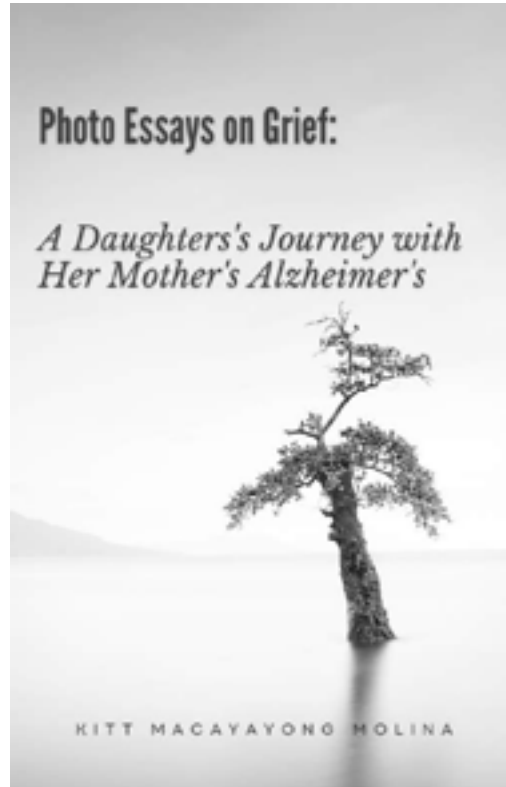


## BOOK REVIEW:

### Photo Essays on Grief: A Daughter's Journey to her Mother's Alzheimer's

*Benji Cruz*

National Director, Living Waters Philippines



This eBook, "Photo Essays on Grief: A Daughter's Journey to her Mother's Alzheimer's," is not just a valuable resource on providing care for elderly fighting a debilitating disease. Kitt Macayayong-Molina invites us to glimpse in the inner chamber of her heart as she takes a journey of giving back to her mother the mothering she received. As I read this haunting photo essays, I got a sense of a coming into a full circle of being dependent on your child who was once dependent on you. And in that process, one increases in love. Kitt's words couldn't be said better, "Alzheimer's brought me closer to Mama and allowed me to show love and care for her. Mama had become my 'Little Girl. I mothered my own mother.'"

That love didn't come easy. Kitt didn't go into platitudes praising her mother. She was real in sharing her tiredness, and at times irritation, at her mother's erratic behavior, even at the receiving end of her accusing words as the disease worsened. But even in the midst of exhaustion of being her mom's primary care for seven years, she found herself having a "deep affection and compassion" for her.

And when she's gone, the book shifted to Kitt's wrestling with profound grief of losing as she witnessed her mother even to her last breath. A

touching moment of a mother to her daughter even when she had already forgotten her name. Mama's heart proudly owned her even if her brains were giving away. "Oh, anak kita (You are my daughter)" she told Kitt, at a loss on recalling her name. That kind of bond can't be conquered by any ailment nor any memory loss.

Kitt courageously refused to cave in to cultural pressure to get over her grieving fast. In indictment of today's move-on-quick culture, she wrote, "The picture is like a looming anger I felt in my heart towards those who wanted me to hurry my process of grieving."

This photo-essay book is not about disease but about being healed to love. It's not about death but being made truly alive by compassion. And it's not about grieving in despair but about grieving unto hope.

I read the book in one sitting as I couldn't put it down. Because it gives me life. Towards the end of her book, Kitt pointed us to where that newfound life, hope and compassion emanated from... "My intimacy with Christ helped me make enough room for love in my life."