



PURPLE ROMERO

Work, then weddings

Her cropped hair
Her baggy pants
Her lack of lipstick

For you
Screamed incompetence

“She’s applying to be this - and that -
To be this - and that - ”

Therefore, she should dress like this
Look like this
Be like this

Never mind if she was
Industrious and diligent
To the bone

Never mind if she works twice as hard
As anyone else

Never mind.

She has no lipstick, no earrings, she’s not in a dress

She cannot apply here.
She cannot join us.

In Manila, some doors are shut
Some jobs are not given
Because a woman - a lesbian -

Had cropped hair
And had baggy pants

We want weddings, of course
We celebrate them

But let us work first.



In the Philippines, aside from the desire for legal I do's
Are battles for rights
Far, *far*
More basic than others



BIOGRAPHY

Purple Romero is a Filipina writer. She has written essays and poems about socioeconomic stratification and the struggle for labor rights for literary websites such as [Kitaab](#) and [Gantala](#). She is also the author of "*Dito, sa Purple House*" (*Here at the Purple House*), a book about interracial lesbian love set amid a backdrop of political and health crises.