

# [Footnote to youth essay](https://assignbuster.com/footnote-to-youth-essay/)

The sun was salmon and hazy in the west. Dodong thought to himself he would tell his father about Teang when he got home, after he had unhitched the carabao from the plow, and let it to its shed and fed it. He washes it ant about saying it, but he wanted his father to know.

What he had to say was of serious import as it would mark a climacteric in his life. Dodong finally decided to tell it, at a thought came to him his father might refuse to consider it. His father was silent hard-working farmer who chewed areca nut, which he had learned to do from his mother, Dodong’s grandmother. I will tell it to him. I will tell it to him.

The ground was broken up into many fresh wounds and fragrant with a sweet is hearthy smell. Many slender soft worms emerged from the furrows and then burrowed again deeper into the soil. A short colorless worm marched blindly to Dodong’s foot and crawled calmly over it. Dodong go tickled and jerked his foot, flinging the worm into the air. Dodong did not bother to look where it fell, but thought of his age, seventeen, and he said to himself he was not young any more. Dodong unhitched the carabao leisurely and gave it a healt h y tap on t h e h ip.

Th e beast turned its h ad to look at h im wit h dumb fait h ful eyes. Dodonggave it a slig h t pus h and t h e animal walked alongside h im to its s h ed. He placed bundles of grassbefore it land t h e carabao began to eat. Dodong looked at it wit h out interests.

Dodong started h omeward, t h inking h ow h e would break h is news to h is fat h er. He wanted to marry, Dodong did. He was seventeen, h e h ad pimples on h is face, t h e down on h is upper lip already was dark-t h esemeant h e was no longer a boy. He was growing into a man– h e was a man.

Dodong felt insolentand big at t h e t h oug h t of it alt h oug h h e was by nature low in statue. Th inking h imself a man grownDodong felt h e could do anyt h ing. He walked faster, prodded by t h e t h oug h t of h is virility. A smallangled stone bled h is foot, but h e dismissed it cursorily.

He lifted h is leg and looked at t h e h urt toeand t h en went on walking. In t h e cool sundown h e t h oug h t wild you dreams of h imself and T eang. T eang, h is girl. S h e h ad a small brown face and small black eyes and straig h tglossy h air.

Howdesirable s h e was to h im. S h e made h im dream even during t h e day. Dodong tensed wit h desireand looked at t h e muscles of h is arms. Dirty. Th is field work was h ealt h , invigorating but itbegrimed you, smudged you terribly. He turned back t h e way h e h ad come, t h en marc h edobliquely to a creek.

Dodong stripped h imself and laid h is clot h es, a gray unders h irt and redkundiman s h orts, on t h e grass. Th e h e went into t h e water, wet h is body over, and rubbed at itvigorously. He was not long in bat h ing, t h en h e marc h ed h omeward again. Th e bat h made h im feelcool. It was dusk w h en h e reac h ed h ome.

Th e petroleum lamp on t h e ceiling already was lig h tedand t h e low unvarnis h ed square table was set for supper. His parents and h e sat down on t h e flooraround t h table to eat. Th ey h ad fried fres h -water fis h , rice, bananas, and caked sugar. Dodongate fis h and rice, but didnot partake of t h e fruit. Th e bananas were overripe and w h en one h eldt h em t h ey felt more fluid t h an solid. Dodong broke off a piece of t h e cakes sugar, dipped it in h isglass of water and ate it.

He got anot h er piece and wanted some more, but h e t h oug h t of leavingt h e remainder for h is parents. Dodong’s mot h er removed t h e dis h es w h en t h ey were t h roug h andwent out to t h e batalan to was h t h em. S h e walked wit h slow careful steps and Dodong wanted to h elp h er carry t h e dis h s out, but h e was tired and now felt lazy. He wis h ed as h e looked at h ert h at h e h ad a sister w h o could h elp h is mot h er in t h e h ousework. He pitied h er, doing all t h e h ousework alone. His fat h er remained in t h e room, sucking a diseased toot h .

It was paining h imagain, Dodong knew. Dodong h ad told h im often and again to let t h e town dentist pull it out, but h e was afraid, h is fat h er was. He did not tell t h at to Dodong, but Dodong guessed it. AfterwardDodong h imself t h oug h t t h at if h e h ad a decayed toot h h e would be afraid to go to t h e dentist; h ewould not be any bolder t h an h is fat h r. Dodong said w h ile h is mot h er was out t h at h e was goingto marry T eang. Th ere it was out, w h at h e h ad to say, and over w h ic h h e h ad done so muc h t h inking.

He h ad said it wit h out any effort at all and wit h out self-consciousness. Dodong feltrelieved and looked at h is fat h er expectantly. A decrescent moon outside s h ed its feeble lig h t intot h e window, graying t h e still black temples of h is fat h er. His fat h er looked old now. “ I am going tomarry T eang,” Dodong said.

His fat h er looked at h im silently and stopped sucking t h e broken toot h . Th e silence became intense and cruel, and Dodong wis ed h is fat h er would suck t h at troubloustoot h again. Dodong was uncomfortable and t h en became angry because h is fat h er kept looking at h im wit h out uttering anyt h ing. “ I will marry T eang,” Dodong repeated.

“ I will marry T eang. ” His fat h er kept gazing at h im ininflexible silence and Dodong fidgeted on h is seat. “ I asked h er last nig h t to marry me and s h esaid…

yes. I want your permission. I…

want… it…

. ” Th ere was impatient clamor in h is voice, anexacting protest at t h is coldness, t h is indifference. Dodong looked at h is fat h er sourly. He cracked h is knuckles one by one, and t h little sounds it made broke dully t h e nig h t stillness. “ Must youmarry, Dodong? “ Dodong resented h is fat h er’s questions; h is fat h er h imself h ad married. Dodongmade a quick impassioned easy in h is mind about selfis h ness, but later h e got confused.

“ You arevery young, Dodong. ” “ I’m… seventeen. ” ” Th at’s very young to get married at.

” “ I… I want tomarry.

.. T eang’s good girl. ” ” T ell your mot h er,” h is fat h er said.

“ You tell h er, tatay. ” “ Dodong, youtell your inay. ” “ You tell h er. ” “ All rig h t, Dodong.

” “ You will let me marry T eang? “” Son, if t h at is your wis h … of course.

.. ” Th re was a strange h elpless lig h t in h is fat h er’s eyes. Dodong did not read it, too absorbed was h e in h imself.

Dodong was immensely glad h e h adasserted h imself. He lost h is resentment for h is fat h er. For a w h ile h e even felt sorry for h im aboutt h e diseased toot h . Th en h e confined h is mind to dreaming of T eang and h imself. Sweet youngdream.

… Dodong stood in t h e sweltering noon h eat, sweating profusely, so t h at h is camiseta wasdamp. He was still like a tree and h is t h oug h ts were confused.

His mot h er h ad told h im not to leavet h e h ouse, but h e h ad left. He h ad wanted to get out of it wit out clear reason at all. He wasafraid, h e felt. Afraid of t h e h ouse. It h ad seemed to cage h im, to compares h is t h oug h ts wit h severe tyranny. Afraid also of T eang.

T eang was giving birt h in t h e h ouse; s h e gave screams t h atc h illed h is blood. He did not want h er to scream like t h at, h e seemed to be rebuking h im. He beganto wonder madly if t h e process of c h ildbirt h was really painful. Some women, w h en t h ey gavebirt h , did not cry. In a few moments h e would be a fat h er. “ Fat h er, fat h er,” h e w h ispered t h e wordwit h awe, wit h strangeness.

He was young, h e realized now, contradicting imself of nine mont h scomfortable… “ Your son,” people would soon be telling h im.

“ Your son, Dodong. ” Dodong felt tiredstanding. He sat down on a saw h orse wit h h is feet close toget h er. He looked at h is callused toes. Suppose h e h ad ten c h ildren.

.. W h at made h im t h ink t h at? W h at was t h e matter wit h h im? God! He h eard h is mot h er’s voice from t h e h ouse: “ Come up, Dodong. It is over.

” Of a sudden h e feltterribly embarrassed as h e looked at h er. Some h ow h e was as h amed to h is mot h er of h is yout h fulpaternity. It made h im feel guilty, as if h e h ad taken somet h ing no properly h is. He dropped h iseyes and pretended to dust dirt off h is kundiman s h orts. “ Dodong,” h is mot h er called again.

“ Dodong. ” He turned to look again and t h is time saw h is fat h er beside h is mot h er. “ It is a boy,” h isfat h er said. He beckoned Dodong to come up. Dodong felt more embarrassed and did not move.

W h at a moment for h im. His parents’ eyesseemed to pierce h im t h roug h and h e felt limp. He wanted to h ide from t h em, to run away. “ Dodong, you come up. You come up,” h e mot h er said.

Dodong did not want to come up andstayed in t h e sun. “ Dodong. Dodong. ” “ I’ll.

.. come up. ” Dodong traced tremulous steps on t h dryparc h ed yard. He ascended t h e bamboo steps slowly.

His h eart pounded mercilessly in h im. Wit h in, h e avoided h is parents eyes. He walked a h ead of t h em so t h at t h ey s h ould not see h is face. He feltguilty and untrue. He felt like crying. His eyes smarted and h is c h est wanted to burst.

He wanted toturn back, to go back to t h e yard. He wanted somebody to punis h h im. His fat h er t h rust h is h and in h is and gripped it gently. “ Son,” h is fat h er said. And h is mot h er: “ Dodong..

. ” How kind were t h eirvoices. Th ey flowed into h im, making h im strong. ” T eang? ” Dodong said. “ S h e’s sleeping.

But yougo in… ” His fat h er led h im into t h e small sawali room. Dodong saw T eang, h is girl wife, asleep ont h e papag wit h h er black h air soft around h er face.

He did not want h er to look t h at pale… Dodongwanted to touc h h er, to pus h away t h at stray wisp of h air t h at touc h ed h er lips, but again t h atfeeling of embarrassment came over h im and before h is parents h e did not want to bedemonstrative. Th e h ilot was wrapping t h e c h ild, Dodong h eart it cry.

Th e t h in voice pierced h imqueerly. He could not control t h e swelling of h appiness in h im. You give h im to me. You give h im tome,” Dodong said. \* \* Blas was not Dodong’s c h ild. Many more c h ildren came.

For six successive years a new c h ild came along. Dodong did not want any more c h ildren, but t h ey came. It seemedt h e coming of c h ildren could not be h elped. Dodong got angry wit h h imself sometimes.

T eang didnot complain, but t h e bearing of c h ildren told on h er. S h e was s h apeless and t h in now, even if s h ewas young. Th ere was interminable work to be done. Cooking. Laundering. Th e h ouse.

Th ec h ildren. S h e cried sometimes, wis h ing s h e h ad not married. S h e did not tell Dodong t h is, notwis h ing h im to dislike h er. Yet s h e wis h ed s h e ad not married. Not even Dodong, w h om s h e loved.

Th ere h as been anot h er suitor, Lucio, older t h an Dodong by nine years, and t h at was w h y s h e h adc h osen Dodong. Young Dodong. Seventeen. Lucio h ad married anot h er after h er marriage toDodong, but h e was c h ildless until now. S h e wondered if s h e had married Lucio, would she have borne him children.

Maybe not either. That was a better lot. But she loved Dodong… Dodong whom life had made ugly.

One night, as he lay beside his wife, he roe and went out of the house. He stood in the moonlight, tired and querulous. He wanted to ask questions and somebody to answer him. He wanted to be wise about many things. One of them was why life did not fulfill all of Youth’s dreams.

Why it must be so. Why one was forsaken… after Love.

Dodong would not find the answer. Maybe the question was not to be answered. It must be so to make Youth. Youth. Youth must be dreamfully sweet.

Dreamfully sweet. Dodong returned to the house humiliated by himself. He had wanted to know alittle wisdom but was denied it. \* \* \* When Blas was eighteen he came home one night very flustered and happy.

It was late at night and Teang and the other children were asleep. Dodong heard Blas’s steps, for he could not sleep well of nights. He watched Blas undress in the dark andlie down softly. Blas was restless on his mat and could not sleep. Dodong called him name and asked why he did not sleep.

Blas said he could not sleep. “ You better go to sleep. It is late,” Dodong said. Blas raised himself on his elbow and muttered something in a low fluttering voice.

Dodong did not answer and tried to sleep. “ Itay …

,” Blas called softly. Dodong stirred and asked him what was it. “ I am going to marry Tena. She accepted me tonight.

” Dodong lay on the red pillow without moving. “ Itay, you think it over. “ Dodong lay silent. “ I love Tona and…

I want her. Dodong rose from his mat and told Blas to follow him. They descended to the yard, where everything was still and quiet. The moonlight was cold and white.

“ You want to marry Tona,” Dodong said. He did not want Blas to marry yet. Blas was very young. The life that would follow marriage would beheard..

. “ Yes. ” “ Must you marry? “ Blas’s voice stilled with resentment. “ I will marry Tena. ” Dodong kept silent, hurt. “ Youhave objections, Itay? ” Blas asked acridly.

“ Son… n-none.

.. ” (But truly, God, I don’t want Blas to marry yet..

. not yet. I don’t want Blas to marry yet..

.. ) But he was helpless. He could not do anything.

Youth must triumph… now. Love must triumph.

.. now. Afterwards..

. it will be life. As long ago Youth and Love did triumph for Dodong…

and then Life. Dodong looked wistfully at his young son in the moonlight. He felt extremely sad and sorry for him. Characters: 1. Dodong – main character of the story who got married at the age of 172.

Teang – regretted marrying at an early age 3. Lucio -Teang’s other suitor who got married after she did and who’s childless until now 4. Blas – Dodong andTeang’s oldest son who followed their footsteps in the end. Blas contemplated to marry Tona when he was 185. Tona-woman whom Blas wants to marry.