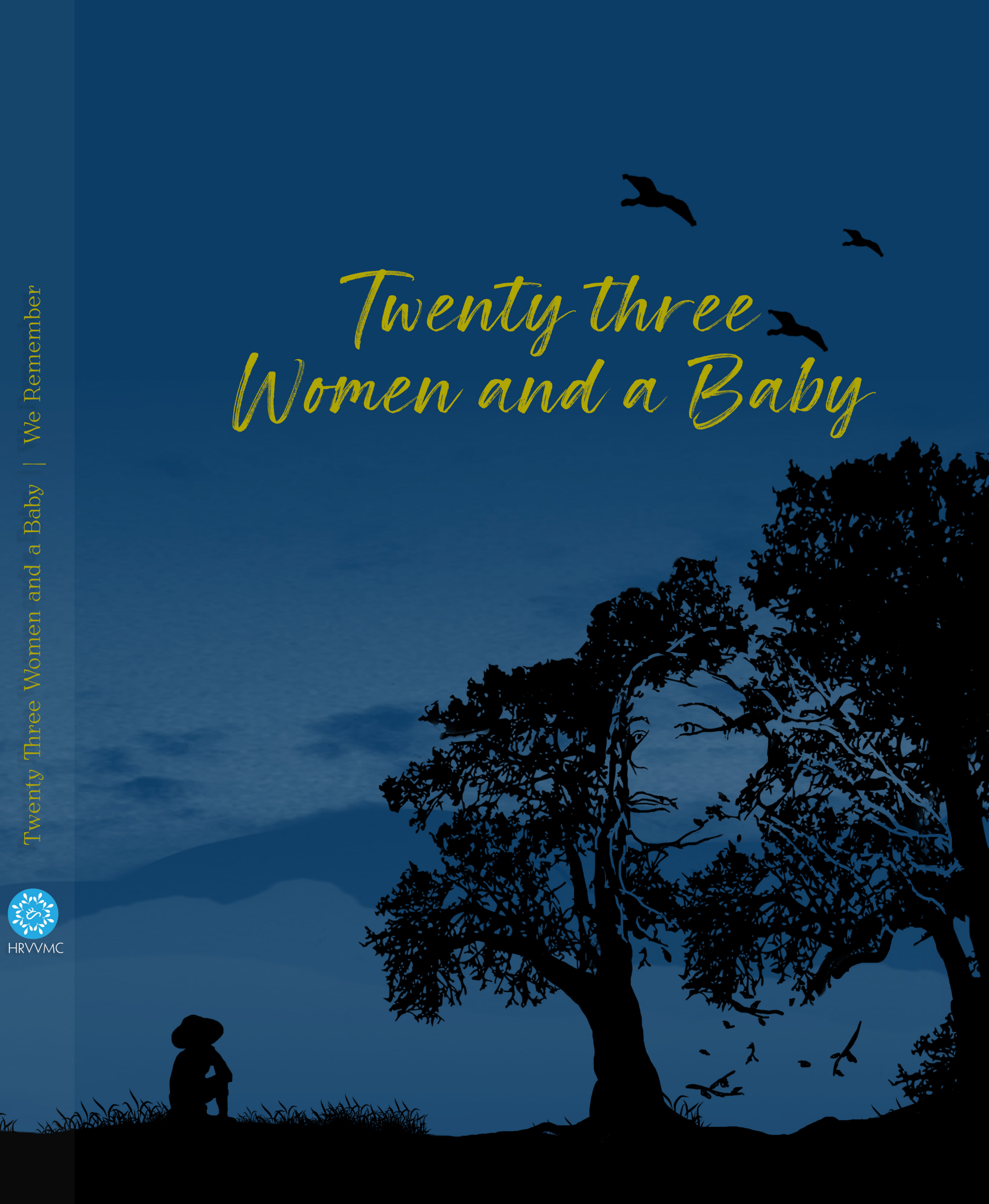


# Twenty three Women and a Baby





## Chapter I

# *Women Disappeared with their Husbands*



# Imagining Mother

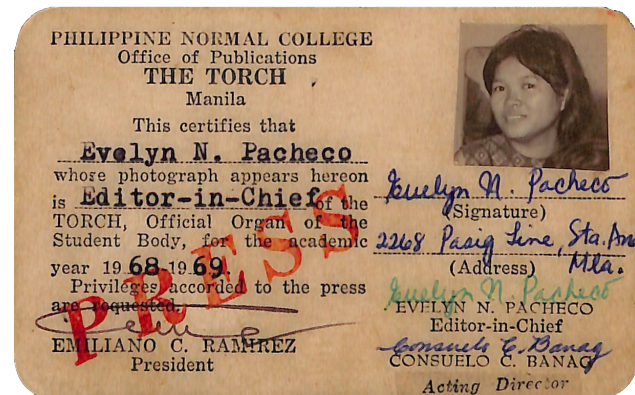
**Docket No. 2014-14-11077**

**Evelyn Pacheco Mangulabnan**

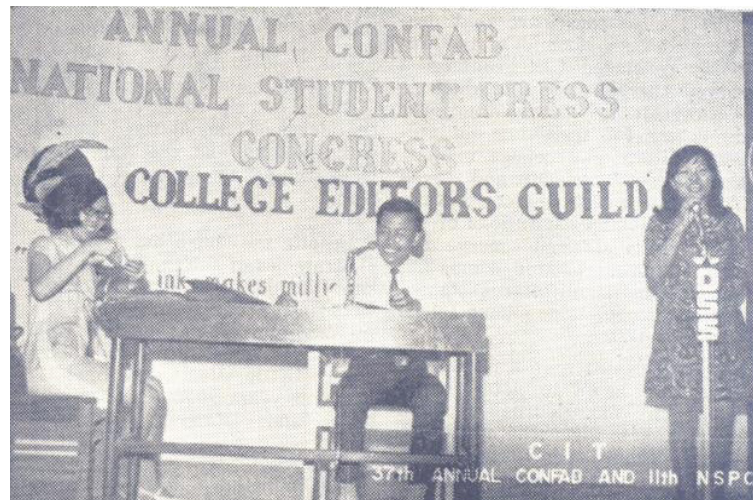
Born: October 8, 1948  
Place of Birth: Paco, Manila  
Disappeared: September 1977  
Place last Seen: Nueva Ecija,  
Central Luzon  
Age when Disappeared: 24 Years Old



Evelyn was a student leader in the Philippine Normal College (PNC). In fact in 1968, she was the editor-in-chief of The Torch, her school publication.



She is seen here holding the microphone in the National Student Press Congress presenting the PNC delegation.

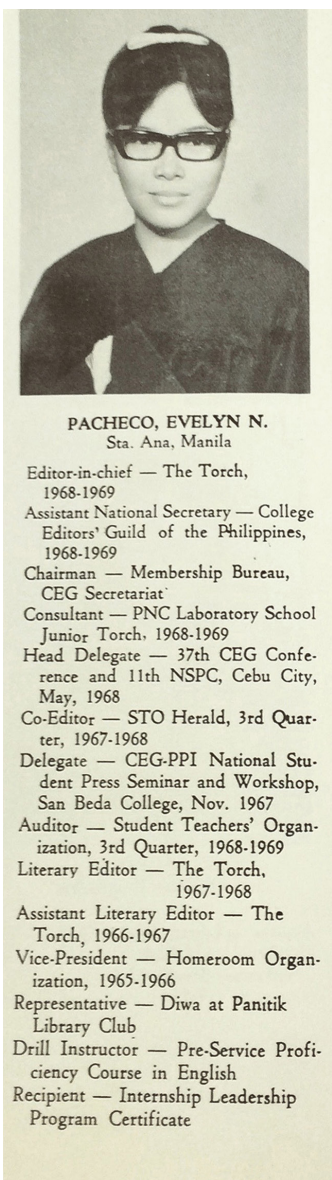


Evelyn Pacheco, head delegate, presenting the PNC delegation as Juliet Ocampo, Congress treasurer and 67'-68' Torch Editor Teofilo Aspillaga, Congress director, listen.

In recognition of her leadership, she became the National Secretary of the prestigious College Editor Guild of the Philippines. The CEGP, then, was an outspoken critic of the administration.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The CEGP is an alliance of student publications and student journalists founded on 25 July 1931 by Ernesto Rodriguez of the National University, with members of the Guidon (Ateneo), the Varsitarian (University of Santo Tomas), and the Collegian (University of the Philippines). It is the oldest and longest-running youth organization in the Philippines. Cuzon, Vincent Carlo (2014), College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), retrieved from <https://anakmindanaw.wordpress.com/2014/11/06/college-editors-guild-of-the-philippines-cegp/>





After college, she continued her progressive views by immersing herself in youth organizations in the Bataan area. They were opposing the establishment of the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ). The BEPZ was one of the many Export Process Zone projects where many protection measures of the laborers were not enforced in order to attract foreign investors.<sup>2</sup>

Nearby was another priority project called the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant which eventually became a white elephant because it was heavily improvised by massive corruption by one of Marcos cronies.<sup>3</sup>



To clear the land for there pet projects, farmers and many families in the Mariveles, Bataan area were forcibly dislocated.<sup>4</sup> Protest actions were heavily frowned upon and organizers identified.<sup>5</sup>

It was during ther time of strife when Evelyn became a mother at the tender age of 24 years. She bore a daughter, which she named as Earnest.

The spouse of Evelyn was a leader of the National Democrats.<sup>6</sup> Ricardo was the National Vice-Chair of Kabataang Makabayan.<sup>7</sup> At that time, there were numerous chapters of the KM all over the country.

<sup>2</sup>Legislation to establish the zone was adopted in 1969, but was not actually established until months after the declaration of Martial Law. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) reviewed that within the zone, firms were provided with various benefits such as 100% permissible foreign ownership and the ability to impose lower wages than in Manila and certain tax holidays. To ensure a docile work force as an incentive to invest EPZs, disputes may be certified for compulsory arbitration and employees thereby prohibited from striking. The Philippines: Human Rights After Martial Law, Mission report, the International Commission of Jurists (Geneva: 1984), 93.

<sup>3</sup>Bonner, Raymond. Waltzing with a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy (New York, NY: Times Books, 1987), 264 – 267

<sup>4</sup> Faith and Social Justice, World Student Christian Federation in Asia (Kowloon, Hong Kong: 1977), 14. Retrieved online at <https://www.ibiblio.org/ahkitj/wscfap/arms1974/Book%20Series/Faith&SocialJus/F&SJ-bataan.html>

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 16.

<sup>6</sup>The term “National Democrat”, or “Nat-Dem”, was assigned in reference to the National Democracy Movement in the Philippines. By 1973 this was particular to members or supporters of the National Democratic Front – a coalition of various unions, leftist political parties, and other related organizations.”National Democratic Front of the Philippines”. NDFP. Archived from the original on March 6, 2018. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20180306142351/https://www.ndfp.org/about/>

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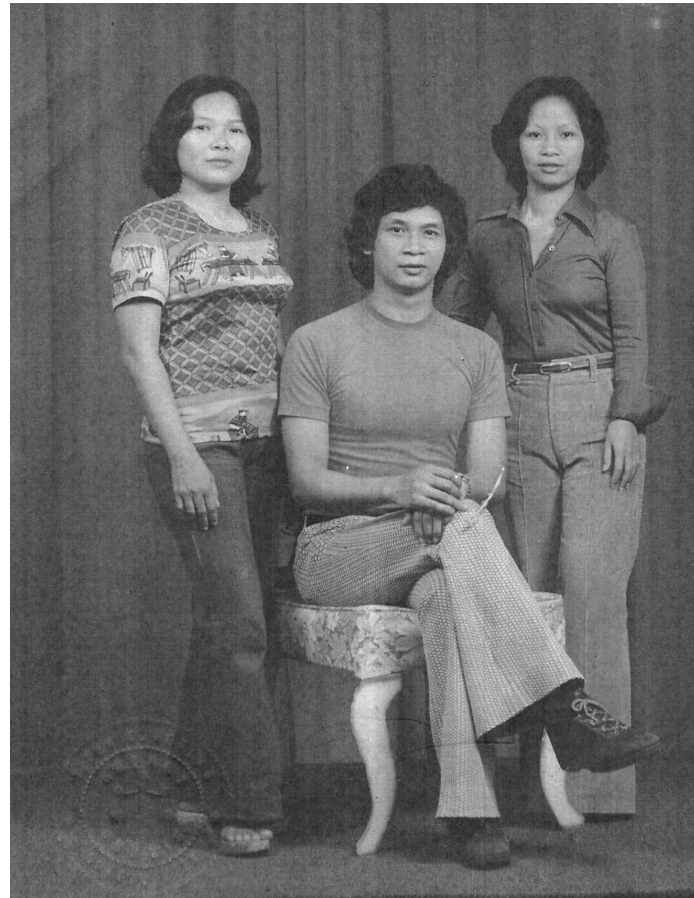
When Martial Law was declared in 1972, the crack down on the opposition was swift. They were fearful they too will be arrested because they were resolute in their convictions.

The couple must have agonized about the future and security of their baby if they would bring her with them to Central Luzon to continue their advocacy. They decided that it would be best if they entrust their baby to Aquilina, Evelyn's mother for her care and safety for the time being.

What they thought would be a short time of caretaking extended to years. Evelyn was unable to see Earnest grow up in her tender years.

Earnest said

*"Except for the first nine months of my life, I never met my parents ever again."*



*Seated in the middle is Ricardo with his sister on his right and Evelyn on his left.*

On September 1977, Evelyn and Ricardo were arrested in Nueva Ecija by elements of the Philippine Constabulary.<sup>8</sup> The charges were unclear if there was anything at all.

The rumor at that time was the couple was killed. Evelyn's relatives searched for their bodies in funeral houses and checked hospital morgues but there was no record.

Earnest recalls that because there was no confirmation of her parent's death, she kept the hope, however, small, that they were still alive.

By the time, Marcos was deposed and fled to Hawaii. Earnest was now a teenager and recalls that

*"...we were hoping they will come back to the family after the 1986 EDSA Revolution but they never surfaced."*

In 2014, when the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board (HRVCB) began announcing that it they were accepting applications for claims. Many Filipinos began lining up in different centers to file their claims.

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<sup>8</sup>The Philippine Constabulary (PC) is the predecessor of the Philippine National Police – established on August 8, 1901 under the American colonial administration. In 1975 under Ferdinand Marcos they served as the nucleus of the Philippine Constabulary Integrated National Police (PC/INP).“The Philippine National Police”, the Official Gazette of the Philippines. Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/featured/about-the-pnp/>

Earnest recounts what she felt like in filling up forms of the HRVCB.

*"When I applied for my parents' recognition as victims of human rights violations in 2014, I was very angry because that was the first time I came to know that they might have been killed."*



*Claimants wait for hours outside the Davao City Recreation Center (old name: Almendras Gym) on August 5, 2014. MindaNews file photo by GG Bueno<sup>9</sup>*

In her application, Earnest attached different affidavits of witnesses, testimonies, evidences to substantiate her claim. It was no easy task to reconstruct a painful event decades ago.

On January 29, 2018, the Third Division of the HRVCB issued a resolution on her claim which reads in part...

*"The allegations of disappearances were sufficiently corroborated with evidence presented because there is uniformity of allegations by different believable witnesses.*

*...Pursuant to Sec. 4 of RA 10368, the heirs of the victims are entitled for compensation..."*

After 41 years since the disappearance, the Philippine government finally recognized the injustices done to her parents. Aside from the reparation, the name of Evelyn and Ricardo will be entered in the Roll of Victims in the Freedom Memorial Museum.

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<sup>9</sup>Batch 1: 450 martial law victims in Region 11 to receive partial monetary reparation article published by Mindanews by Carolyn O. Arguillas - May 12, 2017 1:23 AM  
Retrieved from <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2017/05/batch-1-450-martial-law-victims-in-region-11-to-receive-partial-monetary-reparation/>





Earnest with Dr. Aurora Parong, former member of the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board

Last February 25, 2020, Earnest visited the Human Rights Violations Victims' Memorial Commission in their office in Kalayaan Avenue, Quezon City. She personally shared the few memories of her mother. One of the precious items she shared was a handwritten poem of Aquilina, her grandmother entitled "*When I Cry*" about how she felt about Evelyn whom she fondly refers to as Belen.

In the final lines Aquilina laments,

*"You're not gone half way.  
Come back, I pray come back!"*

The other poem she shared was made by Evelyn herself called "*A Change of Heart*" where the last lines seen foreboding.

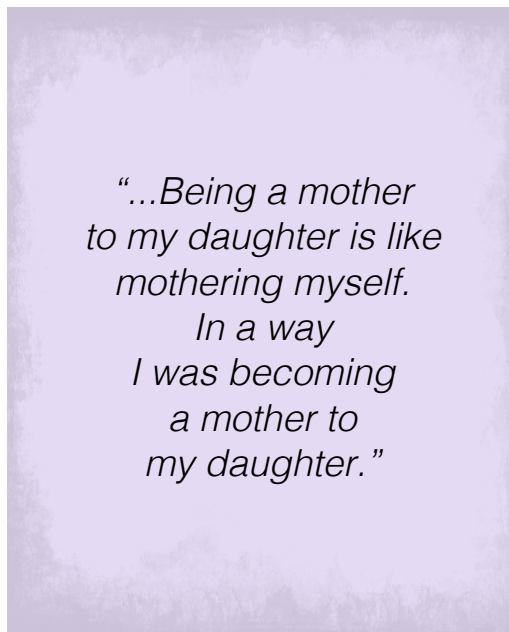
*"Farewell... to the few summers  
The few summers in my life  
Which now are sadly bidding goodbye."*

Looking back Earnest says,

*"I realized that I had a hole in my life that cannot be filled. I talked to activists, joined organizations hoping to be with people like my parents. Later I realized that I was trying to wrap my identity with my parents."*

Earnest says that she is on different path. She writes and bakes.

*"While baking, I listen to Carpenter's I Have You, imagining some moments with my mother."*



The family of Earnest with her daughter at the center.



Earnest holding a newspaper clipping dated November 8-14, 1985 by Lito C. Ocampo

As she parted from the Memorial Commission's office, she mused about why her mother did what she did.

*"Maybe she wished briefly for a country that would let her stay and be a mother to her child. But she knew that her country needed her, needed them. That it was up to them to make sure that children like me would grow up in a just society."*

## a change of heart

one last leaf clings to the bough  
until the bough shakes it off  
eager to dress itself with the cold silver  
of the winter tears.  
even the winds hasten the deathly rites  
even the breath of dawn bid the leaves goodbye  
even the bright nights pull at the shimmering  
gold on the burnt branches.  
ah! the time for doves to fathom the skies  
and the swans to chant their songs has come  
the earth sighs for one who's going too soon,  
but yet there's nothing more to it,  
but farewell.  
farewell... to the few summers  
the few summers in my life  
which now are sadly bidding goodbye.

*—evelyn pacheco*

Undated poem written by Evelyn



9-5-71

When I Cry  
 Words I can't speak no matter  
 whenever I see your picture.  
 Only tears befall me, for  
 so a millions of desire.  
 I wish you were a babe  
 once more to cheerie & to  
 love to guide you comfort  
 you protect from bites.  
 Now all this are gone  
 Now that you've grown up  
 in this world you have  
 in bitter tears, how can I!  
 when our ways seems departed  
 Nothing I can do but cry  
 in moments I remember  
 the one whom I love  
 so dearly didn't even  
 say a bye - Oh its a  
 regret to find you're lost  
 you're not gone half way.  
 Come back, I pray come back!

A poem so sincerely  
 dedicated to my daughter  
Belen  
 From Mamma

A. M. Pacheco Nino

Poem written by Evelyn's mother, Aquilina

