

## FOLK POETRY

Folk poetry refers to poems belonging to an oral tradition that dates back to centuries before the colonial period and continued to develop through the colonial periods. Among the early poetic forms of the indigenous Filipinos were riddles, proverbs, short poems, and poetic exchanges or jousts. Riddles, proverbs, and short poems like the Tagalog *tanaga* and Mangyan *ambahan* are the simplest forms of primordial oral literature, centered around the *talinghaga*, “a single metaphor which establishes an analogy between human experience and an aspect of [a person’s] environment” (Lumbera 1986:12). Collectively, riddles and proverbs are known as folk speech—a spoken code utilizing images, symbols, and ideas, as distinguished from plain, everyday social and private communication. The main distinction lies in the purpose of communication; the manner, mood, or medium of conveyance; and the structure, style, and substance of the message. Many, if not most, riddles and proverbs are conveyed in verse form, and so they are also considered as among the earliest types of folk poetry.

### Riddles

A riddle is a description of objects in terms intended to suggest something entirely different, or a question stated so as to exercise one’s ingenuity in answering it or discovering its meaning. Riddling is a universal art, and Filipinos share this general fondness for riddling. Practically every ethnolinguistic group in the country has its riddles, which are known by various names: *patototdon* among the Bicol, *tigmo* among the Cebuano, *burburtia* among the Ilocano, *paktakon* among the Ilongo, *bugtong* among the Pampango and Tagalog, *pabitla* or *bonikew* among the Pangasinan, *patitgo-on* among the Waray, *patugmahanon* among the Capiznon, *palluvuh* among the Ibanag, *lohmo* or *lakmo* among the Isinay, *lallagunut* among the Gaddang, *kabbuni* among the Ivatan, *antuka* or *paakenala* among the Maguindanao, *antuka* among the Bukidnon and the Maranao, *igom* among the Palawan, *paigumun* among the Batak, *atukon* among the Manobo, *tutukanon* among the Mansaka, and *tigum-tigum* or *tukud-tukud* among the Tausug.

In the Philippines, riddling is done mainly for entertainment, a pleasant pastime while working but especially in moments of leisure. There are only two known instances where a particular time is specified for riddling to be engaged in. Among the Manuvu, riddling is not favored at nighttime, which is devoted to other communal activities, such as storytelling and epic singing. Among the Isneg, a riddle about the riddle itself mentions the appropriate time for this activity: “It is that which we cannot say, except at the time of harvest.”

The examples of Philippine riddles given here are taken from Damiana Eugenio’s collection, 1983, and Donn Hart’s, 1964. These mainly describe objects that are familiar to their audience, such as objects in their immediate environment or parts

of their own anatomy. The central image may be a household item like the mat, dipper or ladle, kerosene lamp, candle, pot, or stone grinder:

**Cebuano:**

*Naghimo akog balay giuna ko ang taliwala;  
Naglibug ang panday kay ang bungbongan  
midapat sa yuta. (Bukag)*

I made a house, I began with the middle;  
The carpenter was confused because the  
walls touched the ground. (Basket)

Plants and animals around the farmhouse such as the bamboo, banana, jackfruit, coconut, corn, ginger, guava, and the cat, dog, ant, chicken, or pig, are favorite subjects:

**Ilongo:**

*Ang puno buko-buko  
Dahon daw abaniko,  
Bunga daw parasko,  
Perdigones ang liso. (Kapayas)*

The trunk is full of nodes,  
Leaves like fans,  
Fruits like large wine bottles,  
Pellets are the seeds. (Papaya)

Some riddles describe parts of the human body:

**Manuvu:**

*Anak na aruwa  
Abaparivaoy yet buvungan  
Kanna magpakadkita. (Mata)*

There are two siblings,  
lying on each side of a mountain,  
never seeing each other. (Eyes)

Riddles all over the archipelago are very similar in subject matter, and only the language and sometimes the structure differ. Thus, we find versions of the same riddle in most ethnolinguistic groups.

**Tagalog:**

*Bongbong con liuanag  
con gabi ay dagat. (Banig)*

**Ilocano:**

*No aldao tubong  
no rabii dadali. (Icamen)*

**Pangasinan:**

*Tubong na agew  
Tabla no labi. (Icamen)*

**Igorot:**

*Mo madsem maannaannawa  
mo pay mapat-a ngumadan si tubong. (Abek)*

**Isneg:**

*Bolo na alxaw  
tanap no xabi. (Aba)*

A bamboo tube by day,  
By night a sea. (Mat)

What is immediately striking about many Philippine riddles is that they are structured as verse, the favorite form being the rhyming or assonanced couplet. While there are nonrhyming, declarative or interrogatory riddles, the assonanced couplet seems to be more prevalent:

**Waray:**

*Baka ha Manila  
inapong nganhi an inga. (Dalogdog)*

My cow in Manila,  
its mooing can be heard here. (Thunder)

When not cast in verse form, riddles become prosaic yet still enigmatic descriptions of objects or phenomena whose actual identities are to be guessed.

**Ilocano:**

*Umon-una nga aganak sa agbugui. (Pagay)*  
First it gives birth before becoming pregnant. (Rice plant)

Sometimes the riddle is given in the form of a question:

### **Cebuano:**

*Unsang reloja nga dili magkahinanglan ug llave? (Manok)*

What clock does not need winding? (Rooster)

Occasionally the riddle opens with a stereotyped phrase to introduce the question, such as the Ilocano “Ania ti pinarsua ti Dios . . . ? (What did God create that . . . ?)”, the Kalinga “Appukedt . . .” (Guess . . .), the Ivatan “Buñi mo buñi ko aya (Guess my riddle . . .), or the Badjao “Daing-daing ai . . . ?” (What kind of fish . . . ?). It may end with a characteristic phrase, like the Cebuano “Unsa man?” (What is it?) and “Karon tag-ana kini” (Now guess this one), or the Waray “Takay tigo” (Guess what it is) and its condensed form, “Tigo-a.” The Mandaya begin any riddle with the phrase “Tuok sang tutukanon ko” (Guess what it is). Here is an example.

### **Mandaya:**

*Tuok sang tutukanon ko  
Tagbi na dadalaga-ay  
Matigam mana-i sang kasigullman. (Ligwan)*

Guess what it is  
Only a small girl  
Yet knows how to spin in the dark. (Honey bee)

Some riddles go beyond the common couplet form and become rhyming quatrains, or even longer. They are elaborate metaphorical constructions of the puzzle to be solved.

### **Ilongo:**

*May diotay nga kaban-kaban,  
Naga abri kag naga sira man.  
Ang solod puro tul-an,  
Kun kaisa nadudunlan. (Ba-ba)*

There is a small chest  
That opens and closes by itself.  
The contents are all bone,  
Sometimes it chokes. (Mouth)

### **Tagalog:**

*Kahit ka na dalubhasa't pantas*

*At alam ang dunong sa lahat.  
Aling bapor kaya sa sangmaliwanag  
Ang sa patag ay naglalayag? (Plantsa)*

Though you be expert and wise  
And possess all knowledge of the race:  
What ship in the whole wide world  
Sails upon a dry surface? (Flat iron)

Sometimes the combination of images can be very unusual.

### **Cebuano:**

*Sudlayng maanindot giniring-giringan paglibut;  
Bantug man kay magatiyabao pagabirig-birigan  
man diay sa kabao. (Intusan)*

A beautiful comb with serrated edges  
It flirtatiously dances whenever a carabao  
goes around. (Sugarcane mill)

Much of the beauty and charm of riddles lies mainly in the startling beauty of imagery that the native mind is capable of inventing and expressing. It is perhaps the metaphorical riddles that are easily remembered, with their fanciful but apt imagery artistically describing objects which are mere clues to the answer. The metaphors used reveal a poetic sensibility keenly aware of and responsive to the environment.

### **Ilongo:**

*Prinsisang ambungan  
Nag lingkod sa kopa. (Kasoy)*

A beautiful princess  
Sitting on a cup. (Cashew)

The enjoyment of riddles derives from the challenge of having to guess the answer, but the riddle can be made more difficult—and the challenge thus enhanced—by the use of various stylistic devices. Balance and parallelism are seen in:

### **Cebuano:**

*Tubig ang gihukot,  
Tubig ang gihuktan,  
Tubig mohobad. (Asin)*

Tied with water,  
Tied to water,  
Untied by water. (Salt)

Paradox is the technique used in:

**Maguindanao:**

*Magagayan a malambeg,  
Mababa den o edtindeg. (Aso)*

Tall when sitting,  
Short when standing. (Dog)

Personification gives human qualities to an inanimate object or idea:

**Manuvu:**

*Labbut ni Kaitoman  
Dilotan ni Kapuypuy. (Kuron uwoy apoy)*

The anus of Kaitoman  
Is licked by Kapuypoy. (Pot and fire)

One of the sources of entertainment in riddling is the double entendre or double meaning, usually containing sexual allusions. Such riddles are common in most groups, and they are intended to elicit laughter in a group of men, or men and women, and also sometimes to embarrass or discomfit an unmarried woman in the audience. These riddles use the sex organs or the sex act as the clue to guessing the answer, using colorful language and the appropriate naughtiness of tone. The answers usually turn out to be commonplace objects.

**Cebuano:**

*Sa ibabao, balucagon  
Pagcabucaha ko mapulahon. (Sapran)*

Its surface is full of hair  
I open it and it is red. (Achuete)

**Gaddang:**

*Congonan nu usin y amam  
Maggirawa pay sila y inam. (Campana)*

If you pull your daddy's penis  
Your mommy's vagina, too, screams. (Bell)

The use of nonsense words is another device used to spice up the art of riddling. In some riddles, nonsense words seem to have been coined mainly to meet the needs of rhyme, rhythm, and meter, as well as for onomatopoeic effect.

Sometimes the words are fictitious or folkloric terms referring to persons, places, or animals.

### **Mansaka:**

*Padi ni Kiding-kiding*  
*Di pagabuslan. (Ollaipan)*

Knife of Kiding-kiding  
No one can borrow. (Centipede)

### **Proverbs**

A proverb is a terse didactic statement which carries the force of tradition, the effect of moral authority, and the mark of timelessness. As “popular saying,” it has been handed down from generation to generation, containing the folk wisdom of the ages, with the validity and impact of moral precepts based on folklore, custom, religious world view, and belief or value system.

Filipinos have always acknowledged the instructional value of proverbs in their social life, and have invoked these in just about any imaginable situation requiring the imparting of advice, admonition to the young, exchange of ideas and opinions, as well as in philosophical and literary writings. Like riddles, proverbs are known in practically all ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines, and dwell on the same universal themes or moral issues.

Most of the native terms for proverbs have the meaning of “wise, old sayings,” such as *aramiga* or *sasabihan* among the Bicol, *panultihon* or *pagya* among the Cebuano, *humbaton* or *hurobaton* among the Ilongo and Capiznon, *pagsasao* among the Ilocano, *kasebian* among the Pampango, *diparan* among the Pangasinan, *salawikain/sawikain/kasabihan* among the Tagalog, *dayhuan/puplongan/patitgo-on* among the Waray, *hueobaton* for proverb and *bilisad-on* for maxim among the Aklanon, *unoni* among the Ibanag, *pananahan* among the Ivatan, *memos an baba/oloran/ tongong* among the Isinay, *lalenut* among the Gaddang, *basahan* among the Bukidnon, *panonggelengan* among the Manobo, *pananaroon* among the Maranao, and *masaala* (proverb) and *pituwa* (maxim) among the Tausug. Another form of folk speech sacred to the Tausug is the *hadith*, consisting of sayings handed down by the prophet Muhammad, and written in Arabic.

Filipino elders are fond of quoting proverbs to inculcate virtues and desirable attitudes among the young; to encourage them when they lose heart; to rebuke, warn, or correct them when they do wrong; or simply when they want to drive home a lesson or truth. Proverbs teach the people custom law, good conduct among themselves, and the art of relating to one another in a harmonious society.

The proverb is distinctly poetic in structure. It is commonly expressed as a

rhyming couplet containing two diverse elements or images, which do not have meaning unless they are brought together. Such are the images of the cart and the carabao in the following proverb.

**Gaddang:**

*Mena dam si mappalungu  
Yo daleday mah so daffug.*

The cart does not precede  
the water buffalo.

In general, the lessons and images of metaphorical proverbs are derived from the common everyday life and occupations of the folk. Plants and animals in the backyard and farm may be used to refer to human character:

**Bicol:**

*Daing maniwang na manok sa nagugutom na butbot.*

There is no bony chicken to a hungry owl.

Processes associated with common objects in and around the house may stand for the development of character:

**Tausug:**

*Bang maraiyau in subu sin kalis,  
pag labai ha hasaan, landu mahait mayan.*

If the tempering of the kris is good,  
passing it over a whetstone makes it very sharp.

One gleans the ways and manners of the common people in proverbs such as:

**Pampango:**

*Ing pamaquiasawa e anting susubung nasi,  
iyapsa nung mapali.*

Marriage is not like rice that is eaten,  
it cannot be spat out if it is too hot.

Customs and beliefs peculiar to a certain group are seen in some proverbs, such as:

**Mandaya:**



*Tatiin mo eng baon mo,  
Sukdon mo eng limokon mo;  
Daw limokon maglata ila,  
Daw punay magpullayaw da.*

Beware when you sneeze  
Heed the turtledove's voice;  
If good, then proceed,  
If bad, stay and take heed.

Native food may be used to signify etiquette:

**Tagalog:**

*Kapag daw nanunuyo,  
nagdadala ng bukayo.*

If you want to win the favor of someone,  
it is customary to bring coconut candy.

Games and amusements, a favorite of which is cockfighting, express certain values:

**Tagalog:**

*Ang ikasusulong ng isang nunusta,  
Ang bukad ng pakpak at lantik ng paa.*

One lays a wager on a cock  
by virtue of its fluttering wings and graceful feet.

Proverbs, like riddles, use many stylistic devices. Balance and parallelism are seen in a simple statement with two elements, which are either similar or contrasting:

**Tagalog:**

*Ibang hari, ibang ugali.*

New king, new rules.

**Ilongo:**

*Kon diin ang luto, didto ang sunggo;  
Kon diin ang hilaw, didto ang likaw.*

Where everything is cooked, all gather;  
where everything is raw, all evade.

Personification may invest inanimate objects, vegetation, and animals with lively human qualities. The following proverb also illustrates the process by which the

favorite Ilocano vegetable dish called *pinakbet* is cooked:

**Ilocano:**

*Dipay naluto ni paria, simmagpaw ni carabasa.*

Before the bitter melon was cooked, squash jumped in.

Hyperbole is an effective device for emphatically driving home a moral point:

**Boholano:**

*Masbale mapilde ang ginharian dili ang gicasabutan.*

Rather lose a kingdom than break your heart.

Analogy illustrates how objects of nature mirror human behavior.

**Pampango:**

*Panga matni ya ing tuquil, ala yang laman*

If a bamboo tube sounds loudly, it is empty.

Other stylistic devices occasionally used in the Philippine proverbs are alliteration, certain rhetorical and syntactical patterns, and clever word play.

According to intent and subject matter, Philippine proverbs may be grouped as follows: those that express general attitude towards life; ethical proverbs or those that recommend certain virtues and condemn certain vices; those that express a system of values; and those that express general truths and observations about life and human nature.

The proverbs often reveal a view of life as arduous, full of challenges to be met and hurdled. It is also uncertain, transient, and fragile.

**Cebuano:**

*Ang dalan sa langit, wala bakkig kabulukan.*

The road to heaven is not paved with roses.

This view of life leads one, by reflection, to the conclusion that life must be led carefully, prudently, and with maximum good to be accomplished. But it also necessarily leads to one consider other aspects of life in proper perspective, such as justice, which in the proverbs is expressed in simple, unequivocal, harsh terms.

**Ivatan:**

*Masonusonung a capayhaus nu bac du duduyan  
by dayem canu catayo su marajet a pinaren*

It is easier for a cow to pass through the eye  
of a needle than to hide a crime.

Proverbs inculcating the virtues that Filipinos hold dear may also be called ethical proverbs. As practical guidelines for living, these include industry, thrift, patience and perseverance, humility, prudence in word and in deed, care and caution, respect and courtesy, forethought and planning, charity and gratitude, family solidarity and harmony, hospitality, and many others. The following examples express these various virtues, respectively:

**Aklanon:**

*Ro kahugod tuboran it kahamungayaan.*

Industry conquers all hardships

**Pampango:**

*Nung sasali ka qng e mu cailangan  
e lumuat pisali nin in quecang cailangan*

If you buy things that you don't need,  
you will soon sell those that you do need.

**Bicol:**

*An gapo na matagas, sa tinuturo-turo nin tubig malalagas*

The hardest stone is eroded by constant dropping of water

**Bukidnon:**

*Ecacampat mo anga ba ecacampat no ho yan.*

Disregard your winsome beauty, for it will only lead you to immorality

**Ibanag:**

*Y sira makanna ta simu na.*

Fish are caught by their mouth, people by their words,

**Pangasinan:**

*No agmo labay so nadangdang, agka onaasingger ed apoy.*

One who plays with fire gets burned.

**Ilongo:**

*Wa'y kinahanglan ang pagsunod sa kabilin sa kabahandianon  
Basta makasunod sa kabilin sa maayong pamatasan*

They need not inherit wealth who inherit good manners.

**Bicol:**

*Ubos-ubos biyaya, pagkaobos tinganga.*

Give away everything wastefully and afterwards  
you will find yourself in want

**Ivatan:**

*Anu nangatus ca su cartos ammacalo a capagan, as nu  
mapia a dadakay am capagan ava.*

Financial indebtedness is easily paid but not a debt of kindness

**Tagalog:**

*Sakit ng kalingkingan, damdam ng buong katawan.*

The pain of the little finger is felt by the whole body.

**Tagalog:**

*Ang pangtawo ng Tagalog  
ay ikmo, bunga, at apog.*

The Tagalog offer their guests  
ikmo leaf, betel nut, and lime.

Proverbs also express a value system, or a way of judging the relative weights and merits of things or conditions that people live with in the world. An object, idea, or condition used as an image in a riddle may be open to two contrasting interpretations or valuations. For instance, wealth is a desirable commodity, because with it come power, prestige, comfort, and security. But then, wealth is not the most important thing in life, because goodness, honor, sound judgment and

discretion, wisdom and intelligence and talent, good name, peace of mind, family and friends, are all considered more valuable than material possessions. This duality of perception is expressed in proverbs such as the following:

**Tausug:**

*In baung-baung makaloon kasunungan biya da astana.*

A hut may hold peace as well as a palace.

Proverbs make a general statement about life and human nature, in the form of a pragmatic observation distilled from long experience. It is in these observations or reflections on life that the depth and range of folk wisdom is seen. Some proverbs of this category are expressed as self-evident and even literal truisms, with philosophical and social implications, or else are cast in vivid metaphorical language

**Ivatan:**

*Mapipia anu sumavat ka a maysaosaod su sagap as  
canu caviden mu du calawangan a manalamad su  
among.*

It is better to go home and weave a net than to  
stay on the beach and watch the fish.

While many Philippine proverbs have been transmitted through generations intact, still echoing the age-old folk wisdom of ancestors, historical events and conditions have had a hand in the creation of proverbs, thus adding to the general trove of oral tradition. The English language has crept into some of them, as in:

**Cebuano:**

*Bisa'g saging, basta labing.*

It does not matter if we have nothing but bananas  
to eat, as long as there is loving.

The sorry state of the national economy may have inspired the cynical outlook of this proverb:

**Tagalog:**

*Maralita, mayaman, at pamahalaan,  
Lahat ay nagkakautang.*

The poor, the rich, and the government  
All get into debt.

## **PHILIPPINE LITERATURE**

Philippine literature is the body of works, both oral and written, that Filipinos, whether native, naturalized, or foreign born, have created about the experience of people living in or relating to Philippine society. It is composed or written in any of the Philippine languages, in Spanish and in English, and in Chinese as well. Philippine literature may be produced in the capital city of Manila and in the different urban centers and rural outposts, even in foreign lands where descendants of Filipino migrants use English or any of the languages of the Philippines to create works that tell about their lives and aspirations. The forms used by Filipino authors may be indigenous or borrowed from other cultures, and these may range from popular pieces addressed to mass audiences to highly sophisticated works intended for the intellectual elite.

Having gone through two colonial regimes, the Philippines has manifested the cultural influences of the Spanish and American colonial powers in its literary production. Works may be grouped according to the dominant tradition or traditions operative in them. The first grouping belongs to the ethnic tradition, which comprises oral lore identifiably precolonial in provenance and works that circulate within contemporary communities of tribal Filipinos, or among lowland Filipinos that have maintained their links with the culture of their non-Islamic or non-Christian ancestors. The second grouping consists of works that show Spanish derivation or influence in the themes and forms employed, and these may include literary works that are translations of original Spanish writings, or adaptations of the same. A third grouping comprises works belonging to the American colonial tradition. Literary production under this tradition shows the impact of American colonial control, which facilitated through the educational system the entry into Philippine literature of forms and themes from the literatures of England and the United States.

In contemporary Philippine writing, one may observe a merging of these three traditions as these are employed by literary artists expressing their response to historical and sociocultural forces that have shaped Philippine society since the Pacific War.

### **The Ethnic Tradition**

Philippine ethnic literature is a rich repository of ideas, ideals, and sentiments, preserved through centuries of oral transmission. From the samples that exist, ethnic literature may be classified into three groups: folk speech, folk songs, and folk narratives.

The most amusing form of folk speech is the riddle, called *tigmo* in Cebuano, *bugtong* in Tagalog and in Pampango, *burburtia* in Ilocano, *paktakon* in Ilongo, and *patototdon* in Bicol. A puzzle in which an object to be guessed is described in

terms of another unrelated object, the riddle relies on *talinghaga* or metaphor. Because it reveals subtle resemblances between two unlike objects, the riddle whets one's wits and sensitizes one's perceptions of things often taken for granted.

This bugtong ingeniously describes, in an apt personification, the motion of feet:

Pampango:

*Adua lang mikaluguran  
Tagalan nong tagalan*

Two friends  
In an endless chase.

Some riddles verge on the obscene, referring to sex-related images to describe what are actually "innocent" objects.

Gaddang:  
*Gongonan nu usin y amam  
Maggirawa pay sila y inam. (Campana)*

If you pull your daddy's penis.  
Your mommy's vagina, too, screams. (Bell)

But the opposite process also occurs. Everyday objects are used to suggest sex or the genitals, as in this riddle, (Alburo et al 1988:13):

Ibanag:

*Kasikallan y levu na  
Bawang y tanggna na. (Fuki)*

It's surrounding is a forest,  
It's center is mud. (Vulva)

While riddles enrich the imagination and sharpen the senses, proverbs and aphorisms instill values and teach lessons. Called *aramiga* or *sasabihan* among the Bicol, *panultihon* or *pagya* among the Cebuano, *humbaton* or *hurobaton* among the Ilongo, *pagsasao* among the Ilocano, *kasebian* among the Pampango, and *salawikain* or *kasabihan* among the Tagalog, proverbs are short, pithy sayings, which encapsulate and preserve a community's beliefs, norms, and codes of behavior. Usually, a commonplace object or incident is used to illustrate an accepted truth or cherished ideal.

The idea, strength in unity, is expressed through the figure of the abaca, a commodity in the Tagalog area.

Tagalog:

*Gaano man ang tibay ng piling abaka  
Ay wala ring lakas kapag nag-iisa.*

However sturdy the abaca,  
It is weak when it is alone.

An egg is used to symbolize virginity.

Mandaya:

*Yang ataog aw madugdug Di da mamauli.*

An egg once broken Will never be the same.

Perseverance is taught through nature imagery.

Bicol:

*An gapo na matagas,sa tinuto-tuto nin tubig malalagas*

The hardest stone is eroded by constant dripping of water.

Other proverbs are more direct in admonishing or in extolling virtues such as gratitude, diligence, and restraint.

Pangasinan:

*Say koli pakalmoay liket.  
Say ngiras pakalmoay irap.*

Industry is the sibling of prosperity;  
Laziness is the sibling of starvation.

A rather extended form of wise saying is the Tagalog *tanaga*, a monorhyming heptasyllabic quatrain, which expresses insights and lessons on living. It is, however, more emotionally charged than the terse proverb, and thus has affinities with the folk lyric. One example reflects on pain and the will:

*Ang sugat ay kung tinanggap  
di daramdamin ang antak  
ang aayaw at di mayag  
galos lamang magnanaknak.*

Submission to wounding  
makes the intensest pain bearable;  
unwillingness  
makes the merest scratch fester.



Among the Bukidnon, the *basahanan* are extended didactic sayings; among the people of *Panay*, the *daraida* and the *daragilon*. These verse forms often employ a central metaphor to convey their thesis.

The appeal to the intellect of the various kinds of folk speech is matched by the appeal to the emotions of folk songs. Among the different forms of folk lyrics are lullabies, love songs, drinking songs, religious songs, and death songs.

Lullabies are sung to put children to sleep. Called *oyayi* by the Tagalog, *ili-ili* by the Ilongo, *duayya* by the Ilocano, *tumaila* by the Pampango, *baliwayway* by the Isinay and *Ilongot*, and *andang* by the Aeta, lullabies are often repetitive and sonorous. Many lullabies are didactic; some are plaintive, expressing the hardships of life; a few express hope in the future. In this lullaby, the parent hopes that the child becomes a good adult:

Ilocano:

*Maturog, duayya*  
*Maturog kad tay bunga,*  
*Tay lalaki nga napigsa*  
*Ta inton dumakkel tay bunga,*  
*Isunto aya tay mammati*  
*Tay amon a ibaga mi.*

Go to sleep, dear little one  
Will my child please sleep  
This strong boy  
So when the child grows big  
He will obey  
Everything that we say.

Many children's songs may be sung and danced to. Sometimes senseless, always playful and light, they reflect the child's carefree world. Called *ida-ida a rata* in Maguindanao, *tulang pambata* in Tagalog, *cansiones para abbing* by the Ibanag, and *langan bata bata* by the Tausug, these are often sung as accompaniment to children's games. A popular children's song is "Pen pen de sarapen," which is sung while the child's fingers are spread and counted.

Romantic love is a frequent concern of many a folk lyric. The bulk of love lyrics, however, was suppressed or sanitized by the missionaries. Some verse forms are sad lyrics about unrequited love, such as the *panawagon* and *balitao*. But this *laji*, a generic term of the Ivatan for lyric, celebrates the lovers' power to demolish—or at least their will to demolish—whatever barrier divides them:

*Nangayan mo kakuyab? Pinangalichavus*  
*ko na imo su dumibu a panahehsan ko nimo,*  
*am dichu mo a dali. Madali mo yaken*

*du chinulung da yaken da ama kani luyna koy'  
du vitas nu dahurapen, as sineseng da yaken  
mu yunut nu maunged a niuy, as valivaliwangen  
aku ava nu dima, as valivaliwangen  
aku nu addaw ko nimoy'mo nadinchad ko a lipus.*

Where did you go yesterday? I have asked all  
the passersby about you,  
but in vain. How could you find me?  
I was hidden by my father and my mother  
in the hollow of a bamboo; they stopped it  
with the husk of a young coconut;  
and I may not be opened  
with the hands, but I may be opened  
by love for you, my beloved.

Courtship songs are many in the ethnic literatures. The Aeta have the *aliri*; the Tagalog have the *diona*; the Cebuano and other groups have the *harana* or serenade. Many of them celebrate the beloved's beauty while expressing the lover's disconsolation without her.

The Mangyan *ambahan*, a poem with seven syllables per line, the ending syllables following a rhyme scheme, frequently deals with love, though not always romantic love, as some are about parental love and friendship. Many of the more popular *ambahan*, however, are exchanges between lovers:

*Tunda pagpangumrawan  
No sa yangko itungpan  
Payi mamabunlagan  
No bunlag di tukawan  
No bunlag bay kar-ayan  
Una way si suyungan  
Una way si bansayan  
Padi yag pangambitan.*

My boy, busy courting me,  
frankly, I will tell you then;  
I don't want to give you up.  
As long as you are with me,  
It will only be through death!  
And even my mother dear  
or my father, let them try,  
all their prayers would not help!

The *ambahan* is also used as a form of social entertainment and as a tool for teaching the young. Other forms of love lyrics are the Mandaya and Maranao *bayok*, the Ibanag *pinatalatto cu ta futu cao* (literally, "pounding in my heart"), the Manobo and Bukidnon *mandata*, the Bilaan *ye dayon*, and the Ilocano *badeng*.

While love lyrics form or strengthen bonds between lovers, work songs foster cohesiveness within the community. They depict the different forms of livelihood in the country—farming, fishing, embroidery, salt making, pottery, hunting, rowing, woodcutting. They are often sung to synchronize the movements of workers. The Ivatan *kalusan* is sung while a group is rowing at sea or is clearing a farm. The Tagalog *soliranin* is another rowing song. The Kalinga *mambayu* is a rice-pounding song. The Manobo *manganinay* is a bee-hunting song. This *mannamili* or pot-making song among the Ilocano is spiced with double entendre:

Boy: *Ading ko, maluksawak  
Ta nabuong tay banga.*

Girl: *Maisublim pay ita  
tay patgweek nga banga?  
No di mo tinippay saan a nabuong.  
Agalwad ka ta ipulong ka ken nanang.*

Boy: *Mano, ading, ti bayad na  
ay damili nga banga?  
Nangina ken nalaka, itured ko latta.*

Girl: *Nalaka, manong, no sika  
la ket gapuna.*

Boy: *Nalaing, ading,  
Dios, unay ti agngina.*

Boy: I broke your pot my *ading*,  
I am sorry.

Girl: Do you think you can still  
put back my precious pot ?  
If you had not tipped it,  
it would not have broken.  
You'll see, I'll tell mother what you've done.

Boy: How much *ading*, is this well-made pot?  
I will do all I can to pay for it, whether dear or cheap.

Girl: For you *manong*, I'll give it cheap.

Boy: Good. Thank you very much.

Drinking songs are sung during carousals. Often brief, always merry, almost hedonistic, many of them originated in the Bicol area, where they are called *tigsik*. In Cebuano and Waray, they are called *tagay*. In the *tagay*, everyone drinks from the same cup and partakes of the hors d'oeuvre.

Waray:

*Igduholduhol ngan palakta na it nga tagay  
Ayaw pagatrasar kay mabutlaw na ug mauhaw  
Ayaw palalapos didimdim hahadki namanla anay  
Ayaw man pagibigla, ayaw man pagbigla  
bangin ka lumnunay  
Sugod man it aton sumsuman sahid gud  
mamorot kay basi pa dugngan  
Kanugon hadton inagonon konkabuwasan  
pa di na daw makakaon.*

Pass now that glass of tuba,  
For we are tired and thirsty.  
Don't let it pass without taking a sip;  
Don't take too big a gulp because you might  
drown.  
Everyone eat, for the fish will be wasted  
If we do not consume it.

There are lyrics for more solemn affairs, such as religious rites and deaths. They have a prayer of thanksgiving called *ambaamba* and an exorcism chant called *bugyaw*. The Kalinga have entreaties called *tubag*; the Aeta, *magablon*. A good harvest is requested in the *dag-unan*; and blessings are asked for in the Cebuano *harito*:

*Maluoy dili ninyo kuhaan  
Kining akong ginsakpan  
Labing maayo nga inyong dungagan  
Sama niining kadaghanan.*

Pity, do not reduce  
These my members  
Better if you will add  
Like these multitudes.

Deaths occasion the singing of dirges or lamentations, in which the deeds of the dead are recounted. Dirges are called *dung-aw* among the Ilocano, *kanogon* among the Cebuano, *annako* among the Bontoc, and *ibi* among the Kalinga.

Folk narratives include folk tales and epics. Folk tales, generally called *kuwentong bayan* among the Tagalog, are of different kinds: myths, legends, fables, and trickster tales. Myths, often regarded as sacred, explain the origin and the goal of the cosmos. They usually involve divinities and spirits who interact with humans. From among the pantheon of gods and goddesses, one is regarded as supreme—called Bathala among the Tagalog, Mangetchay among the Pampango, Gugurang among the Bicol, Kabunian among the Bontoc, and Laon among the Visaya. The gods live in the skyworld, sometimes depicted as having several layers.

Creation myths are numerous. According to one version, the world was the product of a conflict between the sky and the sea. A bird, tired of flying and having nowhere to land, provoked the sky and the sea to fight. The sky threw rocks and stones at the sea, which eventually formed islands. The tired bird finally found a place to rest. One version of the myth about the origin of people also has a bird responsible. It pecked a bamboo open, and from it rose the first man and woman. The Ilongot believe that the world was populated when the first couple had children who married one another.

There are myths to explain the greed and violence of the crocodile, the sweet taste of lanzones, the many “eyes” of the pineapple, and the inestimable height of the heavens. Other myths are associated with geographical features like waterfalls, volcanoes, and mountains, or with flora and fauna, like the *dama de noche* and the shark.

Legends are believed to be about more recent events and, like myths, they explain the origin of things. They are also used to teach lessons in life. Legends are called *alamat* in Tagalog, *osipon* in Bicol, *sarita* in Ilocano, *istorya* in Pangasinan, *gintunan* in Kinaray-a and Ilongo. Many supernatural beings figure in legends, such as the *aswang* (witch), the *engkanto* (fairy), and the *sirena* (mermaid). A popular *engkantada* (fairy/enchantress) is Mariang Makiling. Beautiful and generous, she is said to dwell in Mount Makiling, assisting the people and rewarding the good folk. But she now hides herself from humans, after being betrayed by the man she loved.

Fables are short tales, usually involving animals, which teach a moral lesson. Usually, a comparison between two animals is made to highlight the moral. In “The Monkey and the Turtle,” for example, the slow-moving but quick-witted turtle contrasts sharply with the lithe but dull-witted monkey. A similar fable, though more grim, is “The Carabao and the Shell,” in which a carabao learns never to judge anything by its size. The huge carabao challenges the little shell to a race. Ever and again, the carabao calls out to his opponent, unaware, however, that he is responded to by a different shell lying along the way. Thinking that the shell is quicker than he is, the carabao runs faster, only to die of exhaustion.

The trickster tale recounts the adventures of a clever hero who outwits authority figures, usually coming from the upper classes. Some of the most celebrated tricksters are Pilandok of the Maranao, Juan Pusong of the Visaya, and Juan Tamad of the Tagalog. An example of a trickster tale is “Pusong and the Leaping Frog.” When Pusong realizes that he has prepared too much food for himself, he buried seven pots of chicken and seven pots of pork in the beach, and toys with a frog. A boat is anchored, and the curious captain asks Pusong about the frog. He tells the captain that the frog is magical; wherever it lands is where food is. When the captain and his crew begin to dig by the shore where the frog leapt, they find Pusong’s buried food. Believing that the frog is magical, the captain exchanges his cargo for it.

Less humorous, loftier, and much lengthier than the folk tales are the epics. Called *guman* in Subanon, *darangen* in Maranao, *hudhud* in Ifugao, and *ulahingan* in Manobo, they revolve around supernatural events or heroic deeds, and they embody or validate the beliefs, customs, and ideals of a community. Epics are either sung or chanted during communal affairs such as harvest, weddings, or funerals, by bards chosen for their wisdom or age. Sometimes, the performance of an epic is accompanied by musical instruments and dancing.

A popular Philippine epic is the Ilocano *Lam-ang*. The hero Lam-ang dreams that his father is being killed by the *Igorot*, the traditional enemies of the Ilocano, and awakes to slaughter a group of Igorot. He returns to his hometown, where the women bathe him. The dirt from his hair pollutes the river and kills all the fish. Lam-ang's prowess is demonstrated anew when he slays a fearful crocodile. He then courts and marries Ines Kannyon, besting his rivals with his magical powers. When Lam-ang hunts the *rarang*, a giant clam, a fish swallows him. Lam-ang's pet rooster, however, restores him after his bones are recovered.

Many epics are full of romantic entanglements. In *Labaw Donggon*, the first part of the Sulod epic *Hinilawod*, the hero Labaw Donggon gets himself a wife time and again, until he meets his nemesis, Saragnayan, lord of the arc of the sun, who refuses to surrender his wife, Malitung Yawa Sinagmaling Diwata. Saragnayan fights Labaw Donggon and succeeds in wearing him out, for, unknown to Labaw Donggon, Saragnayan's life force is kept inside a pig's body; thus, Saragnayan is invincible. Saragnayan imprisons Labaw Donggon in a pig pen until he is rescued by his sons, who, having been informed by their ancestors about Saragnayan's life force, defeats Saragnayan and his allies. When Labaw Donggon is freed, he still insists on obtaining Malitung Yawa Sinagmaling Diwata; and, although his other wives object at first, he gets her in the end. He asserts his manhood by shouting thunderously. His voice reverberates around the world.

Many, though not all, epic heroes are as amorous as Labaw Donggon. The Palawan hero *Kudaman* in *Kudaman* marries as many as 10 princesses, all of whom are captivated by his pet heron, Linggisan. In *Tuwaang Midsakop Tabpopawoy* (Tuwaang Attends a Wedding), the Manobo hero Tuwaang is a wedding guest only to become the groom, having charmed the bride with his powers. The exiled Bantogen, in an episode from the Maranao epic *Darangen*, dies unidentified in a foreign land, only to be resurrected and be wedded to Princess Timbang, who has nursed him. He marries about 40 other women before he returns to his own kingdom, Bembaran.

To date, about 30 epics have been recorded. Among them are the *Agyu* of the Arakan-Arumanen; the *Ulahingan* of the Livunganen-Arumanen; the *Ag Tobig nog Keboklagan* (The Kingdom of Keboklagan), the *Guman*, and the *Keg Sumba neg Sandayo* (The Life of Sandayo) of the Subanon; the *Humadapnon*, the second part of the *Hinilawod* of the Sulod; and the *Mangovayt Buhong na Langit* (The Maiden of the Buhong Sky), another song about Tuwaang, of the Manobo.

Although often marginalized by Western influence on Philippine writing, the ethnic tradition survives in various forms even in mainstream literature. During the early years of teaching English to Filipinos, American teachers at the University of the Philippines made the retelling of folktales in English part of language learning, a paramount example of which is Dean S. Fansler's *Filipino Popular Tales*, 1921. Later on, encouraged by the hospitality of *Philippine*

*Magazine* to fiction using “local color,” Filipino writers would dig from time to time into folkloric material for their short stories.

In the 1920s, Severino Reyes invented the character of “Lola Basyang” (Grandma Basyang) who spun out narratives based on folktales from all over the world, indigenizing many of them. Faustino Aguilar employed the form of a legend about ill-fated lovers and the twin trees that grew over their grave in his novel ***Lihim ng Isang Pulo*** (Secret of an Island), 1925. This novel about precolonial Filipinos actually comments on class conflict in 20th-century Philippine society.

Carlos Bulosan, writing in the United States in the 1940s, also drew from the ethnic tradition. ***The Laughter of My Father***, 1944, is a collection of humorous stories about peasant folk in his native Pangasinan, many of which are based on tales recollected from his childhood, and recall trickster tales and fables. In ***Ginto sa Makiling*** (Gold in Makiling), 1947, Macario Pineda used the legend of Mariang Makiling and her buried gold to create an exemplary tale about village people corrupted by greed for gold. The age-old legend was thus revitalized to teach modern-day Filipinos, caught in the aftermath of World War II.

The spurious reputation of Pedro de Monteclaro’s ***Maragtas*** as a precolonial epic did not stop it from becoming a vital source for creative writers from West Visayas. It gave the Ilongo novelist Ramon L. Muzones his material for the novel ***Margosatubig: Maragtas ni Salagunting*** (Margosatubig: The History of Salagunting), 1947, in which is recounted a people’s struggle for freedom and justice in precolonial times intended to inspire modern-day audiences to live by the nationalist aspirations of the times.

Interest in the ethnic tradition of Philippine literature was intensified by the nationalist movement in the 1960s. It was during this decade that writers began to cultivate a deeper awareness of the possibilities of ethnic oral lore as material for literary expression with a marked “Filipino identity.” In this, they were benefited by the increased activity of researchers whose field work yielded new oral texts and fresh information about the culture in which these texts were embedded. Exigencies of organizing among people who have minimal contact with print occasioned a rediscovery by young literary artists of the technical devices and techniques of dissemination of oral lore. The proliferation of poems with rhyme and meter and songs containing simple melodies and easy-to-memorize lyrics is evidence of the recognition by contemporary artists of the resources offered by the ethnic tradition.