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PARTICLE UNM'S LITERARY MAGAZINE • SPRING 2020

PARTICLE

UNM'S LITERARY MAGAZINE



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The background is a solid dark green color. Scattered across the page are several stylized daisy flowers. Each flower has a white center with yellow dots, surrounded by white petals with light green outlines. Some flowers are on thin green stems with small leaves. The flowers are positioned in the top left, top center, middle left, middle right, and bottom right areas.

PARTICLE

UNM'S LITERARY MAGAZINE

Particle is an online literary magazine run by the students of the University of Nottingham Malaysia.

Established in 2013, Particle publishes biannually, committed to providing a platform to amplify the voices of both emerging and established writers and artists.

The work contained in this magazine does not necessarily represent the opinions and views held by the Particle staff or any member of the University of Nottingham Malaysia.

Note: This issue has been recompiled from its original.

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Masthead

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DISCLAIMER NOTE:

We, the Co-Editors in Chief for Particle Magazine's 21/22 term, would love to give you our biggest thanks for being here with us. This disclaimer is meant to highlight the pre-existence of this issue. All works that have been curated and edited within this issue were done by the magazine's previous teams. Although it was previously lost in an unfortunate incident, we managed to recover this issue, and a few others—deciding to republish them. We tried to maintain the novelty of this issue, and sincerely apologise for any errors, omissions, missing works and/or authors, that might have occurred.

Thank you.



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velvet petals

Amber Lee | Poetry

ring-a-ring o' roses, a pocketful of posies,
ashes! ashes! we're all tumbling down,
a thousand red roses, to tickle our noses,
happy anniversary! dad crowned mom

a thousand more roses, we ran out of vases,
mom changed her favourite, dad was silent
the roses lose their petals, ashes! ashes!
it's too late now, we've all tumbled down

tongue stained with all the bitter notes of french wine,
lips burgundy, a lone queen sleeps on a king-size,
painted porcelains burst into a spectrum of browning hues,
the wilted ones lie here in the bedroom with mother

she spends her mornings in front of the vanity dresser
my dad built, knotted fingers carving flowers into mahogany,
last night's mascara still clumped on her webbed lashes,
cheeks black, she swears she can see rot in the wood

heart bruised and calloused over, she tells her daughter,
"bring back a lover if you dare for old ma to see,
has he ever bought you flowers? what? just by the bouquet?
how will he be better if he's less than even your father"

ring-a-ring o'roses, they're no longer in bloom
from when i was ten years old, ashes! ashes!
there's nowhere else, for us to tumble to.



Hounds

Namita Suberi | Poetry

I strung my words yesterday, one after the other
Hung it above my bed, so I could seek no further
The meanings dripped down, like acid, in my eyes
I couldn't hold them long enough to fall asleep.

This shell, this nemesis, my muse and my doom
Has entrapped me like a fly in the gloom.
While I hold mutiny over the lone solitude
It keeps ringing, ringing, ringing...

The eyes have seen, and ears have heard.
Still, in the clatter of the world I seek,
A Sound.
In the rising blackness of the void I seek,
A Glance.
But nothing stares back.

All the hounds are out,
And I am caged in, like an animal.

Actually Autistic

Tan Jie Ying | Fiction & Non Fiction

It happened almost the same way a gay person comes out to their parents. I waited for Mum to be in a good mood, sat her down, then uttered those fateful words and braced myself.

"Mummy, I think I might be autistic."

"...Okay."

That's weird. Not "What?". Not "Touch wood!". Just a very, very abnormal silence and "Okay."

"Wait," I narrowed my eyes at her, "You knew all along?"

"Of course!" She replied flippantly, "You always were obsessed with those educational CDs Daddy bought when you were a baby. Good thing you turned out to be a normal-ish girl, though. When your cousin was diagnosed, I was so scared you'd never learn to speak properly."

Translation: If I had turned out to be like my cousin, unconditional love would be nonexistent in our mother-daughter relationship.

Not that Mum believed in such a thing, though. What she did believe was that friends are just one silver medal away from becoming backstabbers, and children just one B+ away from wasting all the resources you invested in them.

"Just because I can speak doesn't mean I'm not autistic, you know." I chose my next words carefully, "Besides, remember when you'd buy me chocolate, and I'd always spit it out because the sweetness made me want to vomit?"

"Really? I just thought you wanted to help me save money on junk food."

"What about the time I learned English just from watching Disney movies?"

"Your father spoke nothing but English to you since you were 6."

"My English was better than his by the time I was 8!"

"You were still a genius back then! Remember when you grabbed the wrong textbook in Standard 1, and Daddy taught you Standard 4 Maths for a full hour before he realised? That was so funny!"

I kid you not, in that moment I felt like the Math Lady meme because nothing about what she said was funny. What had really happened was Dad got frustrated at his idiot daughter, then flung the book so hard across the room, it drew Mummy's attention to the cover.

That front page was news to him, that's for sure.

Obviously, I said none of that out loud. So I took a deep breath and put on my best confused face. "Seriously? I spent years telling you that something was wrong with me, and that's all you remembered of my childhood?"

And just like that, my mother's smile disappeared.

"Oh, you want to know what's wrong with you?" She hissed, then shrieked in an impossibly high tone, "I'll tell you what's wrong with you!"

Crap, I thought. Of all things, that was the trigger?

"Your pickiness was borderline anorexic," She ticked off her fingers, "You wouldn't greet any relatives even if I asked you to, and even then you had a mouth full of sass!"

As she continued to rattle, her voice seemed to fade away as I hyper-fixated on the first two things she said. Because I actually did remember the times I was a "difficult" child, in all its HD glory.

My pickiness? That was my taste buds amplifying every inedible taste they picked up by 100%, so I'd taste flour in my noodles and soap in my newly-washed water bottles until my late teens. My refusal to greet relatives? I was 5 and everyone insisted I call them Second Uncle or Third Aunt-In-Law, but I thought it was more respectful to use their actual names.

To be honest, what I remembered about my childhood was completely different from Mum's memory of it. It wasn't about how precocious/difficult I was, it was how much I didn't know about myself.

I didn't know what could have been done to help me. I didn't know how my differences could become strengths with the right guidance. Heck, I didn't even know that what made me different had a name, not even after my cousin's diagnosis.

I broke out of my trance and looked at Mum again. She was still ranting, red in the face with outrage at how I was the one who failed her for 18 years, shrieking like a banshee about how it wasn't her fault I turned out useless. Long story short, she was in no state to continue an informed or civil discussion, if what we had could even be called that.

So when she finally turned to me for a response, with her hands on her hips and a threatening "WELL?!" on her lips, this was all I could say:

"...Okay."

The newspaper was an adult fiction for the psychedelics with NO red trigger warning

Shizen Wong Jing-Ee | Fiction & Non-fiction

I remember when I was younger my popo would say—
The newspaper will do you good, the newspaper is good for you.
But I would be playing with golden crows in an emerald field. In my mind the talking giants that descended from the bean stalks were sweet
Bowling to the wind, bowling with the wind; no ulterior motives, no sin churned within.

During those days, only the pork selling butcher on his motorbike was the bad guy. I'd say he's the giant's anomaly for he had a cleaver and he would SLAM the red meat hard— and again and again. My popo would stay to pay but my legs were two frantic bicycle pedals lost to the wind. But
when he started to wither old and grey, I was running away from a different horror—

An ethereal wormhole I discovered only by accident on the page of a newspaper, under all the veggies and sands and soot and false miracles. Once, I tried to outrun it but the tendrils of the veggie caught me by my ankle, dragged me to the soot— a quicksand I sunk under.
From there,

I descended into the reflection one would call a purple nightmare:

Here, the crows had shed its gold,
Thick mascara-ed eyelashes were crying in distress.
Hundreds of hands would PUSH the broken winged man down the flat
or shove a penis parang up the ass.

The sick melodies on the Proton radio sings
about machine guns or two chest buns
And of the emerald field: their mines for cocaine stuns.
Unemployed hypnotist and their pocket watches—
Now reside in a place called Smart Phones.
(They like to think that they are smart, but really,
They are just little phonies.)

Here, when dopamine runs low, the young blood could see,
the invisible neon vacancy sign on the polished coffin wood:
ONLY THE GOOD DIE YOUNG, it says, adulthood is for the dumb.
Come, this wood will share your secrets,
they understood the language of cigarettes.

When I woke, was it my tears I lick by the corner of my lips or was it anaesthetic I taste?

I remember when I was younger my popo would say—
The newspaper will do you good, the newspaper is good for you.
But when I knew how perfect sentences read, I know she was deceived
The newspaper is an adult fiction for the psychedelics with NO red trigger warning,
a convenient way to corrupt an embryonic mind when all she wanted was to
immortalise the sweet, talking bean stalk giants in her head.

Covert Whisper

Abhiraamee Ayadurai | Poetry

i sit cross legged,
bent over her knees
counting number of veins
that run river-green.

her kaili twists up her thighs,
grass-smelling. tiny ants crawling.
her skinny knuckles toil away in the soil,
the mango tree is now 37 years alive.


i sit cross legged
hearing discordant sounds
of her sewing machine.
the Generator of my *paavadai thaavani*,
the Generator of Two Generations.

my Generator of Two Generations tells me
padippu varale
that dreams and ambitions are for girls like me
yet her bony fingers try to flip the pages
as much as her eyes try to read
as much as her lips try to spell.
at this point, i sit cross legged and wonder
maybe *padikka vidale*.

in her wedding picture,
she stands like a bride at a funeral,
her happiness corpsed into a coffin
invisible, like fear. during their
arubathaam kalyanam,
i ask her if she was old enough
to be sixty like grandpa
and her crisp red saree
billows ghostly in the wind.

i sit cross legged, smelling
her coconut-oiled-hair in neat braids.
her evening stories cloaked in sunset.
her history in his story.
a wife of sorts. a mother of four,
a grandmother of nine. all woven
in cotton-silk and unabridged hopes.

the spices in her kitchen,
do not stay for long. they float across wild;
filling every nook and nostril in the house,
summoning stomachs towards her flaming curry
faster than we approach the temple deities.
still she says, '*nalla padi*, not like *paati*'.



i sit cross legged again
with her decades-old insomnia
while the man who married her sleeps away.
she doesn't flinch at this age-old routine,
this state of unrest, her default setting.
a mother always worries, my grandpa jokes.
his mornings begin with fresh toast and tea
hers end with disintegrating fingerprints.

someday soon
her sarees would be unworn,
her coconut oil stagnant, her mango pickles
undried, her house-slippers
not misplaced, her large spectacles unused,
her gardens overgrown, her fabrics unsewn,
her kitchen forlorn.

my Generator of Two Generations,
a feminine rebellion
evanescent into oblivion
just another Woman

i sit cross legged in her silence
salvaging the remains of her journey.
tempted, i am, i tell her.
to reverse her existence, her creations
into nothingness.

yenda kannu?, she politely asks,
why my love?
because Paati,
if not for you
will they still call it patriarchy?

Note (if needed):

Kaili - sarong

Paavadai thavani - similar to sarees, worn by teen girls.

Padippu varale - not smart enough

Padikka vidale - prevented from education

Arubatham kalyanam - 60th Wedding. Indian tradition of remarriage to the spouse, usually when the husband first turns 60 years old.

Nalla padi - study well

Paati - grandmother

A Pregnancy Test

Christine JW | Fiction & Non Fiction

The bus ride back to campus was a quiet one. It was six in the evening, but the sky had already darkened, glowing deep red through the pregnant clouds, until it seemed to be almost nightfall.

Yi Xin looked away from the window to the sleeping figure beside her. Ming Shern slouched in his seat, his head falling forward. His faint snore was barely audible over the grumbling overcast outside; it was only when she felt his tensed muscles relax that she knew he was asleep.

After the suspenseful visit to his hometown with two long-haul bus trips, she understood that the last two days had worn him out. She felt tired too, although she could not fall asleep. Memories of recent affairs still played in her mind, starting from that single line from her that sparked this chain of events.

“I think I’m pregnant.”

The long silence over the phone reflected the quietness of her room. Kai Li, her roommate and best friend, was out on a night shift at her part-time job. Sitting upright on her bed, Yi Xin stared into empty walls and pressed the phone against her ears.

“Ming?”

“I’m here.”

“What do you think?” she asked, biting her lower lip in anticipation.

“How are you feeling?”

“I’m okay.” She relaxed, her smile returning, and got off the bed. “Just that I missed my period.” She stood in front of the full-length mirror beside her bed, touching her belly with wonder.

“You haven’t gotten it checked out?”

“Not yet,” she said, looking at her reflection.

Another pause. “Sorry, can I call you back?”

“Sure.”

The call ended. Yi Xin returned to her bed and lay down, holding on to her phone as she waited. Half an hour passed before he called again.

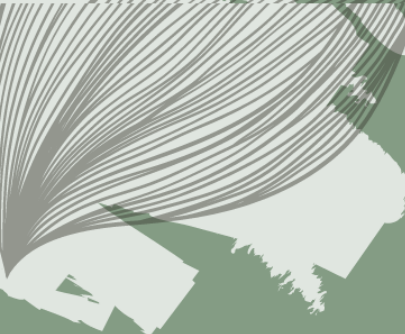
“My mum wants to see you. She wants us all to go to the hospital together and get you tested.”

“Sure.” She sat up. “My classes are done for the week. We can leave tomorrow if you want.”

“I’ll buy the bus tickets,” he offered .

“Okay.”

“I’ll see you soon.”




She remembered how nervous and excited Ming Shern seemed when they met after the phone call. Although his words were spare as usual, he wouldn't stop looking at her. His eyes would dart to her stomach every now and then, even during the bus trip back to his hometown, only turning away sheepishly whenever she caught him staring. Looking at him now as he slept beside her, Yi Xin smiled at how peacefully at rest he was.

A sudden flash of lightning, followed by a sharp bang of thunder, woke her from her reverie and Ming Shern from his sleep. At that moment, the bus slowed to a stop at its destination.

It had started to rain when they got off the bus, and they quickly gathered their bags and belongings before running for shelter at the bus stop, which had roofed walkways connecting to their campus accommodation halls. Ming Shern had offered to walk Yi Xin to her hall, so they walked together, hand-in-hand, in silence. Yi Xin noticed that there was no wind at all, not even a slight breeze. Only the sound of rain and distant thunders could be heard.

When they reached her hall, he stopped at the front door, hesitating before pulling her into a hug. "I love you so much."

Although startled by his sudden display of affection, she smiled and melted into his embrace. "I love you too."



When he released her, she gave him a shy glance, and only then did she notice that his calm had been replaced by a sense of disturbance. She waited for him to speak, but he did not.

"What's wrong?" Yi Xin asked.

Ming Shern's voice was barely a whisper. "I'm sorry. This is all my fault." He muttered, looking away.


"Look, I don't care what people think or say," she said, forcing their gaze to meet again, "and neither should you. I don't care how hard this is going to be, because this is our child. It'll be worth it." She took his hands and squeezed them. "Like you said, we'll face this together, okay?"

"Together," he echoed, nodding, but his torn look did not fade. Sighing, he touched his lips to her forehead, and they said their goodbyes before parting.

The conflicted look on his face lingered on her mind when she returned to her room, but was soon dismissed when her roommate pounced on her with questions about her visit to his home.

"It went well." Yi Xin managed to say when Kai Li paused to catch her breath. "Turns out we were both worried for nothing." She shrugged as she put her bags down near her nightstand.

So they're fine with the baby?" Kai Li asked, her eyes wide with a mixture of hope and disbelief.



“Well, their excitement was beyond what I expected.” She smiled, rifling through one of her bags. “His mother brought us to the hospital as soon as we arrived at his house, and after confirming the pregnancy, she was preparing all sorts of Chinese herbal soup for me to drink, checking on me every now and then to make sure I was fine.”

“Are you feeling fine then?”

“Yeah,” Yi Xin replied, “just a little light-headed right now, probably from the long journey and all the excitement.” She found what she was looking for, and set the bag aside with the rest. Then she showed her best friend the sonogram picture that she’d brought back from the hospital. “Here, take a look.”

Upon seeing the picture, Kai Li’s sceptical expression dissolved into a gentle look of adoration. “He’s beautiful,” she gushed.

Yi Xin beamed. “Kai Li, it’s still too early to tell if it’s a boy or a girl.”

“It’s just a feeling.” Kai Li shrugged. Then she went back to examining the picture, grinning from ear to ear.

Laughing to herself, Yi Xin gathered her towel and a change of clothes. “I’m going to take a shower,” she announced and entered the adjoining bathroom.

Yi Xin sighed as hot water fell upon her head, flowing down her hair and warming her bare skin. She felt her muscles relaxing. Thunder rumbled outside, and a shiver ran down her spine at the sound of the pelting rain. Then a pang struck her in the abdomen, knocking the breath out of her. As she stood hunched over from the impact, her eyes were drawn to streams of blood running down on her thighs to her ankles, spreading out on the bathroom floor.

She was silent for a moment, confused. Then she reached for the bathroom door, slammed it open, and staggered out, naked.

“What on earth...” Kai Li was sitting on her bed, staring wide-eyed at the dripping wet figure before her. A second later, as her gaze lowered to the wet, stained floor, realisation set in. “What happened?” she asked, approaching Yi Xin to examine her.

“I don’t know.” Yi Xin said with a trembling voice, feeling the cold air in the bedroom clinging to her glistening, bare body. “I was just showering. Then suddenly, I felt a cramp. Next thing I knew, I was bleeding.”

“Did the doctor warn you of anything like this after the test?” Kai Li pressed further.

Yi Xin shook her head. “No, he didn’t say anything at all. He just smiled and had me brought to another room to rest.”

“Another room?” Kai Li repeated. Yi Xin nodded.


“Why?” she asked, her voice laced with confusion.

Kai Li’s expression had changed. When she spoke again, her voice was lowered to a whisper. “Yi Xin,” she said, “are you sure it was just a test you were getting?”

Yi Xin frowned at her friend’s absurd question. “What? Yes, of course. We were doing ultrasound scans. See, I even have the sonogram here.”

She found the picture from her nightstand and retrieved it to show Kai Li again, but her roommate ignored the gesture.

“Is there anything else you can recall?” Kai Li asked again.



“Well-” She stopped mid-sentence, remembering something which she hadn’t noticed before. “Oh my god...” A wave of nausea welled in her stomach.

“What is it?” Placing a hand on Yi Xin’s shoulder, Kai Li leaned in, looking concerned. “What happened?”

“The doctor...” Yi Xin started, but couldn’t finish the sentence. Her breath felt strangled as she recalled the horrific scene. She forced herself to inhale deeply before speaking again, “After the ultrasound, the doctor told me to remain lying on my back,” she took another breath, “and he inserted something into me...” she paused as realisation hit her, “through my vagina.” The memory resurfaced fully. “I felt a slight sting.”

“Like an injection sting?” Kai Li asked.

“I’m not sure. I can’t remember clearly.”

“What about afterwards?”

“Nothing,” she murmured. “I felt nothing else. Ming was holding my hand and talking to me. His mother was smiling at us. Everything seemed fine – normal even – and it all happened so fast. I thought it was just some routine procedure for a pregnancy test, so I didn’t ask.”

Yi Xin recalled the way the doctor smiled at her after the procedure, praising her for being brave. She remembered smiling back. She shut her eyes to block out the rest of their smiles, but their cheerful voices continued to echo in her ears.

When she opened her eyes to meet Kai Li’s again, her vision blurred. “I didn’t feel a thing.” At that moment, she became acutely aware of the tingling feeling of blood trailing down her legs, forming a small pool underneath her feet.

“I’m gonna kill that bastard.” Her friend’s words reclaimed her attention. “No!” Yi Xin replied instinctively.

Kai Li looked incredulous. “He kil-” her voice broke, “he killed your child. His own child.”

“What if it’s not him? What if it’s his mother? Or the doctor’s mistake?” She paused to think, and then became convinced of her own speculations. “I need to tell Ming. He needs to know.” She looked around the room. “Where’s my phone?”

It was on her bed. Kai Li passed it to her. She dialed his number and waited. He answered after the first ring.

“I’m bleeding,” she blurted.

“What?” he said.

“I’m bleeding, Ming.” Her voice became strained. “I’m not supposed to bleed. I’m pregnant.”

“Yi Xin,” his tone softened, “darling, listen to me-”

“Ming, what if our baby-”

“Shh... It’s okay.” He soothed. “It’s okay. Everything’s going to be fine.”

She fell silent at the calmness of his voice.

“Yi Xin, are you there?”

She felt her breath leaving her as blood continued running down her legs in cold, wet trails.

“Listen,” he spoke again, his voice now thick with torment. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you earlier.”

“Yi Xin, are you okay?” entered Kai Li’s voice, though Yi Xin barely noticed it. “You’re turning pale.”

“Mum said she’ll make arrangements and take care of everything.” His every word threw shudders through her body. “I didn’t realise before that this was what she meant.”

“You’re shaking, Yi Xin. Let’s get you dressed first, alright?” her friend said.

“Please don’t worry about this anymore. Next time, we’ll do it the right way next time,” he pleaded. “Just tell me now, are you feeling unwell anywhere?”

“Yi Xin, look at me.”

A sudden warmth covered her bare shoulders, making her flinch, and she met Kai Li’s worried eyes.

“Is it him?” Kai Li asked warily, adjusting the clean, white towel that she had just wrapped over her body.

Meanwhile, Ming Shern’s voice pierced her ears again, his tone turning desperate. “Yi Xin, talk to me.”

“You knew.” The words slipped out.

Yi Xin didn’t wait for a response. She shoved the phone into her friend’s hands and stumbled back into the bathroom, locking the door behind her. The shower was still on. Without removing her towel, she walked into it, shutting her eyes and letting the hot water trail down her face. She increased the water pressure, hoping to drown away the chilling memory of him promising her eternity on the examination bed as the doctor emptied a life from her. As the cold left her body, the soaked towel weighed on her shoulders before slipping off her and falling flat onto the floor. Outside, the rain grew heavier.

A sharp pain hit her in the lower stomach. Then there was a heavy splash on the floor. She wiped her face and opened her eyes to see a fresh pool of blood staining the wet, white towel underneath her. Resting between her feet, was a big lump of tissue.

She stared at it, forcing air in and out of her lungs. It was almost the size of her fist.



She slowly lowered herself, blinking away water that clouded her vision, until she was on her knees. For a moment, she could only stare at the dispersing pool of crimson in innocent awe and intrigue, as if spellbound. Then, she reached out to gather the bloody lump in her trembling hands. Streaks of diluted blood slipped through her fingers, and she cradled it closer to her breasts, shielding it from the torrents of water that continued to shower down.

“My baby...”

Water droplets fell from her drenched hair onto the lump and dissolved into it. Watching this, she lowered her cupped hands and pressed its contents against her stomach in painful desperation, rubbing dead tissue with pruned fingers against wet skin, as if it could dissolve back into her – back to its rightful home, safe from harm.

Lightning flashed through the small bathroom window. A bolt of pain stabbed at her abdomen, making her bend over in excruciation. An echoing crack of thunder followed, bursting her bittersweet bubble, and she screamed. She remembered feeling the cold wet floor hit her cheek.

When she opened her eyes, she was in her bed, fully clothed. By her side was Ming Shern instead of her roommate.

“How are you feeling?” Ming Shern asked when he saw that she was awake.

He was holding her hand firmly as he sat on the edge of her bed, his legs hanging off the side of it. She studied him while contemplating an answer. He was still wearing yesterday’s clothes, his hair dishevelled, and his stubble beginning to show.

“How are you feeling?” Ming Shern asked when he saw that she was awake.

He was holding her hand firmly as he sat on the edge of her bed, his legs hanging off the side of it. She studied him while contemplating an answer. He was still wearing yesterday’s clothes, his hair dishevelled, and his stubble beginning to show.

“Kai Li went out to buy us some food,” he spoke again as she did not reply. “It’s almost noon now. You’ve been... asleep for quite some time.”

He paused. She was still watching him.

“Do you want me to leave?”

She shook her head. A decision was made.

He nodded and sat closer to her. “How are you feeling? Does it hurt anywhere?”

She shook her head again. “I’m okay. Just...tired.”

"I'm sorry."

He looked down in shame, his grip on her hand tightening. She stared at the blades of the ceiling fan above them turning in steady circles.

"I understand," she spoke in a whisper. "Like you said, next time, we'll do this right."

He nodded again. "Next time."

The conversation ended there. In the silence of the room lingered an echoing scream that only she could hear.



The Obeying Pigeon

Fara Diyana | Poetry

You are the purest form of my love,
You are the clear image
Of the love I envisioned,
If not then more.

My heart aches for you and only you,
You are in me but also nowhere near.
The light you emit glows so brightly; it burns.
But like a moth attracted to the beauty
of the red flower,
I cannot keep myself away.

In my suffering,
I plant my head on the concrete floor,
And in the silence that falls onto the both of us,
The voice of my heart begins to knock on the door of consolation,
The feeble cries of my heart goes,
“I do not want to hurt anymore”.



You whisper in my ear, so sweetly,
Your words lingered on my tongue; the taste of honey,
“Lover, be patient with this torment”

The call of prayer echoes among the four walls of the vast sky,
The call of nature brings about the pigeons for migration,
Their wings rise and fall as they soar,
On a journey without a destination,
But their love for the wild wind is strong.

Dearest, You are the wind,
I, the obeying pigeon.



The Resistance

Loshni Nair | Poetry

I.

Pushed to the edge,
We painted the streets yellow.
Years of corruption, torture,
and forced silence.

For a famished dog,
Even the iron fist,
Will satisfy.

The second Wednesday of May,
We re-write History,
Sixty years in waiting.

II.

'Super liberals', 'ultra-feminists',
We marched for you.
'Reformation, Reformation'
A hymn on repeat.

We did not rest.

You sell our siblings, barter
ultra-Muslim conservative votes.
The parliament is no
Retribution ground for
your years behind bars.

We will not rest.

III.

With your silk glove,
Where no female has perched,
Man's shoes to fill –
You choose only to warm your seat,
For 'our' leader-in-waiting.

We will not rest.

IV.

Flesh to ash, C4 explosives.
Bone fragments, all that
is left of
a Mongolian mother.

We will not rest.

Corruption sealed in
concrete drums. Gunny sacks
muffling the screams of a
public prosecutor.

We will not rest.

Artists in handcuffs,
Writers and poets.
Gagged under the guise
of the Sedition Act.

We will not rest.



seaside sighs

Lilian Angelia | Poetry

the wide valley of her thighs
they remind her of her hips
the highest peaks where the ships
have failed to sail and say hi

those islands hold their vastness
for the base of all world's mess
their creaminess a layer of unrest
for it conceals all their rough stretches

how many kilos does each weigh
you can tell from their gap
the thigh gap, you see, is the key they say
to run fast and have one's lap

and oh, well, those mountainous shades
give them some white stage lights
avoid how tattered lighthouses made
the ships never find their heights

make sure those lights can blink
and flirt and smirk and wink
one should always remember the tricks
sinking the ships when the time ticks

and what about the diamond
that mother maya spoke of?
some say it pierces through, amen,
the wind and the waves they row,

the mountains, the sound and dimensions
but today it bleeds and poisons the shrine
rise the ocean cleanser, the water brine
for it brings cost and risks to the nation

Peace Within

Seaum Alam | Artwork





Lalon Shah*

Seam Alam | Artwork

*Lalon Shah Is also the name of a prominent Bengali philosopher

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