

## Spreading the word

KRIPOTKIN By Alfred A. Yuson (The Philippine Star) | Updated April 29, 2013 - 12:00am



Marla Yotoko Chorengel helping launch the Maryknoll Miriam College Family of Authors Corner at the college library

Again it's that time of year for our writers young and old and yet aspiring to earn that first or nth Palanca. You have till midnight tomorrow, April 30, to join the 63rd Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature contest.

There are now a couple of offices where entries with complete requirements may be submitted: at the Palanca Foundation's Research Facility on the 6th Floor, Unit 603 Park Trade Center Bldg. 1716 Investment Drive, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City (phone number 511-0003); or at Unit 3-G, 3F, One Palanca Land (OPL) Bldg., C. Palanca St., Legaspi Village, Makati City (phone number 843-8277). Entries may also be entered online through the Palanca Awards website, except for the categories of the Novel, *Nobela* and *Dulang Pampelikula*.

Contest rules and official entry forms are available at the official website: [www.palancaawards.com.ph](http://www.palancaawards.com.ph). The contest is open in the following categories: English Division — Novel, Short Story, Short Story for Children, Essay, Poetry, Poetry for Children, One-act Play, and Full-length Play; Filipino Division — *Nobela*, *Maikling Kuwento*, *Maikling Kuwentong Pambata*, *Sanaysay*, *Tula*, *Tulang Pambata*, *Dulang May Isang Yugto*, *Dulang Ganap ang Haba*, and *Dulang Pampelikula*; and Regional Languages Division — Short Story-Cebuano, Short Story-Hiligaynon and Short Story-Illuko. Starting this year, the Novel and *Nobela* categories will be open for entries every two years.

There's also the *Kabataan* Division, the special division for young writers below 17 years old. This year's *Kabataan* Essay theme for the English category is "What is the Role of Literature in the Development of a Nation?" and "Ano ang Papel na Ginagampanan ng Panitikan sa Pag-unlad ng Isang Bansa?" for the Filipino category.

Each contestant is allowed to submit only one entry per category. For further information, you may e-mail [cpawards@palancaawards.com.ph](mailto:cpawards@palancaawards.com.ph).



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My good buddy Prof. Kirpal Singh of Singapore Management University asks us to spread the word on his latest literary baby, Writing Ventures' new international poetry contest that offers terrific prizes for the winning individual poems. That means it will take only one poem to get the judges' nod as the top prize winner, for which the poet-entrant receives a whopping US\$10,000 and be flown to Singapore for the awards ceremony in December.

The next five top poems will each receive US\$1,000. In addition, the top 100 poems will be published in the annual online WV Best Poems of 2013 anthology.

Submissions will be accepted from July 1 to Sept. 30, with an entry fee of US\$15 per poem or US\$150 for as many as 15 poem entries. Winners will be announced on Nov. 30.

Entry poems can be about anything, but each poem should be no longer than 25 lines. Previously published poems are not eligible. If the judges decide that no entry deserves the top prize, the following year's top prize will be doubled. The three judges are Dennis Haskell, Tina Chang, and Prof. Kirpal Singh himself.

Dennis Haskell is one of Australia's highly acclaimed poets, and has served on both the Literature Board and the Arts Council of Australia. Emeritus Professor of English at University of Western Australia, he has also held visiting appointments in many prestigious universities around the world. His collections of poetry include *All the Time in the World* (2007), which won the Western Australian Premier's Award for Poetry.

Brooklyn poet laureate Tina Chang of New York City teaches poetry at Sarah Lawrence College, and is an international faculty member in the MFA Creative Writing Program at the City University of Hong Kong, the first low-residency MFA program to be established in Asia. Her poetry collections include *Half-Lit Houses* and *Of Gods & Strangers*. She has received awards from the Academy of American Poets, Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, Poets & Writers, and Van Lier Foundation, among others.

Kirpal Singh is an internationally acclaimed poet, scholar, critic and writer also known for his passion for creativity & innovation. He is highly respected as a Futurist, with some of the world's leading universities inviting him to share his insights into the future. In Singapore, Singh is regarded as a cultural and literary icon. He teaches Creative Writing and heads the Arts and Culture Management Program at SMU, where he is also director of the Wee Kim Wee Centre.

Both Tina Chang and Kirpal Singh have been visitors here in Manila, with the latter many times over — as well as in Dumaguete where he's served as a panelist in the Silliman U. National Writers Workshop.

He writes: "Long after we strip away the so-called narrow and scholastic grooves into which poetry seems to have fallen, its triumph baffles and continues to engage. From traditional tribal cultures to the new and urbane cultures where the tribal takes on a very different meaning, poetry not only survives, but has, indeed, even become big business, an industry unto its own!

“And yet global, public recognition of poetry’s huge contribution to human well-being does not seem to merit good returns for those who write it and ignite it. Yes, there are many awards and contests, but the prizes are modest.

“So Writing Ventures has been set up, in part, to attempt to redress the situation: to offer a top prize which is truly worth writing a good poem for! A top prize which is bound to garner strength as the years go by because it has a global reach, a global audience, a global platform.”

There. Let’s all help spread the word about this new and prestigious literary contest. Visit [www.writingventures.org](http://www.writingventures.org) or e-mail the organizers at [hello@writingventures.org](mailto:hello@writingventures.org).



Among the Maryknollers in the world of letters who attended the kick-off event were (front row) Raquel Ledesma, Mariel Francisco; and (back row) Villavicencio, Lorna Kalaw Tirol, Asuncion David Maramba, Rita Mariter Macapagal, Mila David, Maria Chorenge, Jasmin Acuna, Baby Tabseco Cruz and Tes Choa.

Another peripatetic buddy, Marla Yotoko Chorenge, is back in town, and informs us that it was a big day last Tuesday at the Miriam College Library, where a ceremony “kicked off” the MMCFA Corner that is a gift to the library from the Maryknoll Miriam College Family of Authors.

Miriam College president Dr. Charito Lopus led in untying the ribbon at exactly high noon for Marla’s brainchild, which was to assemble the college’s numerous alumnae who have gone on to become women of letters.

The formal launch will be held at the college homecoming in September. But last week, at least 50 alumnae came with their donations of books, among them authors, editors, publishers, journalists, columnists and scriptwriters.

Marla writes: “The celebrated queen lady Asuncion David Maramba was surrounded by younger writers Narz Lim, Joy Abaquin, Pat Sutter, Tina Roces Garcia, Joanne Maglipon, Laida Lim, Dr. Jasmin Acuna, Cynthia Jimenez... There was esteemed editor Lorna Kalaw Tirol being teased by her ‘ex-cub reporters.’ Former Metropolitan Museum president Rita Ledesma was serene as ever, together with Lolita Delgado Fansler (who helped me with the birthing of the MMCFA Corner).

“Mariel Nepomuceno of Pampanga’s elite writers came with her sister Raquel Villavicencio, actress and scriptwriter famous for her screenplay for the timeless film *Himala*. Tita



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Hamada and Mabel Alampay drove all the way from Pangasinan to be counted. Also present were Cata Salazar de Jesus, Patis Tesoro, and Korina Sanchez who sneaked out of her TV schedule to be present even for a moment. Bing Carreon Buck donated her 24 coffee-table books. Nelly Lichauco Fung Fed-Ex'd books from Hong Kong.

“Two Palanca awardees could not attend, as Rica Bolipata Santos had a meeting elsewhere, while Mookie Katigbak Lacuesta was represented by her mother Annie Katigbak, who brought Mookie’s books of poetry.”

All in all, about 150 books initially graced what surely will become a hallowed corner of that library. As Marla let on, they were but scratching the surface, as the harvest of alumnae authors here and overseas is rich. Among the rest still to be tapped are Aida Sevilla, Sony Maramba, Gemma Cruz, Tweetums Gonzalez, Arlene Babst Vokey, Cecilia Brainard, Arlene Chai, Chit Lijauco, Sari Yap, Myrna Segismundo, Micaela Fenix, Margarita Holmes, Backie Celdran, Sol Reyes, Gina Ordonez, Carn Abella, Ciay Misa...

‘Too many to list,’ adds Marla. “It’s growing as the word is spread about the MMCFA. She’s happy that “the alumnae books at the MMCFA Library Corner will have perpetuity and institutional security, and will certainly become a haven of inspiration for future Miriam College writers.”

Congratulations and kudos for that writers’ corner, Marla and Maryknollers (Miriamists?). The word is spread, and the word comes home to roost.