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Image created in Davao Oriental,
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Sunset: Uncertainties and opportunities

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After a long day of drifting at sea, fishers go home with either a boatload of fish or nothing at all. Sunset marks the end of a day's work of a fisher who sails on a daily basis to make ends meet. This photo was taken during my ethnographic fieldwork in Davao Oriental, Philippines. Fishing as a livelihood closely embedded in the environment is very vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The acute changes in weather patterns compounded by the influx of commercial fishing companies forced small-scale fishers to go further offshore which increases the costs of every venture. In a landscape marked by environmental degradation and marine resource depletion caused by natural and human-induced calamities, fishers are prompted to engage in a myriad of economic activities. In this research, I take a closer look at how these fishers navigate through the waves of uncertainty. Farming and wage labor becomes the community's adaptive strategy in the midst of economic instability. As they safely moor their boats, fishers see the sunset as a symbol for the arbitrariness of their lives. The cyclic nature of the sun setting over the ocean brings the hope of a new dawn with new opportunities.