

Classic Poetry Series

Leona Florentino
- poems -

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Leona Florentino(19 April 1849 - 4 October 1884)

Leona Florentino was a Filipino poet in the Spanish and Ilocano languages. She is considered as the "mother of Philippine women's literature" and the "bridge from oral to literary tradition".

Born to a wealthy and prominent family in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Florentino began to write her first verses in Ilocano at a young age. Despite her potential, she was not allowed to receive a university education because of her gender. Florentino was instead tutored by her mother, and then a series of private teachers. An educated Ilocano priest taught her advanced Spanish and encouraged her to develop her voice in poetry. Due to the feminist nature of her writings, Florentino was shunned by her husband and son, and so was forced to live alone in exile and separately from her family. Florentino married a politician named Elias de los Reyes at the age of 14, and they had five children, including Isabelo de los Reyes, who would later become a Filipino writer, activist and senator. She died at the age of 35.

Blasted Hopes

What gladness and what joy
are endowed to one who is loved
for truly there is one to share
all his sufferings and his pain.

My fate is dim, my stars so low
perhaps nothing to it can compare,
for truly I do not doubt
for presently I suffer so.

For even I did love,
the beauty whom I desired
never do I fully realize
that I am worthy of her.

Shall I curse the hour
when first I saw the light of day
would it not have been better a thousand times
I had died when I was born.

Would I want to explain
but my tongue remains powerless
for now do I clearly see
to be spurned is my lot.

But would it be my greatest joy
to know that it is you I love,
for to you do I vow and a promise I make
it's you alone for whom I would lay my life.

Leona Florentino

Kakaibang Pagkalibing Ng Paghahangad

Leona Florentino

Naunsyaming Pag-Asa

Leona Florentino

Pagbating Babiro

Leona Florentino