

Classic Poetry Series

José Corazón de Jesús
- poems -

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José Corazón de Jesús(22 November 1896 – 26 May 1932)

José Corazón de Jesús, also known by his pen name Huseng Batute, was a Filipino poet who used Tagalog poetry to express the Filipinos' desire for independence during the American occupation of the Philippines, a period that lasted from 1901 to 1946. He is best known for being the lyricist of the Filipino song Bayan Ko. Buhay Huseng Batute was born on November 22, 1896 in Santa Cruz, Manila to Vicente de Jesús, the first health bureau director of the American occupation government, and Susana Pangilinan of Pampanga. He was christened José Cecilio de Jesús but he later dropped Cecilio and replaced it with the Spanish name Corazón (heart) because he said it best described his character.

 Early Life

De Jesús spent his childhood in Santa Maria, Bulacan, his father's hometown. He completed his education at the defunct Liceo de Manila, where he graduated in 1916. His first published poem was Pangungulila (Yearning), which was published in the defunct Ang Mithi (The Ideal) in 1913 when he was 17 years old.

 Newspaper Poet

In 1920, de Jesús received his bachelor of laws degree from the defunct Academia de Leyes but he never practiced his legal profession because he was already busy writing a column in verse for the Tagalog newspaper Taliba. The column was called Buhay Maynila (Manila Life) which he wrote under the pseudonym Huseng Batute. Through his column, he satirized society under the American colonizers and espoused independence for the Philippines which was then a commonwealth under the United States. De Jesús published some 4,000 poems in his Buhay Maynila column. He also wrote about 800 columns under the title Ang Lagot na Bagting (The Broken String). Although his favored pen name was Huseng Batute, he also wrote about 300 short poems and prose works under several pseudonyms, such as Pusong Hapis, Paruparu, Pepito Matimtiman, Mahirap, Dahong Kusa, Paruparong Luksa, Amado Viterbi, Elias, Anastacio Salagubang and Water Lily.

 King of the Balagtasán

On March 28, 1924, de Jesús and other leading Tagalog writers met at a women's school in Tondo, Manila, under the auspices of Filipino educator Rosa

Sevilla, to discuss how to celebrate the birth anniversary of Tagalog poet <a href="

 Contribution to the Spread of Balagtas

De Jesús, who was already famous around the Philippines as Huseng Batute, was asked in 1930 to act in the movie *Oriental Blood*, which starred Atang dela Rama and Carmen Rosales, the most famous actresses of the day, and his own son, José Corazón de Jesús, Jr., who would later gain some fame as a silent movie actor. De Jesús contracted an ulcer during the filming of *Oriental Blood* and died of ulcer complications on May 26, 1932. He was survived by his wife Asunción Lacdan de Jesús and children Teresa, José Jr., and Rogelio. Upon his death, his heart was donated to a government museum where it was preserved until it was buried with his mother. He was finally interred at the Manila North Cemetery where he was buried under a tree, as he wished in his poems *Isang Punong Kahoy* (One Tree) and *Ang Akasya* (The Acacia). Many of his descendants now live in the United States, carrying on the family name of de Jesús.

A Tree

Viewed from a distant vantage
I appear as a cross with arms outstretched;
As I stayed on my knees long enduring,
It seems that I am kissing God's feet.

Like an organ in a church,
Praying amid extreme sorrows,
Is the candle flame of my life
Keeping vigil upon my tomb.

At my feet is a spring
That sobs all day and all night;
Upon my branches lie
The nests of love-birds.

By the sparkling of that spring
You'd think of flowing tears bubbling;
And the Moon that seems to be praying
Greets me with a pale smile.

The bells tolling the vespers
Hint to me their wailing;
Birds on my branches are covered with leaves,
The spring at my feet has tears welling,

But look at my fate,
Dried-up, dying alone comforting myself.
I became the cross of the withered love,
And a watcher of tombs in the darkness.

All is ended! Night is a mantle of mourning
That I use to cover my face!
A fallen piece of wood am I, and prostrate
Neither bird nor people find any pleasure.

And to think that in the days past
A tree I was of luxuriant and leafy growth;
Now my branches are crosses o'er graves,
My leaves made into wreaths on tombs!

José Corazón de Jesús

Agaw-Dilim (Twilight)

José Corazón de Jesús

Ang Magandang Parol (The Beautiful Christmas Lantern)

José Corazón de Jesús

Ang Posporo Ng Diyos (The Matchstick Of God)

José Corazón de Jesús

Ang Tren (The Train)

José Corazón de Jesús

Bayan Ko (My Country)

José Corazón de Jesús

Isang Punungkahoy (A Tree)

José Corazón de Jesús

Itanong Mo Sa Bituin (Ask The Stars)

José Corazón de Jesús

Kahit Saan (Wherever)

José Corazón de Jesús

Kamay Ng Birhen

José Corazón de Jesús

Manggagawa

José Corazón de Jesús

May Mga Tugtuging Hindi Ko Malimot

José Corazón de Jesús

More To Come

If I go blind, I will follow you
by the sound of your voice alone,
in your throat there is a sound
more golden and unique among all things.

If I go deaf, my entire being
will converse with your eyes alone,
in your every look I will conjure
all the words you want to say.

If I go deaf and blind and there's nothing more
in the world for me to see,
I will follow your scent if that's all that's left,
I will let my nose do all my loving.

Even if you hide, the wind will deliver to me
your every gesture that overflows with poetry.
In the dried grass I will trace your footprints
like perfume that someone has spilled.

Without perfume or radiance or voice
to whom I can pledge my love
your very presence is enough to make me feel
you will yet draw near.

I may go blind but only come close
to the chords of my heart full of longing,
I know you by your footfall, my love,
and I am filled with so much poetry.

José Corazón de Jesús

Pag-Ibig

José Corazón de Jesús

Pakpak

José Corazón de Jesús

Puso, Ano Ka?

José Corazón de Jesús

Sa Bilangguan Ng Pag-Ibig

José Corazón de Jesús

Sa Pamilihan Ng Puso

José Corazón de Jesús

Violin

José Corazón de Jesús