



Raw Whispers





why is everything filtered, censored by our own minds...
shouldn't there be an outlet for just you without a mask..at
least without as obvious a mask..

why are we so reluctant to accept, let alone express our
emotions....especially pain... why are we so ashamed of
pain when it is our constant companion ?
Doesn't it make us human? make us strive for
more...sometimes even for something beyond our illusion
of ourselves
Wouldn't the acceptance of our emotions open us up,
make us realise the need for compassion... and in the
process diminish pain for ourselves and maybe others

this is a space for self-expression ..at least *for now*

-Rinchen Angmo



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tongue tide memories .

we're standing at this beach and she's quivering and tears almost escaping those eyes . i'm pulling my sister's arm towards the waves as they creep into our flip flops . she's petrified, squealing and shrieking and i could never understand why, until today, two years later . they're roaring and as they swell they form this intimidating tide that's ready to wipe you out clean . the uncertain is sprinkled in the sea and as it rises it brings those hopes up and in those precious six seconds, you're holding your breath . it crashes against the sand, so powerful that everything below it gives in, the crabs scrambling and those hopes nudged into the sand like the half chipped sea shells . i tell her to dip her feet into the white froth and the moment the tide forces itself forward, run . don't look back, don't pick up the pieces and don't bother having hope . it's been two years, yet only one of us still sees this as a game .

Shania Mathew





Sit in the midst of cacophony

Crave for silence

Sit in the midst of stillness

Crave for sound

A Meditation on Silence and Sound

-Afnan S.M



P!NK's 'Raise your Glass' is hosting a party. Next door Martin Garrix's 'Animals' and BTS's 'Dionysus' are dancing wild and LOUD. That's Cobra Starship's 'Hot Mess' and Fall Out Boy's 'I Don't Care' throwing up. Linkin Park's 'Iridescent' and Black Veil Brides' 'Goodbye Agony' are wailing.

You don't mind meeting them individually. A quick greeting from the open door of a shop on the sidewalk. Small talk from a fellow passenger's headset on the bus. Deep conversations in the café.

But together – NO

The other neighbours threaten to call the cops.

You muffle your ears with the pillow,
hoping the playlist party will stop.

----- **Cacophony #1** -----

You are in a cab, stuck in traffic.
If you can't make it there in twenty minutes,
you will have to seek other roads to travel.
Horns blaring, out of rhythm.
Drivers swearing, too much rage.
'Who do you think you are?'
'This road is not your father's property.'
Panic murmurs the same question
over and over again,
'Will you make it on time?'
'Will you make it one time?'
Panic sinks in your ribcage
into a scream.

----- **Cacophony #2** -----



You are hanging out with your friends-acquaintances. They speak a language you can't understand.

"It's my Self-Care Saturday tomorrow
I'm gonna stay in my room all day
with a movie, chocolates and
scented candles."

"Gucci is overrated,
Versace is better."

"They are stuck so deep in their privilege that they don't care what's
happening. I'll go to the protest and then come to the party."

"Yeah, he's really cute,
is he with someone?"

Suddenly your silence becomes too loud. . they turn their heads to you for
inclusivity.

"Have you been sleeping well?"

"Your (thrift-bought) outfit is so cool."

"I know its hellfive of a time for
you, but please don't lose hope. If
you need anything, we are always
here for you."

"Tell us about the girls you like.
Do you have a crush on me?"

----- **Cacophony #3** -----

Run off to your room.
Meet your neighbor and inform them
that you will be leaving for home
and won't be back for a week.

Get into your room,
Shut the door,
Close the windows,
Turn off the lights.

Create Silence.

You are no longer there.

-----Silence # 1-----

--

Actually, run away.
Don't wait, don't turn back.
Run.
Run till you find silence.
Go far away.

You are a dewdrop, meditating
on a cobweb

----- Silence # 2 -----

-



----- **Stillness** -----

TIGER & FLOWER IN ZANG

ལྷག་ & མེན་ཏོག་



tiger and flower in one being...binaries are constructs, as
my first college friend rightly said

: pan-Tibetan art style

-Rinchen Angmo

I guess I needed to write this one memory down. Perhaps this is my eulogy which I attempted to erase but in vain. .

.
As per my faith's beliefs, a dead person is reborn at a maximum time of 49 days from the time of his/her death. In that process, we engage ourselves in delivering rituals which help them to move clearly on their next journey as a reincarnated soul.

.
I never knew why I would suddenly become attached to memories of dead people as if their part of the story was yet to be finished somehow, or maybe it was my own desire to have that one last conversation with them before they left their earthly self. Be it Mokshi, whose incredulous journeys with my sister seemed to remind me of my own shortfalls as a younger sister or my grandmother whose only memory attached to my younger self is the last time I saw her lying on her deathbed in Naggar.

.
And in the midst of all these memories, I remember you, Aane, even though you have been dead for three years now.

Somehow the death of someone seems to have an extreme effect on families. Either you become closer or avoid things and people more than usual. Your younger sister seems to have taken a lead in the first premise. She seems to be much more interested in us than she was four years ago. She sends us messages on valentine's day and whatnot day, maybe to reduce her guilt of not knowing us sooner or maybe of the realisation that anyone could be lost to nature at any moment like it happened with you.

I was never close to you, I think for the most part I never felt any attachment from your side. The only thing which maybe kept us at the same plane was that time of the year when you would send us your self-knitted socks for us to wear. In the winters till this time too, I get compliments for wearing such cute, small woollen knitted socks and like always I take pleasure in announcing your name and your talent in specially creating these for us all. Even though these socks remain as the last reminiscent of our relationship, yet I never seem to forget some of our silent conversations.

Perhaps the reason why I remember you is the fact that there are so many words and conversations left unsaid between us two. I wanted to ask you the whys and the hows of so many situations which had undertaken in those two years when I was myself battling my own demons. I wanted to say sorry too for the way I acted impulsively and maybe cursed you for making my mom cry in the midst of that catastrophe.

And even now as I write these down, it's somehow become rather hard for me to write those bitter silent memories. Instead some vital energy seems to pull the strings of my brain to focus on our happier moments together; when it felt for the first time that you were trying to mend things between us. Maybe the bond which was supposed to have been made years ago had begun appearing somewhat transparent then.



I could never say this to you but I had forgiven you at that moment itself and I had begun to pray to God every single day afterwards to let you live the way you always wanted to.

It was a summerish, autumnish day, somewhere in a park in sector 15 in Chandigarh. The weather seemed so nice that I think you would have taken anyone to the park if I were not available at that moment itself. Yet I want to believe that you had planned it somehow for us to grow closer and build memories with me as an Aunt and niece would do in normal familial environments. A new phone camera seemed to be a good option to take a step ahead and I heard you asking me to click a picture. I hurriedly felt excited and I saw that smile on your face, maybe for the last time. Even though you had covered your head and a part of your face to hide those scars of radiation therapies, as you uncovered yourself in front of the camera and stood beside the bougainvilleas of someone's house, I felt that you were the most beautiful, bold and courageous-looking Aunt I could ever ask for.

In that entire process, you also demanded to take selfies with me. I remember clicking a lot of them since you dismissed some of them as blurred pictures and works of bad light.

I could never forget our bitter narrations but this was some sweet tale that replaced some of my dislike for you. And I felt happy for that moment and later, because in some ways I understood that you wanted to patch things up with everyone. I want to believe that that's why you took me to the park, clicked pictures and calmly taught me some words of our language.

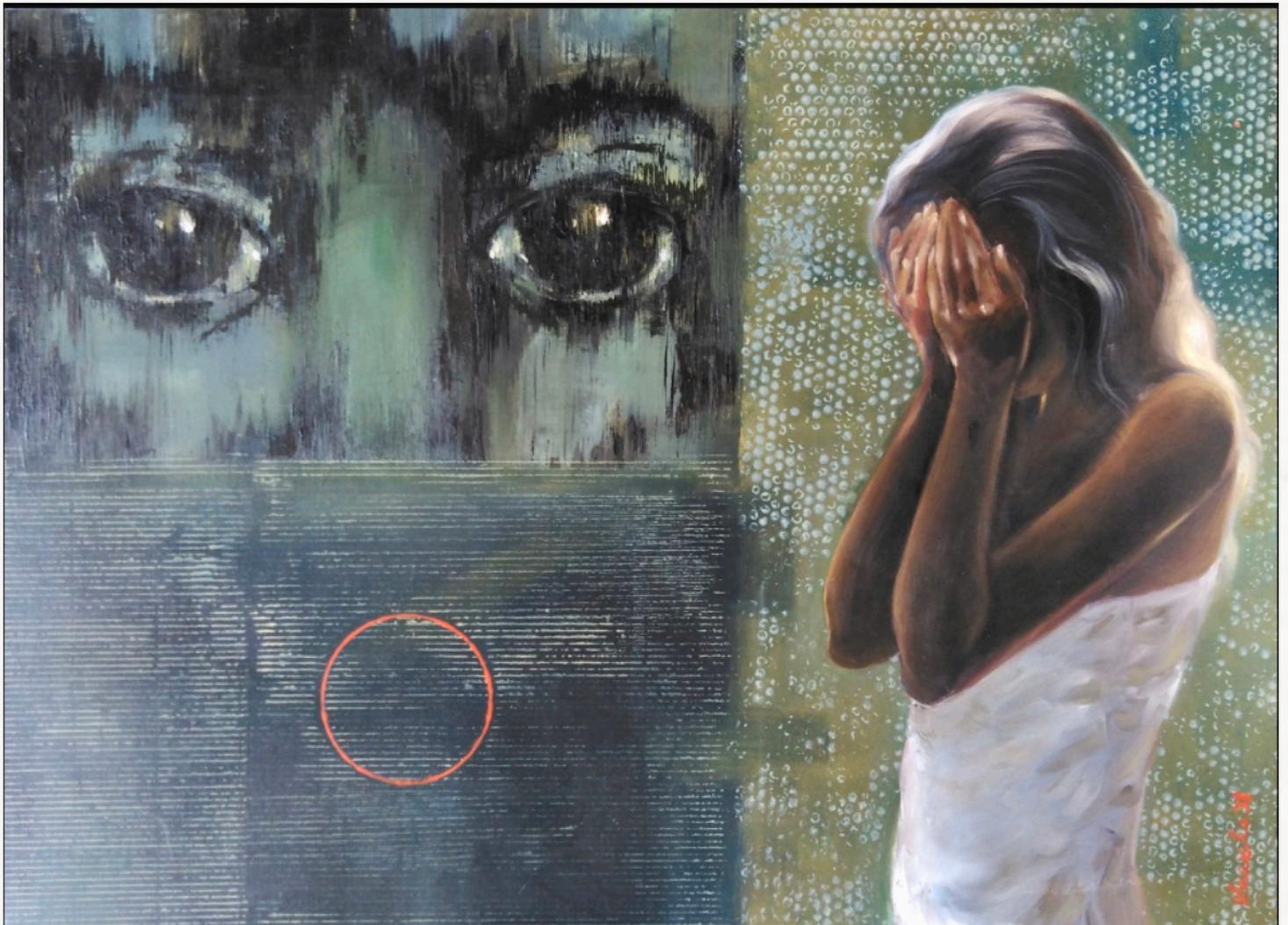
Sometimes when I drift back into these stories and past memories as I glance over my gallery, I regret not transferring these pictures in my phone since those were our only photos together.

Whether you would have been alive or not, or could things have been clearer before the plunge of a death threat, I think things wouldn't have changed a lot. And perhaps all my attempts at remembering you are only to clear a guilt which I have accused myself of. There is nothing that could have been done, the situations were such that maybe we didn't want to understand each other's stories and lives. And maybe that is what drifted us apart, our lack of communication and our failure of giving each other chances of some sorts.

And yet when time came, all of us with whom you had ever engaged in a talk, came forward to pray for your reincarnated soul. We felt relieved at the news that you were said to be born in a good family somewhere in the hills, which coincidentally remained as your last wish too.

Your loving niece, Anna.

-@artalogues



-Saasha Sarin



Mirrors

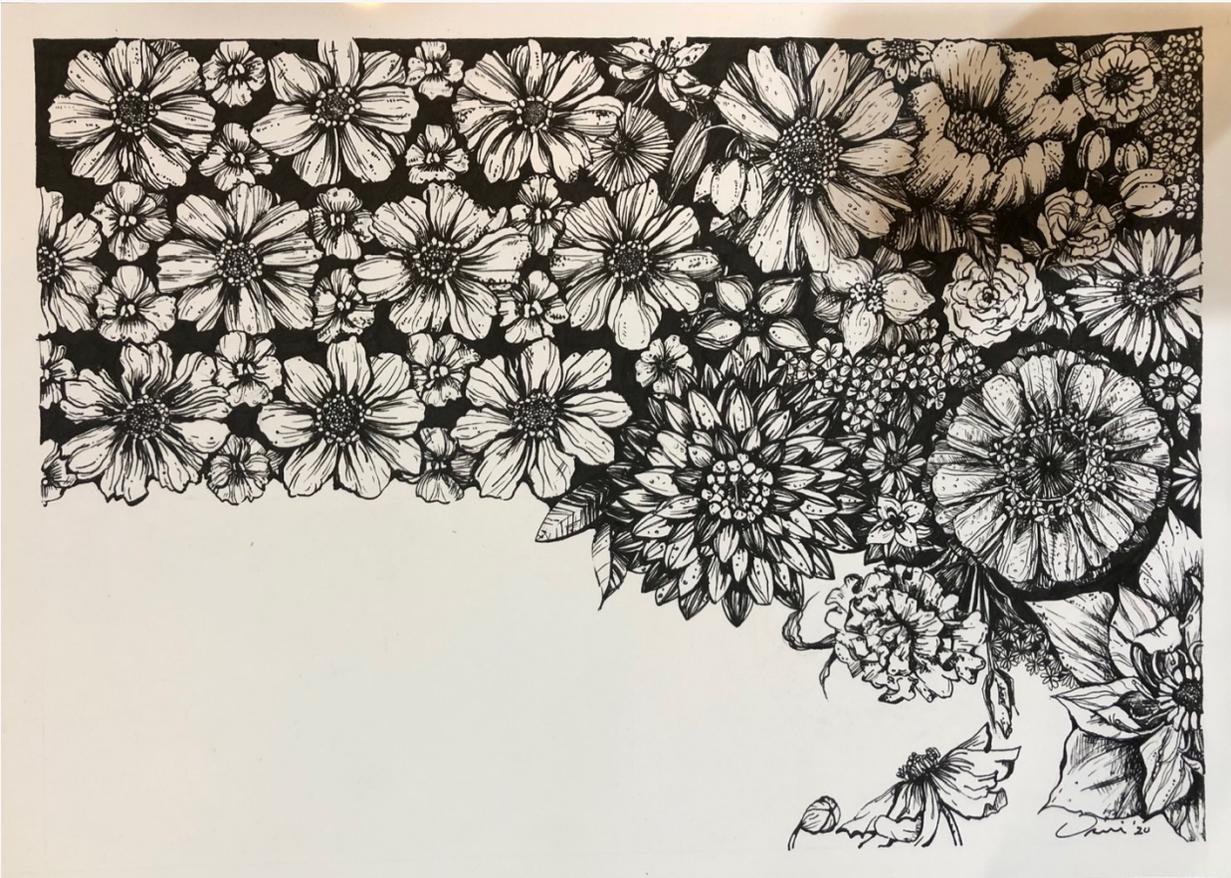
The darkest of our secrets,
Lurk in the shadows of our mind,
Whispering in each moment of silence.
A constant murmur of regret and guilt.
Compelling you to bury the collection of shattered pieces,
Each a story of a different sin.

What you see in the mirror,
Is a reflection of what civilization prefers,
A model of idealism and propriety.
And also the murderer of your truth.
The culprit of your nightmares,
Or rather the countless sleepless nights,
Caused by the indescribable anxiety to live up to society's expectations.

But what drives this obsession
Of fitting people into moulds?
Is it the fear of anarchy?
Or the risk of collateral damage from individual liberty?
Whatever it is,
Is it worth sacrificing the counted days of precious life,
Before we return as dust to the earth's soil?

Rome wasn't built in day,
And nor were these restrictive mindsets.
It's taken centuries of social conditioning,
And blind belief in the order of the world.
Unwinding it won't be an easy task,
Especially with the evolving layers, disguised as a departure from the orthodox,
While it truly stems from the same origin.

-Anushka Saha



PARACOSM

For as long as I can remember, I have always seen women being “guided” by their family and friends to present themselves in a certain manner .

“Dress the way you wish to, but just ensure that you don’t seem too inappropriate .”

“Don’t be so proactive!”

“Men can’t control themselves, men have needs and desires, you are the one who has to be careful to maintain your repute .”

Women today, are taught to be liberal, financially independent, and multitaskers, but at the same time are constantly reminded to be aware of the ‘MAN’ of the house and give due respect to them .

Unfortunately what society fails to understand, is that despite women liberating themselves, they are unable to acquire the space in society which is rightfully theirs .

While we have to start accepting that women need to be liberated, we also need to create a space for men in society, such that they learn to rectify their mistakes and not become silent contributors to the endless objectification of women . Their misogynistic actions should not be glorified or justified by society by the mere statement “BOYS WILL BE BOYS” . People need to come together to take steps to change people’s patriarchal mindset; a rotten element etched in them from time immemorial .

This art piece is an encouraging visual depiction for all the women out there to not grow within ‘confined notions’, and instead allow themselves to experiment with whatever they wish to with no indulgence of the misogynistic actions of the men .

-Urv Seth



**Eavesdropping, because they're talking
about me**

In the silence,

I hear the whispering crowd walled in my
skin

In the noise,

I catch a few words, they're screaming.

They make so much sense,
it feels like they're talking to me.

Wait

were they talking to me, all this while?

-Perna Kejriwal

Snow Lions in a breeze
 Snow Lions in a breeze



Tibetan art employs heavy colours. For this painting I used light colours because I wanted to create a soothing effect.

-Eshay Tobgyal



You: A story.

Prologue:

You have run out of reasons to stay alive.

One.

You were born in the heat of summer. You grew waxing and waning, contradicting yourself in every fold, struggling with others and struggling with you. Thoughts swim in your head, crashing into each other and the only voice you hear is your own. How long will Summer last?

It was your seventeenth birthday when you had realised that you will never love yourself. And your eighteenth, when you realised you can learn to hate yourself less.

Two.

You keep your eyes open when the priest begins his prayers. They all eat the bread and drink the grape wine, the supposed flesh and blood of the saviour, while you count the number of times the candles flicker inside the chapel. You keep in mind to count the ones before the alter, on the sides of the empty- on- weekdays corridors and of course, the one inside your head.

You had lost your faith when you saw how a deacon treated his wife, how women in your community were inferior citizens and how everyone accepted it. First it came as a repulsion from the subjugation caused by patriarchy and you raised your voice against it. And when the men and women defended their sexism with patriarchy and their patriarchy with their religion, you lost your faith. The flame in the candle inside of you extinguished.

Three.

You carve out your name on the pumpkin. October is the first month of your personal year, and the last day is your first. You celebrate new year, and carve out every reflection of you in the pumpkin.

It is in your pumpkin that you see a self portrait made with mangled hands. And this self portrait hardly looks like you, but is a sketch of father and mother and sisters and friends and teachers— nothing that belongs to you except perhaps the pumpkin itself.

Four.

Mother gives thanks, while you struggle to collect your thoughts. Sitting round the table laid with choice food, your tongue feels limp like a damp rag used for wiping dirty tables in some roadside hotel. There is no taste in your mouth.

This is the first time that there is everything to be happy about. No mismatched socks, no teenage angst, no deaths, no sickness. And yet you feel like gnawing your limbs out, piece by piece. Unhappiness is wretched when there is really no reason to not be happy but you are not happy and you feel that you ought to be happy but you can't feel happy when you're not happy. You feel like the worst sinner for not appreciating what you have, but you really don't know how to appreciate a room of unwanted gold when your eyes had always been fixed on bronze bars.

Five.

You peep when you hear Santa's steps. It's been years and years and you still put up a stocking. You've never believed in the existence of a Santa Claus but you still did so, because everyone else did so, too.

When you saw father put something wrapped in green in your stocking, even though you had always known that he'd been playing Santa, something broke in you.

Now you still put up the stocking, even though no one does so anymore. Or maybe you do so precisely because no one does so anymore. You have grown too much like yourself, that your self is now everything and anything everyone else is not.

Six.

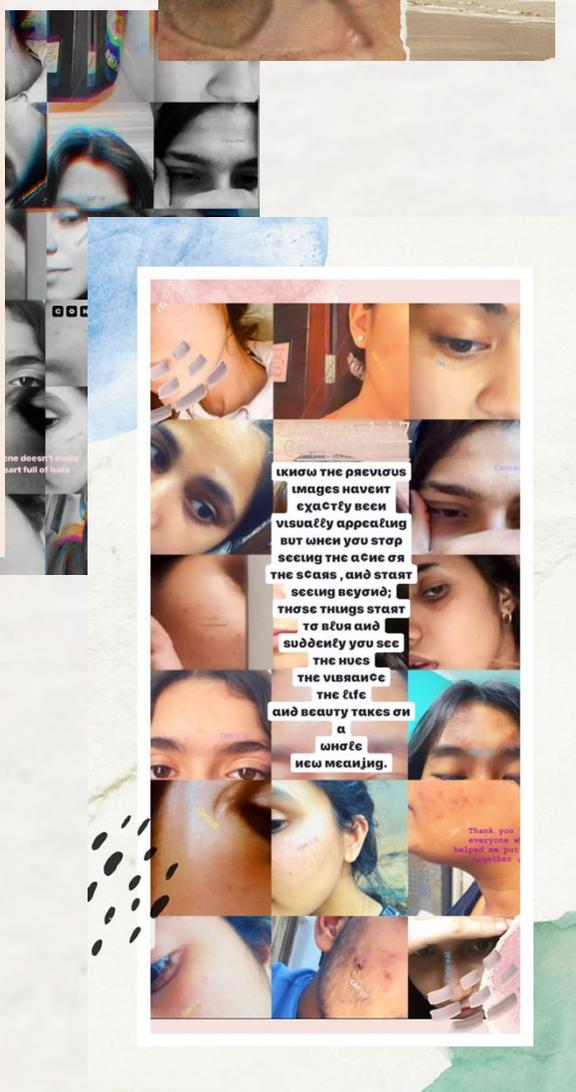
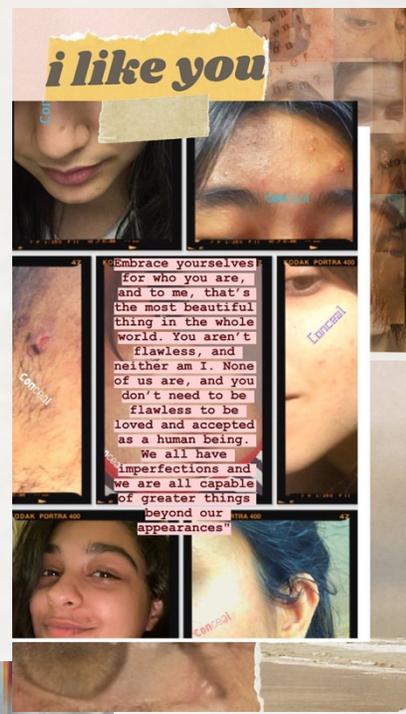
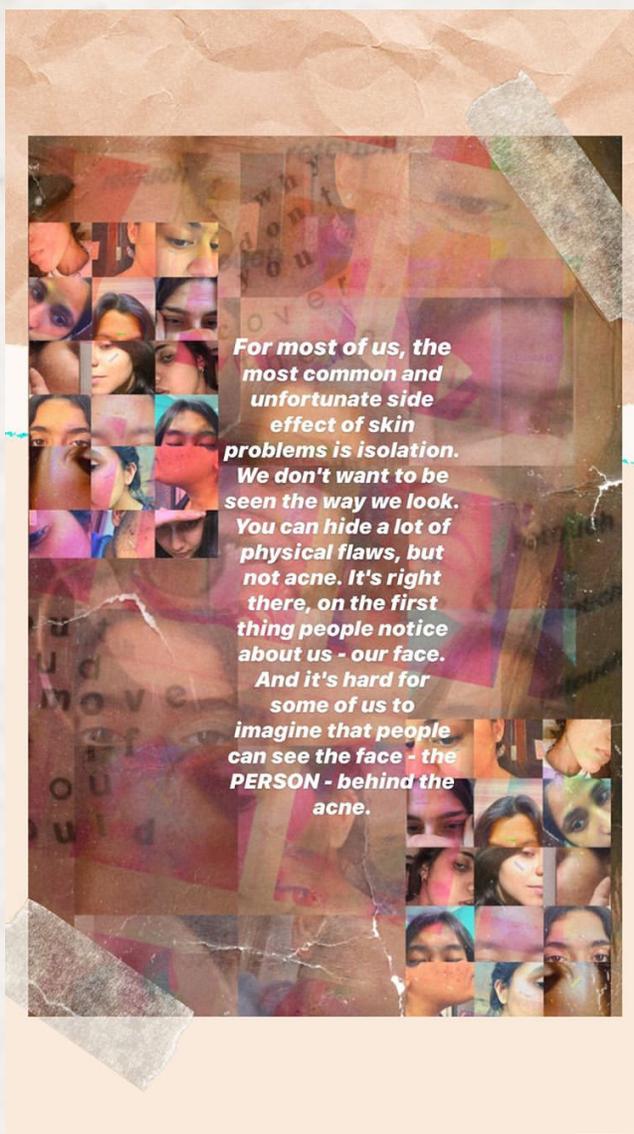
You have run out of reasons to die.

Epilogue:

The flowers don't smell like you. The slab isn't warm; the six feet of earth between you and I muffles all the words that travels to you. In place of you, stands a stone with your name.

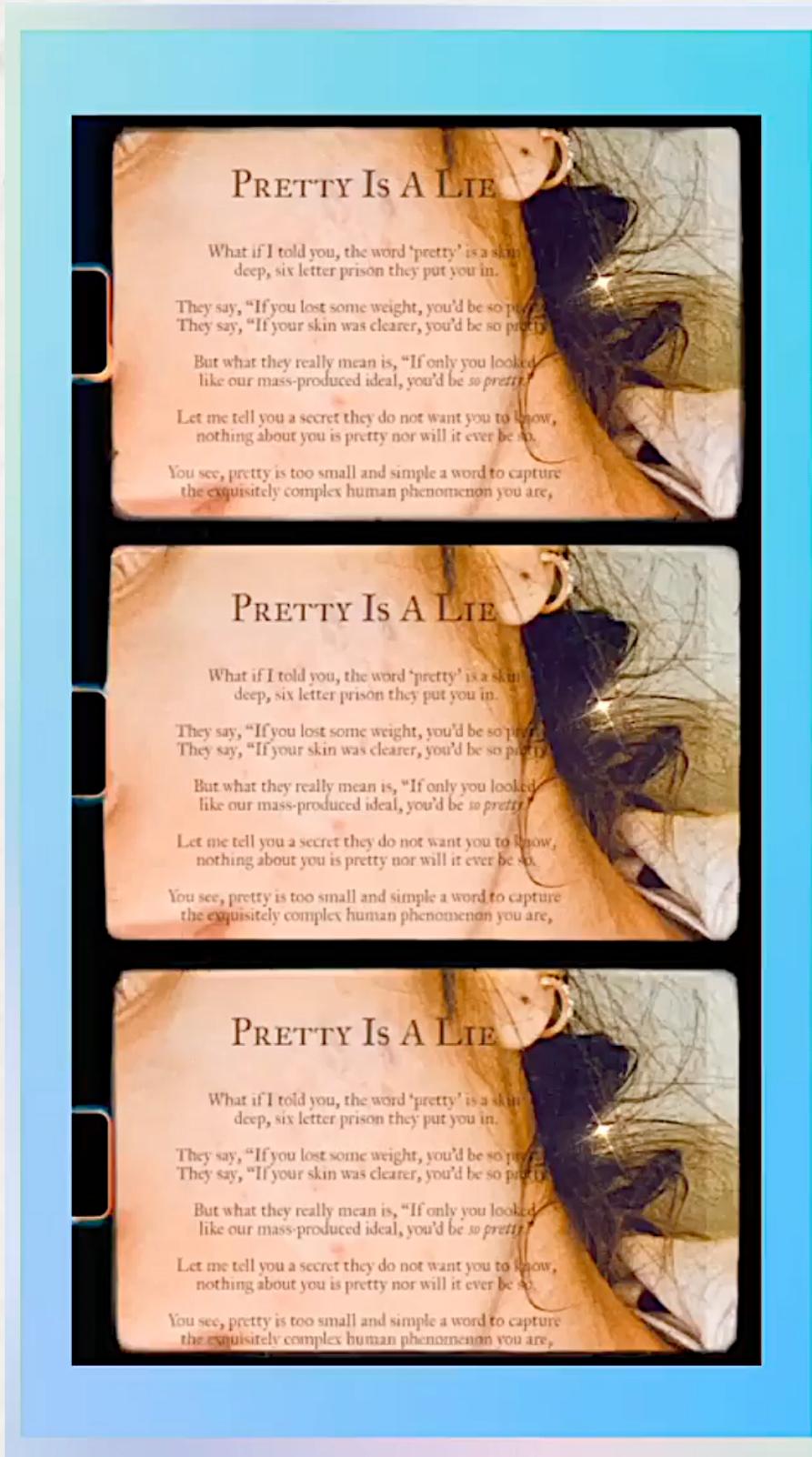
But the cold marble slab is not you.

-Niangthianmuang S. Ngaihte



When I developed acne, my self-confidence tanked. I felt incredibly low, and self-conscious about it. To now see other women proudly sharing their skin makes me so happy - and I am waiting for the day when it is no longer 'taboo' to post a bare-faced image - but completely normal and natural.

-Saasha Sarin



Saasha Sarin



*There you are
Cutting to the chase
What's the hurry
It ain't a race
Hold up mate
Don't you want to leave a Trace?
A wonderful gesture
Leaving a sweet smile upon her face
An exceptional way to
Maintaining your grace
Nothing soft in your
Longing for that warm embrace
Finding the door that is
Leading you to Extraterrestrial space*

-Ananya Singh



february long gone

*no more chocolate cigars to swirl in hot coffee,
 no more hitting snooze for twelve more minutes of warm quilt
 goodness.
 cup noodles were our excuse to stay warm amongst many other
 things.
 the sinuses gradually melt away
 while the sun licks the lawns in the mornings again
 making it perfect for spaghetti straps and citrus dates in the
 football field.
 the capture of turtle necks now free,
 toes are ready to wriggle in the breeze.
 when the cold shower hits my back, i don't shiver.
 it escapes the scruffy towel and it's scrubby wrath,
 drop
 by
 drop
 meandering.*

-Shania Mathew



-Saasha Sarin



I think we all do enough, you know

Yet we end up this way, feeling hollow

Maybe it's the circumstances,

Maybe it's the people,

Maybe those ideas of academics we don't even understand

Maybe it's the life we are living in itself

But do you know what isn't so bad,

These very circumstances, people, academics and life have given us
those

whom we can speak to, we can express to..

those, whom we call home away from home

So.. I don't know if this would help or not but,

Let us talk more. Lets do this!

-Poorvi Parakh



The death of my ego

I feel no love, no self worth, no life, for the first time in my life I feel truly empty and while I know many people love me I feel unlovable, like no one will ever look at me the way I've always dreamed of. Maybe it's because I have valued other people's opinions over what I have always wanted to be. Tried to be a different person for someone else when I needed to be me for myself. Or maybe it is because I always mistook entitlement for self love because when I needed to love myself for who I was I fell in love with the idea of me and not me and every time I did that the idea of me came crashing down, taking along with it the entitlement and the ego and any semblance of self that I had taken years trying to form.

When I finally broke down and felt like I was nothing and worth no one, in moments like those I felt for the very first time in my life, true to myself, gone were the expectations that came with being me, what was left was the shell of a person and inside this enormous shell of an ego was me.

-Tishyaa Sehgal



Hamzah Mattoo



Hamzah Mattoo



Success.

If a layman on the streets asks you, “What do you mean by success?”, how would you possibly answer it? Would you tell him that success means picking himself up off the street and capitalising on his limited talents and intellect? Or, what would you define intellect as? If one of these questions struck you, this read will be an interesting one for sure.

An individual with his beliefs set on a capitalistic venture would see *Adam Smith* as his “*Prophet*” while a *Communist* would look up to leaders like *Sun Yat Sen* who formed the *Communist Party of China* or *Kuomintang*. Notwithstanding these beliefs, life seems difficult if you’re out of focus on the past and the future, but most individuals often forget to keep track of their breaths in their daily lives. Moreover, the mind is an absurd place if you dive too deep into it - causes more confusion than not. The ever intelligent, *Sadh Guru* says that everything in life, be it local or global is damaged due to one man’s belief clashing against another man’s belief. That could very much include the clashes between capitalism and communism; racial, religious, social and economic differences have separated so many individuals on a global level that they often forget to separate their minds from their bodies.

Capitalism is an act of instilling a consumerist mindset in individuals’ consciousness and is being followed by most, blindly rather than understanding that they are all becoming slaves to the *Earth* that they live in, rather than looking at the bigger picture - which is the universe, in its literal sense. The same idea goes with the other “isms” that have been articulated by historical figures. Astronauts would suggest that the universe is inconceivable and they are often correct. But, what if access to another dimension through a better understanding of the universal sense of the world around us, is possible? The answer is yes, it is possible to the extent of your own mind.

That smirk you make when you understand a concept of a sophisticated film like *Inception* or a book series like “*Harry Potter*”; they make you think that it’s completely relevant to the reality we live in, or when certain jokes made in the animated show, “*Rick and Morty*” make you think from a slightly different perspective, you grow a bit. And that bit, over many little bits, adds abundantly to the growth of the consciousness. The answer, honestly, doesn’t lie in climbing the peak but rather, in the challenges a person faces on the trajectory towards the top.

Moreover, success should not be defined by how many digits a person can earn nor how much of a failure a person is due to his inability to resist temptations, but through experience, one learns that happiness comes from being satisfied with the very moment that we are living in - regardless of where we are in the universe, if we aren’t happy now, we will not be happy when we reach the top of the mountain. It’s more about the mindset, and meditation helps evolve our mindset throughout our lives. We do not necessarily have to cross our legs under a *banyan* tree to meditate, but whenever we are faced with a challenge in life, the ability to resist the spiralling of the mind into negative thoughts, the act of stopping them is when you are in control of your mind and the perseverance of this action, is success in itself.

Success should not be defined by results, but how hard a person has fought to get to the top even though it means that the result will not be what we have pictured. At least, the person worked for it.

-Robert Lianzathang Hangzo



**Today I walked into
my balcony to watch
the sky turn pink**

While I waited
I saw people do the
same

I saw an orange kite

I could hear the falling
water near the pool

While I contemplated it's
futility

I heard the birds sing
the sun to sleep

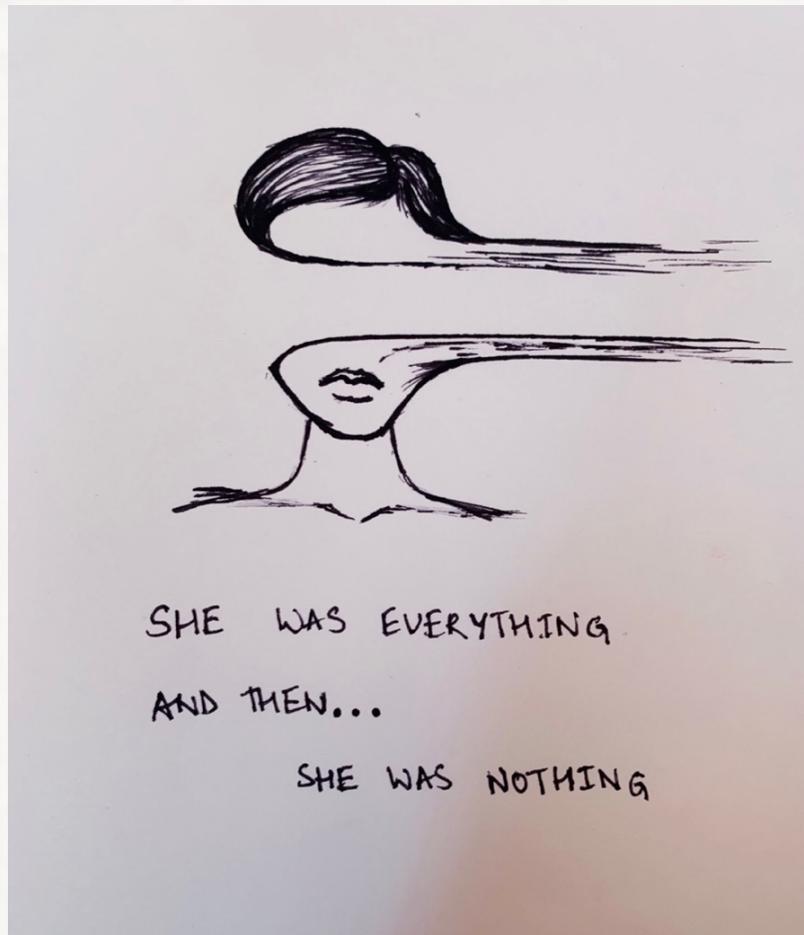
-Purna Kejriwal

couldn't see the sun, but an
orange kite flew close by.

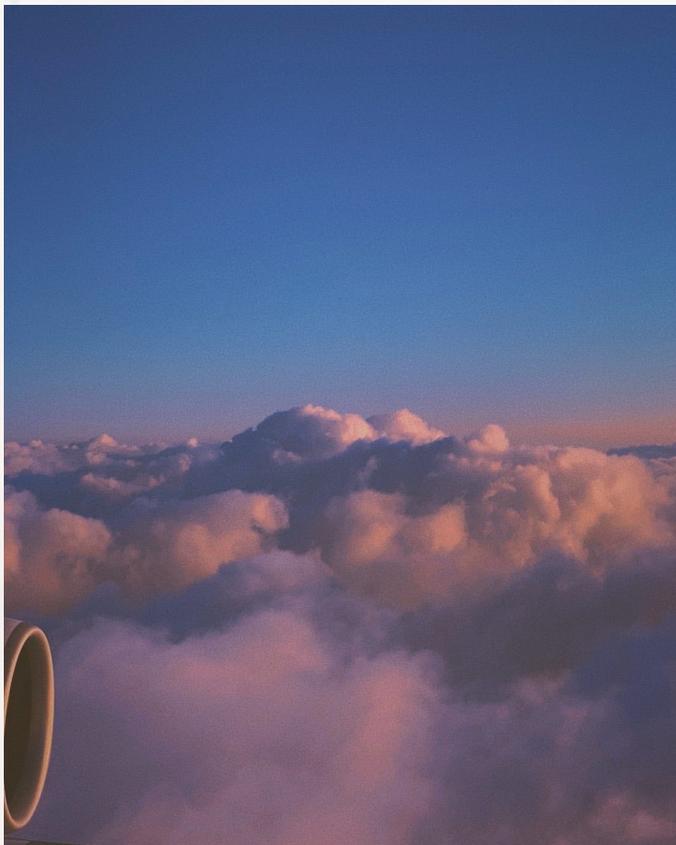
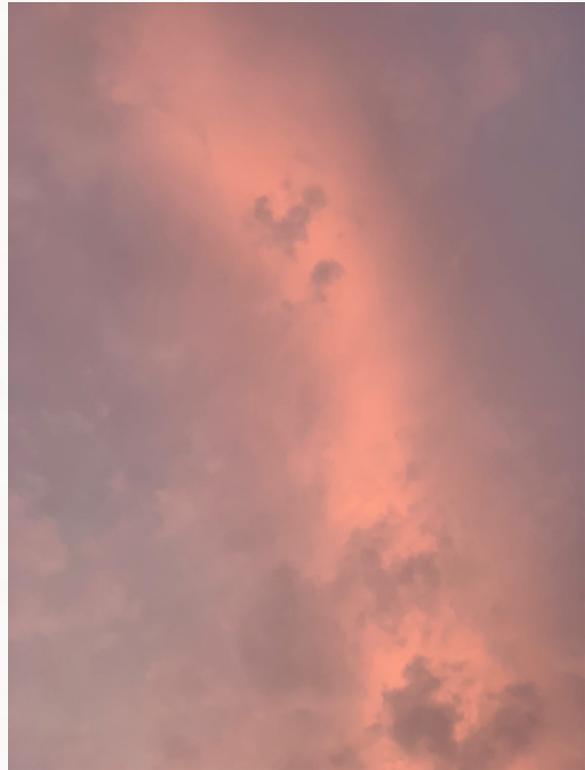


Madhubani art, originated in the Mithila region of Bihar . The eye-catching geometrical patterns used in it, form the essence of any Madhubani painting . Initially these paintings were categorized into five different styles, Tantrik, Kohbar, Bharni, Godna and, Katchni . But now, these have been merged by contemporary artists .

-Shraddha Rai



-Shreya Bahukhandi



Generation after generation we have been teaching our kids that the sky is blue. Is it though? The sky is pink, grey, orange, purple and even green depending on where you're standing. So why limit ourselves to one idea? Nothing here is the truth, just another perception because the sky is pink. .

-Tishyaa Sehgal



Green or empty vale

A green vale. She was walking in the space in-between. The magical space between the stream and the grass. Magical? well, let's just call it an otherworldly realm. It's quite a happy place, at least happier than the tangible world. You have to balance well as you walk along. She suddenly saw a raven chase an eagle; even in this far away realm you couldn't escape the tangible world's sky. but that's okay.

Now getting back. it was actually a green vale across a white wall. Or maybe it wasn't. the point is, it didn't matter. She enjoyed walking in that space in-between, so far away from the tangible world, tangible problems, seemingly tangible answers that were hollow.

But having access to that green vale came at a cost. The tangible world became all the more unbearable. And the more unbearable the tangible world became, the more wonderful the green vale did. It was a paradox of sorts. And she didn't know what to make of it.. One moment it was the sparkling waters of the green vale, the other moment the unrelenting winds of the tangible world. There was never a balance, never ..why? Each time she tried to attain it, it all kind of tumbled down.

But she was grateful that she at least had access to the green vale, what would she do otherwise..but didn't precisely that make things worse...no, that's only as per theory...and she didn't believe in theories unless she had verified them herself.

Yesterday I saw her skipping in the green vale, today she's back in the tangible world. The venue keeps changing unpredictably. But even in the tangible world she seems to have visions of the green vale and that makes her hopeful. I guess she's better now...now that she's accepted that these two worlds exist..and that she's a part of both....and that she's got to accept it all despite her ideal wishes.

but hey, no worries.. it's all an illusion anyway..places and things only exist in our minds don't they?

The green vale.

The entry was unknown to most. You either chanced upon it or you didn't. there were some who put in an effort to discover it; but Skalzang was inherently a member.

In fact, she belonged more to the green vale than she did to the tangible world (t world). But she was stuck in the t world, and well, there wasn't much she could do ..was there? was there?

was there? that was the looming question? Furthermore, she didn't know whether she was really stuck.. I mean what if there was neither a green vale nor a t world and it was all an illusion after all. But she had to deal with what seemed real at least for the time being.

The green vale was an indescribable place. There was so much to it, that one almost forgot what it was all about. Though it was an in-between place, it was a place of no in-betweens. As in, it was an intermediary realm between the t world and the unknown, but the innate nature of the green vale can be described as 'a realm of extremes'. Here, you were either on one end of the spectrum or the opposite end. So you never traveled the terrain in-between..you never knew how you landed from one end to the other..you never knew what to make of things. It was either wonderful or horrible.

As Skalzang says, "It's like sitting on a swing, but never knowing how to oscillate from one end to the other. So while you're at the utmost top, there's a shower of euphoria..but then you wonder how you got there and before you know it you're at the other end ...and suddenly it's dark. But you know that just as soon there will be light.

And you can't do anything because you see, you're on a swing which never stops. If you try to get off, you'll hurt yourself terribly. The longing to get off becomes really strong at times, but you realize that you'll just transport yourself from one swing to another. So, there isn't really a point is there?now the next important question is ..what do you do then?"

Despite always having been a member of the green vale, Skalzang had never asked herself this question until now. So I guess she had come at least one step ahead. She had recognized her predicament and she was willing to probe into plausible answers.

Answers? The only answer was acceptance of how one feels. It wasn't anywhere near a solution, but it was an answer...an answer that was helping her more than all those empty words of consolation. The answers also entailed emptiness...what a paradox, it was no where near empty precisely *because* it entailed emptiness. The only solution ?

Cascading from the vale to real..
 when would she wake up
 and wipe that tear,
 But was a tear such a bad thing?

wasn't it
 a diamond cutting and cut from your joys
 water in dreary terrain
 an expression of ...?

something

..

a piece, as true as the truth the eye can release

a stream...a stream called...a dream...stream..stream called

-Rinchen Angmo



Over time I also hope to garner funds to support students, writers, artists and others, especially due to the economic difficulties caused by the outbreak of covid-19. Moreover, this can hopefully become a space where writers, artists etc. can make their voices heard. We'll be mentioning alternative avenues to look up as well as support them directly.

With time, if this garners support, hopefully there will come a time when *Raw Whispers* can pay its talented contributors. The initial editions will be free of cost. Donations are welcome. For the initial editions, the proceeds for the donations will be contributed to support students, writers, artists etc. The allocation of the donations will be notified.

Thank you for the support!

Hoping for more wonderful submissions for the next *Raw Whispers* edition:

Deadline: 7th June 2020

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Many of the contributors are people I know at some level. When they sent me their work, I got a deeper and wider glimpse of their universe. Every sentient being has so much beauty and compassion within. More than anything else, I hope for this space to be a celebration of that..a celebration of all we feel...whether it's pain, joy or a void...
a celebration of being unapologetically you, them or empty

-Rinchen Angmo

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