

Picket Fence: A Personal Journey

Essays & Stories for Meditation

By Utanes

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Preface

Why stay peeved by what is happening around you when you can look at the beautiful things beyond the rut of life's grueling situations?

Most people see recent tsunamis, earthquakes, widespread hunger, nature's destruction, human violence, wars, financial ruin, economic disaster and a tidal-wave more misfortunes as the distinguishing mark of this time and age. We hardly can do anything to change these events and their effects. We do not have much choice but to succumb to the miseries caused by them. Or do we?

In *Picket Fence: A Personal Journey*, we the Utaneses have written and compiled essays and short stories—at times intriguing and the rest of the time entertaining—based on otherwise ordinary experiences. Here, we attempt to help one draw useful insights to face life, along with its struggles, a little more positively. This little book aims to help do away with the idea that life is but just a journey slipping into personal defeat. Rather, it espouses a restful attitude to expect the best of what life can offer, a peace of mind that only could come from a heart that counts its blessings daily.

Enjoy crossing over and getting life tips on sensitive barriers involving: marriage, respect, parenthood, forgiveness, sonship, determination, friendship, celebrations, first love, nature, ambition, philanthropy, success, truth, profession, and many others.

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Plow through 31 readings one piece each day, as slowly as you need to if you will. Dare to get caught up in a picket fence of healthy reminders to awaken your fighting spirit or cheer-up your lonely heart. Surrender to the lure of wonderful lessons optimized by pausing for self-examination, meditation, or group discussion.

Most of the essays in this book were written during the most conducive time in my life when I had almost perfect peace in my heart and when I was in almost perfect harmony with my surroundings. It was what I call *my three great desert years*.

My son John Gabriel wrote the essay *Ironies of Life* and the following short stories:

A Childhood Memory

My First Love

Anger

Rebel Soldier

How Young People Think is based on my other son Jonas Gildo's unfinished short story.

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I also included here to share my wife Joy's letter to her friends and prayer as well which I entitled, *Joy's Christmas Tree*.

The essays and short stories are intended either for daily meditation or simply for the purpose of group conversation, to break the ice, or for discussion.

This version is the Secular Version. Anyone who is interested in the Biblical Version, that is, the Study Guide consisting of leads into the Holy Scriptures, can log on to www.overflowcentral.com and go to the link where bible-based discussion questions can be downloaded.

I and my family earnestly desire that as you enjoy reading the essays and short stories in this little book, *Picket Fence: A Personal Journey*, you could experience firsthand glitters of joy as we did when we wrote them.

Fred Utanes