo: Whatever it is Julian, I know that *once* it was beautiful.

(PAST.)

Gil: And only in that tragedy, I can live. Only there can I be happy.

(PRESENT.)

Fr. Maximo: And we try, Julian. Dear God, we try.

(Fr. Maximo hands Julian a pen.)

Sarah and Maya always loved your stories.

(Julian rests his body on Fr. Maximo's lap. Fr. Maximo cradles him.)

(PAST: Gil climbs a peak. Upon reaching the top, he looks at "Encarna" one last time then jumps back to this existence.)

VI.

(FUTURE. By the fallen Governador's Palace – where Gil Perez was once stationed.)

(Yna is asleep. Silaw has been reading the tale. As she closes the book, she realizes the truth.

Instead of rage, she accepts the present.)

(Another flare from the dying sun. She looks up.)

Silaw: *(Calm.)* Yna, Yna, wake up. I think it's time.

Yna: *(She wakes up and looks at the clouds)* Yes dear Silaw, let's go.

(They rise. From a distance, crashing is heard.)

(Silaw stops.)

Yna: What is it Silaw? We must get going.

Silaw: *(Silaw musters the courage to reveal the truth to her mother, but instead:)*

I love you, Mama.

Yna: I love you too.

(Yna finds the place – the exact place where Gil Perez vanished.)

Here it is my child. We found it. Just like the book said!

Alright now, we just have to stay here until the portal opens. Are you excited my child?

Silaw: Yes I am, Yna. We shall see Papa soon?

Yna: Yes – at Encarna!

(Yna cradles Silaw, the child's head near to her breast. She sings an age-old song: Isem Isem.)

*Isem, isem umisem ka man biag ko
Lawlawagam man man toy barukong ko
Tay isem mo isu't mangay-ayo
Daytoy pusok napwan ti limdo*

(PAST. The song from the future is still heard.)

(By a dock in Mexico.)

Gil: My dear Encarnacion, I am in *Mexico*. Yesterday, I was just in *Filipinas*. I do not know how I was able to come back. It seems like a hundred years have passed. They asked me how I've come to be and I can only tell them that I was in a dream.

And now I am awake—without the seas to separate us from one another. My dearest, I am coming home.

(As Gil prepares to travel, he sings to the wind certain that his lullaby will reach his son.)

A los niños que duermen, Dios los bendice

A las madres que velan, Dios las asiste

Duérmete niño , Duérmete niño

Duérmete niño, Arrú arrú

(PRESENT. The song from the past reverberates.)

(Julian still cradled by Fr. Maximo.)

Julian: Sarah would tell Maya stories passed on to her by her grandmother.

Fr. Maximo: Yes, Nana Ising.

Julian: About ports, and walls, doors, magic...

Fr. Maximo: ...about our ancestors, our father's father and fathers beyond-

Julian: -and maybe I'll write about that.

How did it end? After Gil Perez teleported from

Intramuros to Mexico – but now aware of all the
doom and truth ahead?

Fr. Maximo: He lived.

Julian: I shall live too, Father. I shall be full of energy, words
and tales – boundless. And maybe, just maybe, when
I die – my body shall become light – and I shall travel
the infinite universe.

(FUTURE. The sun has truly died.)

Silaw: It is so bright, Yna. Are we entering the portal?

Yna: I – I don't know, my child. I don't know. I can only see light.

Julian: And in the openness, we shall find each other – yes,
I'll find you, Sarah, Maya. And we shall all collide –
then we shall create a universe from ourselves.

Fr. Maximo: Yes – a new beginning.

(As Julian rests, he hums a lullaby for his wife and daughter)

Julian: *As your bright and tiny spark,
Lights the traveller in the dark.
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.*

(As songs from the past to present echoes, the fires engulf everything.)

Silaw: I can feel it, Yna! Can you?

Yna: I think I can, Silaw.

Silaw: Isn't it beautiful, Yna?

Yna: Is it?

Silaw: *(Smiling)* If we believe it is...

Yna: *(Holding her tears – then resolute) ...then it is.*

Hold my hand, my child.

We've done all we could.

We shall rest now.

Everyone can rest now.

(Silaw smiles to her mother.)

(A cacophony of destruction and sweet arias. Flames consume everything, a swift bright light upon the entire stage. After the glare, all are gone.)

(Upon embers, we can now only see the vast universe: a galaxy dying, and new stars forming.)

END