

# FORUM: CHIKADORA CHURURUT



*Brenda Rodriguez Alegre*

**B**eki namen...anichiwa na mga ateng...ang gandis mo naman tranene... hahahaha. Wow, I wonder how you are currently feeling or reacting upon hearing these unfamiliar words or phrases. Surely there are some readers out there who are feeling something so familiar with the language—normative perhaps, or appropriate. This special issue of *Alon* is the first “Beki” or trans/queer issue and we take pride in putting this together. This issue came about after the Mactan 500 special issue and conference last year and seeing a couple of queer works submitted, it was an epiphany between us editors to jointly curate the first trans/queer or Beki issue that you are now reading. Hopefully, this is just the first, and *Alon* will pave the way to more opportunities for queer writers in the diaspora to be empowered in our native languages, including our own “Beki lingo.”

The last two years have not been easy for all of us, and we have been affected differently by the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the Philippines, the thousands of deaths and innumerable infected Filipinos struggle to make light of the grief and struggles, the degree to which worsens among the most oppressed, including the poor queer communities. The aggravations and abrasions were exacerbated by ongoing acts of injustices and neglect among the poor and oppressed queer Filipinos. President Duterte’s seeming betrayal of justice by absolving transpinay Jennifer Laude’s murderer, American marine Joseph Pemberton, was a blow towards the queer collective. Trans and queer Filipinos displaced by the pandemic had nowhere to go but to seek help from the collective. Transpinays experienced transphobic exclusions in public. Trans and queer youths experienced violent attacks and bomb threats in the South.

These and many other events have been the painful and bitter struggles of the collective, but as we look to the rainbow, always—yes, the rainbow as a sign of hope—good things came out as well. Trans and queer visibility expanded greatly within the online sphere with Miss Trans Global and other prestigious beauty pageants, which somehow gave hope to transpinays to earn their bread and butter, not to mention visibility. Fund raisers and various trainings and seminars on trans and queer visibility were quite rampant, as well as empowering

a new generation of trans and queer advocates to emerge. And since we are in the line of representation, your two super queer editors take pride in hosting this platform for our burgeoning and seasoned writers, academics, and artists. Truly, talent and passion are abundant in our motherland and the diaspora; but, to be empowered to curate this colorful issue is truly, as they would lovingly put it in drag circles, an “extravaganza” and an “eleganza.” As we hope for a brighter future for us all, may these works inspire and empower you. So, instead of just wishing for world peace, we wish you beauty, body, and *biyaya* (miracle) because, much as we hate to negate Ate Guy, with this maiden queer issue...*May himala*. And we thank you.