Ang Mga Alamat sa Dilim by Gayle Dy, Batch 25, August 20, 2020

Logline:

After being alive for so long, an entity loses its zest for life, yet there is nothing to be done. However, the great thing about life is that it can still take you by surprise, even though you think you've seen all there is to it.

Opening scene:

The film begins with the camera pointed to the sky. In the background, we can hear two voices--the entities--talking. The first entity breaks the silence by repeating a tongue twister it had overheard earlier, followed by some riddles. The conversation then takes a turn to the stars, which the first entity wishes it could embody and take the form of. The second entity argues that by doing so, it would be too far from earth to be able to see and hear anything. The first says that it's already seen enough of earth anyway, and that humans are getting worse and worse each day. The second says that that's just the way the world keeps its balance, that there will always be good and bad people. The first wishes that everyone could just be good, and on that note, they finally agree.

ACT ONE:

The next day, the entity decides to take the bus, where a vignette of people come together and are observed through the entities' eyes. Inside, a series of social issues are present, such as class discrimination and sexual assault among other things. Still, there are also acts of compassion, such as when the people on the bus band together to help a woman get off after missing her stop.

Eventually, the entity gets down at a stop near the hospital, and ends up following an older woman into it. There, it learns that the woman's husband is in a coma, and that she visits him everyday, telling him stories of when they were younger. The entity listens for a while and leaves. After wandering the city all day, the entity returns that night to talk to the other entity. They talk about the brevity of existence and get into an argument on whether life is even worth living, ending with the first storming off in rage.

As the entity storms off, it witnesses a dead body on the ground, suspected for being a pusher. The camera zooms in on the young body, which is now in the arms of a hysterical woman, presumably his mother. Because the entity is omniscient, it's able to peer into the life of the young man, and see that it was an activist student. The mother lets out a scream as the scene fades to black.

ACT TWO:

A month has passed since that night. We see snippets of a night sky, similar to the opening scene, followed by a busy street, children begging on the sidewalk, a frame of a window where we can hear a family inside eating dinner and laughing, a couple walking together and holding hands, some drunkards singing along to a videoke machine inside their barangay, a holdapping incident along a kalye. There's no entity in sight.

Then, we see a girl standing on the edge of a rooftop, breathing heavily as she looks down. For a while, all we hear is the sound of her hysterics, until finally, we hear the entity's voice again, begging her not to jump. She looks around in search of the voice, leaving the entity dumbfounded. This girl, Bea, isn't surprised at all by the entity, for she has been communicating with ghosts ever since she was a kid. She talks about how difficult life is, and the entity feels itself getting drawn to her. We learn that she is actually pregnant and that her boyfriend left soon after finding out.

Moreover, she is depressed, and cannot raise the baby on her own. As time goes by, they become close and the entity believes it is in love with her. Later, the girl mentions of this mangkukulang in the province, and the entity leaves in search of it, hoping she could turn him human. After a long journey, on which it meets more people, the entity finally meets the mangkukulang, who warns it that once the transformation is over, it can never be undone. The entity agrees, and the transformation takes place.

ACT THREE:

We see the silhouette of a man, once an entity, but now, a human, walking up to a door, carrying flowers. Bea opens the door, confused by the stranger. As the entity reintroduces itself and explains what happened, she clearly grows upset. The entity doesn't understand why she's reacting this way; he did this for them to be together. Bea explains that it isn't her that the entity is in love with, but rather the idea of her, and its desire to be seen by someone. The entity argues that it does know love, that it has observed love for so many decades, to which Bea says that observing isn't the same as experiencing. She goes into a monologue about how time will teach him these things too, but for now, he just needs to be patient. Heartbroken, the entity leaves.

Eventually, he finds his way back to the hospital, where he learns that the husband of the old woman has just died. He sits outside and cries. Finally, we see the sky again, and the entity comes into view. It speaks to the air, as if to summon the other entity, but it can't. Not anymore. Still, he talks aloud anyway, apologizing for the fact it was never able to say a proper goodbye. It thanks the entity for all the years they've spent together, for getting him through the good times and bad times. He admits he doesn't quite know what he's going to do with his life now, but that he'll do his best to live a good life, and hopes that the entity will watch over him.

Cut to a mountain, where the human entity is finally at par with the sky, a reference to an earlier conversation between the two entities, where they argued over where the sky began. He watches the world in wonder and smiles.