

FILIPINO

Pilipino ako! In my language, that means, “I. Am. Filipino.” I was born here. I did not discover these islands.

I was discovered. And when they came, the Spanish, the Chinese, the rest of the Europeans, some of us laid down our arms, found another way to endure. Let their daughters mix with the invaders, let our fields become the lands of their opportunity. But some of us fought. And though we are defeated, we continue to wage war against every incursion. Remembering our past, our pride, our lands, our blood. These were our islands, despite every tide of change that washes over us, these are, and always have been, our islands, and we remain.

THE DAUGHTER

(into the recorder)

January 20th, 2006. It's nearly 3 a.m. and I can't get to sleep. I've been going over my research again. Not my dissertation research, God knows, though that's what I *should* be working on, but all the material I've found on my family history. I've got to get all this stuff in order, I've got to classify it all somehow, organize it, but ...I can't file it away until I've dealt with it, figured out what it all *means*.

I think that's why I started this journal, recording my thoughts so I can try to keep it all straight, so I can keep track of it all. Why am I so terrified of losing everything? Well, besides the fact that every single thing here is, like, a hundred years old, totally unique, and irreplaceable. What are the odds I'm going to lose it, though? It's all here. I think I'm more afraid of it slipping out of my mind. I don't want to *miss* anything. These clues are so important.