



# WHIPLASH

SPRING 2018

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# PROSE

## Fractal

Sohil Vinayak

Rohit: Two, two and a half weeks? I think what made us click was the collective misanthropy against the dating scene.

Jay: I talked to Mauli over like a half week, during which we didn't have like fireworks and stuff, you know.

Shiv: One day texting, that's it.

Jay: But she was all apologetic and conscious and all like, she was pretty, she was nice, she was new to this Tindering. So I'll give her that. I said, you know. You know.

Shiv: To be fair, I did bring my A-game that day. There are some girls who you know demand your A-game.

Rohit: It's strange because everything was through the filter of memes. Never "How do we get to Sanjay Van?" Instead, "Do u know da wae?" Funny how quick that turned normie.

Jay: I said no scene. You can't really construct a person through text can you? I said hey, nothing that some My Bar can't cure.

Shiv: I told Mauli that I saw this cringe ScoopWhoop video about asking girls out. She asked me to describe it and, I said words won't do it justice. How about I show you over a cup of coffee tomorrow?

Rohit: She said, mountains or beaches? No context, just mountains or beaches.

Shiv: Ess-mooth. Although, she did say that she doesn't have coffee. Which, fair. But she knew this cafe in HKV which has a nice rooftop view, lakes and stuff. So I said sure, game on.

Rohit: I picked mountains. Why, she asked. I said, mountains are still. If you find your place on it you can stand still, and if it's not too foggy you can see loads ahead of you. Beaches have too many people, too much heat, all you can see is water. Nothing over

Jay: We went to Headquarters, there was waiting. I asked her what she studied. She said she's doing Lit, and then described her coursework a bit. It was experimental, not the typical curriculum. I told her that I do Business Studies, in Manchester Uni. Top ranked and stuff. Great night life. The waiting took forever, should've gone Paharganj.

Rohit: She said, she wants places which allow you to be with a person, to really be with them. She said, this should be a place which, when you leave, you leave with a part of the other person. She said that part of the reason she joined Tinder at all was to meet new people. I said, there's this area called Sundar Van, near Vasant Kunj. If any place matches that description, it's that.

Shiv: The lake was nice. It was green. Mauli was telling me about her dissertation. It was titled 'To Be Or Not To Be Left Alone: Introversion and (Anti-)Social Norms in Literature'.

Jay: I ordered a Hoegaarden. We had the speakers like, right over our heads, playing trash like bam bam.

Shiv: So she said how in most of pre-nineteenth century fiction, plots were devoted to people doing things. Like, Shakespeare's characters had problems of a whole new level, like how to hide murder, or exact vengeance. None of them ever woke up with crippling social anxiety, everyone sort of knew how to behave around others. It's when we got Modernism that stories became less about what people do, and more about who they are. So it's this chronicling thing, she said, of character archetypes across history.

Rohit: No matter how deep we went, there were always aunties on a walk. Which was a shame, but after a while you learn to tune them out, I told her. We went up a mound, and decided to stay there because all this walking without talking was painful.

Jay: It was tough having a conversation. I couldn't hear half the things she said like, I asked if I could sit next to her because the music was too loud. Admittedly smooth. So we began talking about Tinder and stuff. She said she wanted to meet new people. I described profiles of chicks whose bios said that they were "looking for friends", I mean come on. All you see a person's face or, you know, whatever they do display on their display picture. Few words. An app designed for meaningful connection, this is not.

Rohit: There are two kinds of jokes guys crack on me, she said. It's either, do you want some coke with that molly, Mauli? Or, cool lightsaber, Darth Mauli. I guess I'm the third kind of guy then, I said.

— Which iiiiss?

— The boring kind who cracks no jokes.

She laughed. She said dude, don't worry. You're way funnier than all those other dudes. I smiled. I asked, do you listen to music? She said, does a JNU student smoke pot?

— What kind?

— All kinds really. I have no favourite genre. You?

— Same, really.

She smiled.

Shiv: She told me about her part-time job then. It was, um, digital transcription of esoteric texts. The agency she works for creates digital archives of rare books, and since it can't all be images of scans, they need text versions too. They do have a text-recognizing software which does the bulk, but they still need human spellcheckers because sometimes, it will do shit like recognize 'Shakuni' as 'salami'. That, was hilarious.

Jay: I asked her if she liked this music at all. She said it was alright. I asked her if she's seen 'A Beautiful Mind', the one with Russell Crowe as the schizo guy. She said yeah, so then good, because that meant she was familiar with the Game Theory. So I said how these clubs play safe, and play safe music. Like, they could go balls out, play some Prodigy, Enter Shikari shit, but in this city it will be a rave to like a few. They want safe music, non-controversial music, which would be bearable by the lowest common denominator. Of course, booze helps.

Rohit: Noir movies? I asked. Heard of them, she said. Never really got to watching them. I said, the especially grim ones have loads of blacks in them, with only a shimmer of white shining through occasionally. Frame composition, of course. She said, oh wow. Reminds me a lot of Heart of Darkness, she said. I said sometimes, the blacks on my screen reflect myself back to me. I don't know what she thought of that.

Shiv: She asked me to pick between mountains and beaches. I picked beaches, just because I don't like cold much. I asked about her and, she just said that sometimes she has her mountain days, sometimes her beach days. And that must do for an answer.

Rohit: I apologized to her for my subdued behaviour. I said my mind was just chemically inactive today. One of those days. She said it's fine, really, she understands. She said she's had those times too where you just can't find your fucking groove. And it's these swings between total apathy and complete obsession are so hard to control, so you just gotta ride them. This once she spent a whole day on Youtube tutorials about sketching, to sketch this guy she had a crush on. All he had to say was "Ew". And just like that, she swung to apathy, hard, and weirdly enough bounced back only when she went to watch a film with her friends. And it wasn't even a good film. It was What's Your Rashee.

Jay: So we left after a bit. I was beginning to enjoy the My Bar music, means I was tipsy. She said she had to attend a birthday party, so we headed off. Her way was the yellow line, mine was blue, but I offered to ride along since I had nothing better to do. Truth be told I had nothing better to do. Like back in uni, you were bored, you stepped out, took a bus, and stepped into something happening in the city. Here, nothing worth happening, happens. Anyway, she said she should be fine, so we said goodbyes and I let the bird be.

Rohit: After that there wasn't much else to talk about, so she called an Ola. We got up and started heading out. I wasn't gonna bear the silence, so I asked her, why mountains or beaches? What answer are you looking for? I asked. None, she said. There is no correct answer. The 'what' isn't important, she said, the 'why' is. The choice is an excuse to turn out what's in your head.



Shiv: Ola says five minutes away, but the South Campus traffic will take Parthsarthy another ten-to-fifteen minutes to reach here. There's a certain poetry in that, I told Mauli. How? Well, I said, you mentioned the Shakuni mamu today. And now, the Olachariot rider is gonna be ten-to-fifteen minutes late. Which gives us a whole ten-to-fifteen minutes pondering over this modern-day Mahabharata. This sounds a lot like something Rushdie would write to be frank, she said.

Jay: I overthink when I drink, but I stayed at the station and thought of her, standing next to the glass, looking at her reflection. I wondered what she thought of today.

Shiv: We began talking about Rushdie, and oddly enough, she wasn't only just one of the rare Rushdie-familiars around here, we also shared the consensus that dude was a one-trick pony. It could very well either be her or me who said that in his Midnight Children days, when he still had things to prove, he put the soul into writing. But now he's grown bigger than his writing. In so many ways. Now he's the story, not the teller anymore. It feels amazing to have someone share such personal ideas with you. All things said, I said, Arabian Tales has no one author. It has sieved through many authors, many egos, and has crystallized into one of the most everlasting texts in the world.

Rohit: We kept in touch for a while. No significant meme-spamming anymore. It's odd how she spelled all the 'you's as 'u', while spelling everything else as is. That was the only thing I noticed in our last few texts.

Shiv: Back home I saw this George Harrison picture saying "The Beatles will exist without us". I shared it with Mauli, I only got a response next evening. She said that she'd had a lovely time with me, she had, but she just didn't see it turning romantic any time. It ended with a "Sorry :/".

Jay: I texted her saying "Message me when you get there". That's been our last message.

Shiv: Not with a bang, but with a "Sorry :/".

Rohit: Last online yesterday. I went through her pictures, three of them. One was the pretty picture, with her beaming at the camera. Another was the activist picture, her holding the Pride flag at an LGBT rally. The last was the social picture, a group one with her friends. The bio said "English Lit. Show me your good times and I'll show you mine." By now I should just look elsewhere.

Jay: It's okay though, you know. At least we're not like wasting time. This is what I hate the most about vacation time. Wasting time. I saw this pretty bird called Smruti. Bio read, "I'm the small package all good things come in". Swipe right, it's a match.

The bar was in the middle of a steep hill on which there were several similar places. A small crowd of smokers were congregated in front of each, exchanging empathetic expressions in the cold night air. I pushed my way through them into the door. As I reached the threshold a dishevelled looking man was similarly pushing his way out and I thought that he was my mirror image reflected in the glass until he reached the door a moment before me, therefore, shattering the illusion, and in doing so he stumbled and placed a shaky hand on my shoulder for support. His wild eyes for a second met mine. He pointed his finger to his temple and said, "There are things in here which I can't get out," and then he stumbled out and into the smoking group where I lost him, a stranger after all.

There was a dramatic change upon entering the bar. The cold sparse air suddenly became hot and oppressive. I was too aware that I was breathing in the close exhalations of a cramped roomful of strangers. Amongst the crowd and the music I was, for a moment, disorientated. In the midst of it, I closed my eyes for a second and imagined that I was in my own isolated world in the darkness until the anxiety slowly passed.

I reopened my eyes and began to scan the place. I was supposed to be meeting someone here, so, I looked around for them but I did not want to appear to be looking too obviously so as not to dehomogenize myself from the pulsating mass. I could not see. I went to the bar in order to get a drink. I put my arm on the counter but immediately moved it away due to the stickiness which I felt on my shirt sleeve. The barman was occupied with speaking to two girls in short dresses further up the bar, and so I looked to my right where a man in a waterproof jacket, stared blankly into the dregs of a pint glass, and then to my left, where I saw for the first time the woman. She was looking at me. She smiled as our eyes (lips) met. "Hi," she said. I could feel the word as it was birthed by her lips. Her eyes closed and opened. I looked at her legs and the way they curved out and in again and then harmonised at the top. I opened my mouth and the noises that came out sounded like " ". But I meant so much more. The smile came back.

The barman came by and I bought us both drinks which he slammed down carelessly, some of the sticky liquid spilling over the rim on to the counter. I was surprised that she stuck around. I never asked her name. She told me that she was going to a party later and that I should see her there, and she wrote on the back of a beer mat where it was and I said that I would see her there. She stepped back and was lost in the crowd. I was sad to see her go. Sad, but with a lightning thrill in my cortex. I was so happy to have met her but so quickly terrified to lose her. All I could do was order another drink. The note felt crisp and real as I handed it over, and then the liquid when it touched my mouth was strange and sweet, and then gone, down my throat and into my body to be absorbed and for it to work and alter and infect.

Left on my own at the bar, I tried to observe people but somehow they all felt translucent and somehow lacking any kind of vitality after having met this vital woman. Instead, I watched the walls which had been decorated with Rothko's, themselves decorated by spilled beer and sick.



I felt I ought to leave, so I got up and went to another bar and there I drank more, just so the time would keep on passing and, eventually, it obliged.

I left the other bar, and the water glistened off of the tarmac on the road and the people stood on the water, suspended miraculously on it. There are miracles everywhere when you look close enough. It was nearly time.

I made my way through the crowds. Men shouting, rain falling on bare skin, women stumbling in shoes which they could not wear and everywhere bottled up emotions frothing over. I still had the beer mat. I reread it, even though I had already memorised exactly what it said several times, and I was on my way in that direction. It was not far. Her handwriting had gained a familiarity to me already.

I was close. I could see people outside the door; I could hear indistinct bass from inside; I paused. There was nobody behind me; there was nobody between me and my destination; no cars moved on the street. The wind seemed to be purposefully avoiding this street, as if it knew not to impose. My eyes were closed.

I came out of my reverie with the sound of quiet sobbing which was coming from a small pathway to one side. There, a girl was sitting on a step, her shoes by her side and her face covered by her hands. I crept down the alley, and crouched down beside her. Her hair was matted with vomit. It looked like rosary beads. Gently, I moved her hand from her face, and she peaked and tried to focus through cloudy eyes, trying to see me. I got close to her, and, quietly, I hissed in her ear: "You make me sick." I got up and came back to the street, not looking back, and went inside.

There was an immediate change. I was hit by the warmth and the thudding heartbeat of the bass outside became an overwhelming tribal call to prayer. There was no doorman and nobody asked me for money. It was like walking into an abandoned building, aside from the music. The walls were bare brick and this antechamber was small, all it contained was an iron door and the other door behind me, so I went through.

On the inside, the bass was even louder. The room was claustrophobically packed, and with all kinds of people. Although the room was relatively small, I knew that finding the woman would be difficult in the mass where men and women contorted their bodies into animal forms and the ceiling dripped with the perspiration from them. At the end of the room behind a raised podium stood the DJ, who danced fervorously, and more manically than anyone else. As I watched him I realised that the man was blind: in fact, he had no eyes at all.

The music was so much a part of the room that the very walls seemed to move in time to the beat, winking, closing in and backing out, and always pushing me into the centre.

I slipped through sweaty, shirtless bodies and wet hair and made my way around the room, searching for the woman. Everywhere I pushed through I was only confronted by another press of bodies, tall and short and fat and thin, all pressing, all making it impossible to maintain any kind of coherent thought process, and the music was

overpowering, and I began to join the press and dance. Men and women surrounded me, everywhere, so close that it was impossible to distinguish any single individual, just the mass, a unified consciousness. I writhed and I writhed, now a snake, now an ant, then a man and a woman together and a convocation of cells and spirit in an infinite night. We all were together for those moments, but then the next... the mass had halted. Without explanation, all stood still. The music had stopped.

I felt let down. We had been one, but now the rest had felt some signal to stop of which I was not aware, and I was once again inside the orgy but not a part of it. The crowd were now all looking to the DJ, who had stopped his manic dancing. He took out a vinyl record, snapped it into two and then cut across his wrists with it. Blood erupted from the gaping wounds and the crowd began chanting some kind of chant which did not seem to follow the pattern of any kind of language I knew. Every person was in perfect unison, and then the dancing recommenced, to the sound of the chant which had its own rhythm and power.

Feeling disorientated, I retreated from the growing pressure of body against body, and soon found myself in the bathrooms. A ratty man doing something by the sinks looked up in alarm and slunk away. I locked myself in the cubicle. The walls on either side seemed to sway, as if in a gentle but still unnatural breeze. I closed my eyes. The sound of the chant, at first diminished in my little cell, seemed to grow stronger again, as if it was calling me, as if the crowd had turned to project in my direction, and the walls danced like the glistening bodies of the dancers until I could hardly tell the difference, and I breathed deeply and went back out.

I entered once again the main room. The dancing had stopped, and the chanters all stood still looking at me. A clear pathway had been formed between them which led between me and the DJ booth, where I saw stood the woman. She smiled to me. The whole booth had become bathed in a deep white light. She motioned for me to come. The chanting intensified and I went to her.

# POETRY

## Akshat Bhuta

*Akshat Bhuta is a full-time B.A. student of filmmaking and a part-time poet and writer. He has written and directed several YouTube short films.*

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### Picasso's Guernica

Anguish crystallised  
into quaintness. All eyes open,  
rapt with something black-and-white  
memory has lost. A bawdy punchline  
has startled them, frozen puppet-faces;  
stocking-beasts, eyes bemused, emerging  
like rude gags from the blast.  
A painted candle stretching  
the swing, the creak of a door,  
the mummer's still leg  
dragged to her horse-fallen confederate:  
a mural, an exotic village play.

How blood clots, lava  
cools; sheeny paint dries to  
grey on a pale stretch of canvas.  
Screams stagger to laughs; pain  
that signalled war in past  
stalls for a few forced minutes  
in a museum, then lets go.

# Afrin

Tanks growl; gas wafts;  
a Kurd digs  
another grave.  
Smoke rises from the schoolhouse,  
rises from the chimneys,  
rises from the barrel of a launcher.  
A shell draws another line on a formless sky;  
at its crest it glints—it winks—  
the keening breaks off:  
the battle stops:  
the tanks halt;  
the flower, half-crushed,  
lives on.

The woman lets down her launcher  
and picks up the keys to the combine:  
here there is always a mouth to be fed.  
Every other kernel is born scarlet;  
every sheaf is a chequerboard;  
the fields are a plain of blood.

The men and women of Rojava  
eat their scarlet bread and grow strong:  
to lift a spade, to break red soil, to plant  
steel rods, steel beams, steel frames, trees,  
and flowerpots in graves.

## A Tipsy Vigil

It was in a hazy dream pregnant with rose-dimpled children gestating decades yet  
and for decades more  
that, with a chill to disperse from before the moon at noon of night the clouds of  
smoke and infants crawling on the floor of my heart, epiphany struck:  
before the first rush of blood spurted up the arterial slides to suffuse my cheeks in  
outward indication of simple, immature pleasure,  
before my voice first caressed the lining of my larynx and thrummed the drums of my  
ears,  
for longer than I have been the sum of flesh and blood and semen and rage,  
for longer than I have known life and the joy of breathing,  
my parents have known death and the silenced cry.

I am the second son: third-born, but second to gaze into the burning masts of the twin  
towers  
rising from my birthday cake; to see twisted on TV the steely skeleton, the mangled  
sinews and appendages of the American Dream—  
my first encounter at a distance of over twelve thousand kilometres with cold, final  
death, that most impartial arbiter,  
was enough to cast a pall of unspeakable dread upon my virgin heart:  
the dread of being shaken awake by frigid hands gleaming in the moonlight.  
Such an uncontainable terror of not being does being itself induce that the living,  
for want of peace, the sempiternal breeze rustling through a field of hair, must  
deceive  
itself, claim life eternal, and point to One World Trade Center rising from the ashes.

With a crack of gunfire as the word “fuck” rending the peace of a cold metropolitan  
night was innocence shattered,  
splattered upon pavements, on walls, on wheels, on Kevlar torn to smithereens, on  
eight-score perforated corpses  
flowing through labyrinthine gutters that twist and bend and spiral into  
the ocean, injecting a tiny drop into the earth-spanning sea.  
And Mumbai is suddenly filled with hearses shuffling leisurely through the lanes,  
winding through byways, through alleyways, on a one-way trip to the undiscovered  
country,  
where the midnight sun soars sentinel and casts its brilliant white light  
upon the ghost of my brother frolicking through its unpaved streets.

# Josephe Lavelle Wilson

*Joseph Lavelle Wilson is an Australian lawyer living in NYC. He writes poetry to get closer to the heart of things..*

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## Evaporation

Gum trees are made for storms:  
bark rent, limbs like lightning's  
stark afterimage. Gum leaves cannot  
put down the weight of wild deluge,  
they bend over dry rivers in the wood.

After each storm, the gums race  
to redistribute rain amongst  
their thirsty roots, while the sky  
tugs at every bead of moisture,  
spooling clouds mercilessly.

Standing before the gums I feel  
our storms - rain running through your hair  
pooling in your clavicles, and my thirst  
for those lagoons which proved to be  
for better or worse unquenchable.

It is a bright blue day and  
no storms trouble these trees now.  
The only stirring is the susurrus;  
love sighing, lifting from the leaves,  
and alighting softly out of view.



# Powerful Owl

Around the time the dog got too old to go  
you took me up the gully behind Newport,  
where a dark green arch welcomes  
intrepid boomers with hiking poles.

The path was trimmed with golden mushrooms  
and you knew their names - botanical,  
Dharug, English. We crossed the creek,  
me cautious, you like a rock wallaby.

You had been here before, looking for  
a powerful owl, finding only her evidence:  
whitewash and pellets. We scoped hollows  
in thick trunks among the cabbage palms.

I was moving away soon, and I could feel  
your questions - I spoke about me,  
I wondered if you were content  
in retirement, seeking owls in gullies.

At a small waterfall we broke our fast  
with cold apples from your backpack.  
Feeling my thoughts slow down  
I held the core between my fingers

and you knew before I even asked -  
no apple tree would grow, you said,  
but a possum would appreciate the snack.  
I tossed the core, it sank in the stream.

# Murray Cod

Late one evening in summer, back from the beach,  
as the deck released the day's warmth into my feet  
I listened to my aunt swearing softly to herself  
while cooking my uncle's catch, a fat Murray Cod  
'Full of bloody bones. He never cleans them properly!'

I've always been wary of fishbones – lethal  
thin daggers hiding in a strange warm smell –  
I imagined them wedging in the craws of fat men.  
How do you remove them politely? I wondered  
as I set the table with quiet precision.  
My aunt's silverware demanded reverence,  
coming as it did from another world, and I took  
particular care over the kerning of the cutlery.  
As I pressed the napkins firmly, the fish entered  
on a funereal barge - an immense white dish.

A Murray Cod cannot be cut, only divided  
in sheaves of flesh - thick, fragrant pages slipping free.  
Enraptured, I lifted forkfuls of fish to my mouth.  
There were no bones, the flakes slipped over my tongue,  
and I fell to thinking of the cod as she must have been  
before the catch - snaking proudly, each sudden turn  
holding the promise of death for smaller river-dwellers.  
She lived a long, narrow life, bounded by reedy banks.  
she knew the currents, and the safest place to lay her eggs.  
Before tackle, line, and hook, her eyes swivelled  
to the riverbed for yabbies, to the flickering surface for ducks  
and snakes. Is this why her mouth was always gaping?  
What other look befits the predator - territorial, feared, apex?  
What look for the plated fish, white, with greens and lemon?

Welcoming her, I saluted each tender, nutritious portion,  
pressing it against the roof of my mouth in mute remembrance  
of her obscene rubbery lips, her marbled scales  
which would not be held, her unyielding tail  
and her entrails, stinking in a bucket by the river.

# Saumya Kaulgud

*Saumya Kaulgud is an American writer and poet, living in Mumbai, India. She is completing a BA in English from Mithibai College. She has been performing poetry for three years. Her three poems in this issue are observational pieces taken from her experience as a college student living at home.*

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## Consummate

Love comes to this house  
in bunches:  
a dozen at a time

Sometimes with one extra thrown in --  
by street vendors, insisting  
they can sell you better  
Tomorrow.

Love comes to this house  
still green  
readiness blushing onto skin  
in soft waves

They say--  
Take them unripened for now,  
keep them for a while  
give it time, it will turn sweet.

Love comes to this house  
Half speckled.  
Sun spotted.  
Lightly toasted.

This is the best time for love  
when the door is swinging shut  
behind tongue-sticky immaturity

and the windows are flung open  
for the first breeze of Spoil.

Love comes every day in the summer  
is taken in --  
ground down between teeth and baby gums  
so quickly these days

When the sun heaves itself into your throat  
leaves it to crack  
and all that will soothe it is the soft  
tack of love, unpeeled.

Love stays too long some weeks  
left in unjoined pairs  
they rot from the surface  
at open mouths where they met

Crush overstayed love between  
your palms  
bake it slowly, on low heat  
be patient with this love.

Love comes to this house  
in bunches  
waiting to be eaten.

# Vani

For an optimistic bag of rice  
I will get in a fistfight  
Throw my small striped satchel to the ground  
Shake out cracking knuckles

Again, I have no memory of this  
My hands could have been sticky from  
Over squeezing tomatoes  
Before dropping them on the scale

Did I need a full kilogram of tomatoes  
Or only a quarter, and a half of curd  
Or loose change in chilies and lemons and curry leaves  
Or none of that and just a single coconut with its hair intact?

If you asked me to count  
I could tell you  
I have only ever written  
Seven grocery lists

I mean to write them  
Every time  
I forget to write them  
Every time

Look here, here stands the prizefighter  
Holding empty jute bags stained green  
With nothing to put in them  
But old receipts

Oh, never mind  
The store is closed today

---

Vani - Marathi, noun,  
*a retail merchant who sells foodstuffs (and some household supplies)*

## Sixteen, O Two

In my dreams  
I am dreaming  
I fell asleep on a cloud  
Of smoke  
Hung out to dry

Early so  
It seems late still  
Like a summer evening with  
February chill  
Shaking my hands  
Folding them together  
Bending down  
To grab toes

Bless this awakening



# Devashish Makhija

*Devashish Makhija is an Indian filmmaker, screenwriter, graphic artist, fiction writer and poet, best known for writing and directing the full-length feature film Oonga and authoring the bestselling children's books When Ali became Bajrangbali and Why Paploo was Perplexed, and a series of 49 short stories published as the anthology Forgetting by HarperCollins. He has also worked on the films Black Friday and Bunty Aur Babli.*

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## tasteless

the mouth is made for food  
the penis for the vagina  
the heart made to beat  
until it simply ceases  
death is no salvation  
the only thing left is to  
write

words are symbols  
they have no smell  
said, they imply; written, they evoke  
your touch is wordless

wordlessness, let loose thus, is pandemic

on other days  
on keyboards as altars  
we say too much  
we always  
say  
too  
much

masturbation has ceased to be solitary

copulation has taken to text

my penis and your vagina  
they throb for abstractions  
                    for binary pulses  
                            inbox impulses  
the mouth is made for tongue too

i miss yours in mine

i could say this to you in a  
text message

but that would be  
tasteless.

# mud

she asked if she could plant  
herself on me  
she had dreamt of mangos  
the night before and asked  
me to google what  
that meant

the fruit of my labour  
came organically

*sexual,*

said google  
her hair hung like a hundred roots  
searching my skin for a trace  
of an aquifer

*wet,*  
she'd said  
in a chat message  
when i'd asked her how she'd been

reaching for the sky could take  
seventy years  
if you are a tree

the rest of us find our clouds  
underneath our eyelids  
as we shudder  
into fistfuls of mud.

## beast

Paint your face on the back of your  
Head if you will  
But a beast can tell  
Your front from your back  
By the shifting stiffness of the bulge  
Where your breasts should be.  
By the occasional glitter in your  
Eye when a hidden reservoir of  
Mirth punctures through  
Your dam of stoic silence.  
By the muscles clenching  
In your ass  
As you pang two times  
Seven inches within your gates,  
Your carefully engineered lock  
Now picked.

A beast can tell  
By the damp earth smell  
In your elbow nook  
When you bend to look  
Around  
Hoping you aren't being followed  
Hearing no sound  
But the growl  
At the other end of the cave  
Of your own tunnel throat  
Growing to a howl.

Walk backwards at the same speed as you  
Do forwards  
And you would walk  
Into him

Walk backwards at the same speed as you  
Do forwards  
And you would walk  
Into him

Your back will stick to his front  
Your skins dissolving  
Till his nails grow out of your fingers  
And your scratching leaves red burning  
Pathways on  
The insides of his thighs  
Till you hear your moist quickening breath  
Wet your own ear  
The dampness unfurling like a carpet  
Down past your insides  
Where his heart now pulses  
In time with the quickening  
Throb at  
Your navel, which explodes as you  
Roar  
Writhe  
Wrench free  
And turn  
Around  
To face him.

## descent

Where your legs part  
Is a blinding darkness  
I feel my way in  
My hands held out like an insect's  
Antennae

Recoil  
Is a frequent response  
When wading through  
Fluids that smell like your own

You swell and you recede –  
An ocean of impulses –  
As you force me  
To go down  
On all fours:  
The lower I get  
The deeper you allow

The tremble  
Started in your eyes  
From down here I couldn't see  
Your eyelids flicker like  
A dark cloud just before it  
Shudders and explodes in rain

But where I am now  
Is the flood:  
Turns my limbs into  
Mud  
Many have been here before  
I smell them all  
Some don't smell like me  
I let those drain through my fingers



I feel your legs close  
Crushing my sight

I remain  
A smell  
Like those before me  
Like those yet to come

I want to feel my way out now  
But I have started to cake on the inside  
Of your skin

Someday I will be scab  
And then I might be whole again  
To recoil  
Resist  
Relent  
And remember.

# Ankita Shah

*Ankita Shah writes and reads poetry, as the only way she knows to trace the fault-lines of her being. Her new poems, introspect life, death, and wormholes.*

*In 2013, she co-founded The Poetry Club (TPC), an outfit that enables accessing & learning poetry, through discussion-based readings and workshops. As a curator with TPC, her attempt has been to bridge the boundaries of language and practice, not only amongst poets themselves but also between the poet and the reader/listener.*

*She has been previously featured at the Story of Space Festival 2017, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival 2016, Times Literature Festival 2016, Kavya Hotra 2016, an annual multilingual poetry festival in Goa, and the Poets Translating Poets Festival 2016. Two of her poems have also been shortlisted for the Wingword Poetry Prize 2017: Annual Anthology.*

*Apart from poetry, she is passionate about Indian classical music, birding, and eating between meals. She currently works with an arts and culture, a not-for-profit organization in Mumbai.*

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## Survival

I never thought of surviving as outliving, until my father died  
And growing older became a euphemism for growing fewer.  
I never thought of surviving as relocating, until his insomnia  
and my ignorance stepped out of their own rooms and met each other.  
I never thought of surviving as disorientation, until a day after he was gone  
I sensed the passing of time, as walking away from him.  
I never thought of surviving as uncoiling a cruel knowing of breath  
I never thought of breath as decay  
I never thought of surviving, my father  
never thought of death.

# Vulture

Do you remember the poem  
where house was a metaphor to mean you  
and I, was determined to burn it?

That poem, when it set out, was a sunbird,  
yellow-bellied, purple-rumped,  
upside down on a flower, hung  
with a mouth that yearned to swallow the sky.  
But on the page, when it perched, it preyed  
for a cold and bitter July.  
It wanted words thinned out  
to the last layer of their skin, holding within  
a meaning fermented to putrid perfection.

Do you remember that poem?  
The anatomy of our past,  
dismembered by a bird  
with a taste for decay?  
That poem is not over.  
That vulture still shows up on the page.  
When I set out to draw spring  
I spill outside the circles and shapes  
of who we are,  
into what we've been.

The words I know are always becoming  
and the poems,  
they come from history.

The sunbird does not rest on the page yet.  
I've heard,  
we learn words long after  
we've felt what they mean.

## Make-Believe

A bird hops from branch to plant -  
branch - a high-rise with tinted glass  
plant - a grey-expanse of concrete.  
It repeats cheet cheet  
A squeaky wavering whistle  
I exclaim, a fantail!  
But I am fooled  
by a myna,  
and the myna by the linguist,  
who allowed infringement  
of language.

## Dharamkot

Firecrackers burst at midnight like gunshots fired from a rifle that startle even the hunter. Deodars shake from slumber; wake to smoke spiralling up the valley. A million birds rise from darkness, then break in all directions. A blue magpie hits the window of a hotel room, braces itself mid-fall, then disappears. Someone turns in their sleep. Someone wakes up and wants to join the party. Another match is lit, another loud thud, until the birds learn to find their way home, windows untouched.

# Rochelle Potkar

*Author of The Arithmetic of Breasts and other stories, and Four Degrees of Separation, Rochelle Potkar is alumna of Iowa's International Writing Program and Charles Wallace Writer's fellowship, Stirling. She is the winner of the 2016 Open Road Review story contest for The leaves of the deodar. Her story Chit Mahal (The Enclave) appears in The Best of Asian Short Stories. Her poems Cellular: P.O.W. and Ground up were shortlisted for awards. Her poem The girl from Lal Bazaar was shortlisted for the Gregory O' Donoghue International Poetry Prize, 2018. She is editor of the Goan-Irish anthology, Goa: a garland of poems, with Gabriel Rosenstock, and co-founder of the Arcs-of-the-Circle artists' residency program, Mumbai. Her first book of haibun (Japanese prose-poetry) Paper Asylum is due soon. <https://rochellepotkar.com>.*

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## Sculptor of Radiance

Light over sea, beach light, window light, moonlight,  
jaguar-eyed moments,  
cloud-bitten biscuit suns,  
large white bed sheets...  
What all can I remember  
as it slips over the frames of my window-mind?

You see me in color.  
I see you in light.  
In varying sheerness  
the ones that shone  
from your half-moon eyes,

boat smiles, as you took me  
afloat carnage dreams.

Your wet clay lips  
in the potter's wheel of mine.  
Your chest making ocean currents,  
your manhood eking vinegar.

How did we shape these days  
into bottle mangoes, tailorbird nests,  
rims of interwoven husk, grains for the future?

You write on me  
and are overwritten in turn a thousand times.

If it weren't for this...  
time wouldn't be seen.

Light defines darkness.

I swirl like a sugar cube  
bit by bit,  
afloat on this height.

On a laser pinpoint far below  
is our favorite sleepless street  
of kebab meat.

Rodents, cats, crab emerge,  
instilling time  
in the amoeba shapes of their walks.

Black night, black white, black time  
moments stop and stare at us.

How can we forget anything  
when memory keeps a chronicle of us?

# Jaguar Lights

You and me sitting a space apart  
resting our chins watching  
golden moments bashing against stone  
some flotsam and a boat coming home

so many thoughts float into the sea  
so many voices get muffled  
while your eyes watch a lonesome bird fly  
across a pyramid in the orange sky

a swollen, jaundiced sun  
gets swallowed in one slow gulp  
as I breathe into your scent and salt  
was it at that time that you were talking  
about the physics of film-making or something?

eyes like those of a hundred Jaguars  
open up  
guiding wheels going home  
in the dark

fresh, young with the promise of naked love  
my arm surrounds your body  
and rests on your soft walking roundness

an invisible moon takes over  
as a crab laps up  
the laughter in the rocks  
I listen to your oblivious banter

# Summer Radial

The scent of summer ripens  
on the tree of my body,  
unveiling my moist skin to breeze  
on the flower of my body.

Come kiss my lips,  
ripening with nectar  
at your chest and navel.

Slide your arms, surround my waist,  
compress your tongue in the quest of my moaning.

This is how you should love me, wordless  
like a wind instrument,  
a whirlpool sucking in its last victim.  
a spider exuding silk for trapping

spinneret upon spinneret  
gently in motion  
whirling and whorling  
in amniotic obsessions  
of delicate lines, dials, radials  
sticking out a trail,  
a cocoon of wrapping

as I reach...  
out of my body...     ...     ...

Then this tree would burst fruit,  
then it would blossom.



# Biscooti Love

Memory is... images of a prepubescent boy cycling home,  
Parag milk packets in one of his arms,  
feeding biscuits to a stray gaggle of brown dogs, wagging their shins.

Large half-moon eyes, kind salivating tongue,  
his smile showed no cookie-crescent as he fed them all;  
he was my first love.

More than the girls, the calves and canines knew his way home,  
this small-towner of a bygone Bhaarat who found humans in animals,  
he grew hunger in me.

Now in this morphing, super-quick India, his animals are holographic.  
His love fades cookie-slim into the sun of many states, tastes, time zones.  
He has not one trail from work to home, but ten homes.

He, the colour of chocolate, almond-abdomened,  
he found love in many cities,  
technology-girls,  
animals in liberated women,  
who fed off his glucose, milk, sugar, marmalade;  
they never grew thin.

Over the trail of his virgin-white honey, the scent of shudh desi,  
Old world in new crackling wrapping,  
always with a 30% improved marking.

Bearing the saccharine of my bites and goosebumps,  
he now breaks under my neurotic granular breath.  
chai mein dubha hua – tea-dunked, wafer-thin, milk crux-ed.

My Pickwick, Marie, Parle G, Tiger,  
Oreo, Bourbon, mall-shelved Belgian,  
online baked-and-ordered  
same old-same new,  
premium cream-crunched love.

# Golden City

The yolk of sun is severe, here.

The horizon, a sea of forts.

The yin riots in red, maroon, florescent veils over brown faces,  
anklets clinking to camel bells, or mustard turbans sequinned in stars.

The yang grows like incisors from flat earth  
into sculptured homes of sandstone, fossil, camel bone.

A mist of dust holds my fingertip writings of your name  
on the car window that moves into invisibility,  
like the seeping, haunting evening light.

Voluptuous dunes meander like lost love  
as camels trample the sun.

The night and cold descend.

In these freezing states, hallucinations take root.  
No idioms from the Internet or greeting cards help.  
Nor Bollywood's next hit song on the car's stereo.

Yesterday when I went shopping,  
a military man was buying a sari from a heap.  
The way he read its diamond prints  
was as if he was reading his beloved's body.

The nights must be colder for him,  
omnipresent like the moon.  
Four degrees with high wind speeds,  
fire dancing to roadside breeze.

In my own four-poster bed,  
my body moves under heavy blanket  
revolting against the memory of you  
in thick sweet aromas.

# Yadnesh Kulkarni

*Yadnesh Kulkarni is a student pursuing his masters in science and hails from Pune, a poetry aficionado and strolls through the likely wilderness of poetry when he gets time from morose monotony. He tries holding coffee mugs in a manly way rather than trying poetry. .*

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## Hemalata

In the courtyard those abolis stand wilted.  
Your stream cannot water them anymore...

I am at the half open door of your room  
Where light of neither dusk nor dawn  
Is willing to crawl in.  
The walls which nurtured solidarity and  
Trustworthiness once,  
Are now feeling like abandoned villages  
Buried under flaked off paint,  
After you have gone.  
Walking about your room I realise  
There is an addition of a figurine to  
Your set of figurines arranged neatly in the  
Showcase,  
Which is memories- of yours and of  
Those stories you told me in my childhood.  
So bright! So bright!

Your stream will not undulate anymore!

Your pearl earrings glitter mutedly  
As the earthen lamp in the corner casts  
Its light upon them.

That lamp will also extinguish one day,  
Won't it?

# CINEMA

**by Vishnu Sivkumar**

*Vishnu Sivakumar is not a film student, but he is about to finish his graduation on something he has no love for. He's an ardent film enthusiast who spends his time understanding life through cinema and books. He also pursues to be a writer and a filmmaker.*

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## **Learn something about cinema, but first learn a little something about Ozu as well.**

*Like Shakespeare, Ozu too died on his birthday. Ozu is to Japanese Cinema what Shakespeare is to English literature: both, a master of language. The films of Ozu are so subtle in terms of his story and his work. The simplicity in his portrayal of the conflict between two generations is as natural as a mother giving birth to a child.*

*After watching Tokyo Story and hating it the first time, I never thought I'd find myself watching another Ozu film again. There was a long gap before I watched another Ozu film. During the time, I invested my time in watching several classics and studied several masters like Bresson, Hitchcock, Tarkovsky, and Fellini. This period of time helped me understand Cinema better.*

*It was a rainy day in July last year when I found a Blu-ray disc of Ozu's Floating Weeds sitting on my father's study. A force of sheer impulse at that moment let me discover the beauty in the films of Ozu. I was in a state of immeasurable happiness after my viewing of Floating Weeds; I was denied sleep that night. I rewatched Tokyo Story that same night, only this time it left me speechless. The important lesson that I learnt that night was not that Ozu was brilliant but rather the change that occurs watching a film over and over again.*

*In the next couple of months, I spent my time going over the films I had already watched instead of discovering new movies. Suddenly, Citizen Kane wasn't so bad, Lawrence of Arabia wasn't so boring, and I didn't fall asleep watching My Own Private Idaho. Actually, falling asleep watching films doesn't mean that the movie is bad. Either the body or mind is just tired. I've slept through great films like Hiroshima Mon Amour, Aguirre the Wrath of God, Solaris, Au Hasard Balthazar and still ended up loving them. Often I found films that were similar to the pace and style of Ozu's work which I loved watching it for the first time but how was it that I adored Koreeda's Still Walking quite instantly? The only answer that stares at me right in the face is patience. The more patient I am, the more I understand. It takes lot of time to understand the cinematic idiosyncrasies of Ozu.*

*Ozu's Late Spring has been the most beautiful film to have been constructed in the history of the medium, let alone Japanese cinema. It is a film that never spares a person from having a beautiful experience. Anyone who's into cinema should never miss Late Spring.*

*I want to stay away from explaining any element at all from Late Spring because the film should speak to the viewer by itself.*

*The most special characteristic of Ozu is the ellipsis in his films. He was daring and fearless when it came to omitting important events in his films. For instance, Hollywood always emphasize on events like weddings and funerals as an important part of a film if they exist in the story, whereas Ozu avoids showing these events at all costs because he finds it meaningless, instead he believes in the ambiguity of his characters.*

*Ozu has influenced a lot of filmmakers through his works and has led them to find their voice. In the 1993 documentary Talking with Ozu, Finnish filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki addresses to a picture of Ozu by beginning saying: "I've made 11 lousy films and it's all your fault." This one sentence made me laugh and feel heavy in my heart at the same time because he calls out on Ozu as a friend. The films of Kaurismäki are nothing like Ozu's but the idea tends to be the same as Kaurismäki says:*

*"My eternal plan is always to make a film that a Chinese lady from the countryside can understand without subtitles."*

*Wouldn't that be the truest form of cinema if he ever did that?*

*(There are more filmmakers on the documentary who express their views on the films of Ozu such as Claire Denis, Wim Wenders, Paul Schrader, Stanley Kwan, Hou Hsiao-Hsien and Lindsay Anderson.)*

*People like Ozu, Chaplin, Keaton, and Murnau made silent films that were easily understood and would be an argument against Kaurismäki's plan. Kaurismäki desires to achieve the same kind of excellence in his trade like the other masters, but with a*

*talkie. The art of silent films do not exist anymore, but will always be the greatest achievement in Cinema since the birth of motion pictures.*

*Kaurismäki's films are also obscure to the world like the films of Ozu. I'm often surprised when people bring up Kaurismäki in film discussions. I was reading about this discussion on the internet the other day where this guy was speaking about the importance of Kaurismäki's work being accessible to first time viewers. This actually not only applies to Kaurismäki but to every other filmmaker as well. Floating Weeds was the most accessible work of Ozu for me and which is why I disliked Tokyo Story at first. Had I watched Lawrence of Arabia before Brief Encounter I'd have take a long long time once again to watch another work of Lean. This is a purely subjective matter but the lesson is to always watch other films or rewatch the films of a filmmaker that you don't find interesting at first.*

*Who knows, you might find the beauty wedged somewhere between them later. Give yourself some time.*

*If you had no idea of Ozu but would like to discover him now, start with Floating Weeds. I have studied almost every film of Ozu and I still think it's the most accessible film for people with no patience. If you think you have the patience, get on with Late Spring.*

*In a generation of people who post pictures of films they haven't watched on the internet (like how people quote books without actually reading the book), Ozu is a very hard filmmaker to appreciate. I'm not telling this to sound elitist but that's just the way it is because I was once that person a long time ago. Godfather was my favourite film when I was 16 but I only watched it last year for the first time. I'm twenty now.*

*I know people who would run out of the room if I were to put on a black and white picture to watch. It's hard to watch a black and white film all of a sudden when you've been watching color films all your life, isn't it? The first time I inserted the disc of Casablanca on the Blu ray player I had no tolerance. It felt so uncomfortable when there was nothing discomfoting about the film. I forced myself to watch for 30 minutes and I was stuck for the next two hours until I walked out of my room with a smile on my face. It was a remarkable feeling discovering something as beautiful as that. The only disappointment in being a film enthusiast in a country drenched in the essence of Bollywood is to never experience that feeling walking out a theatre; the aftertaste of a good film.*

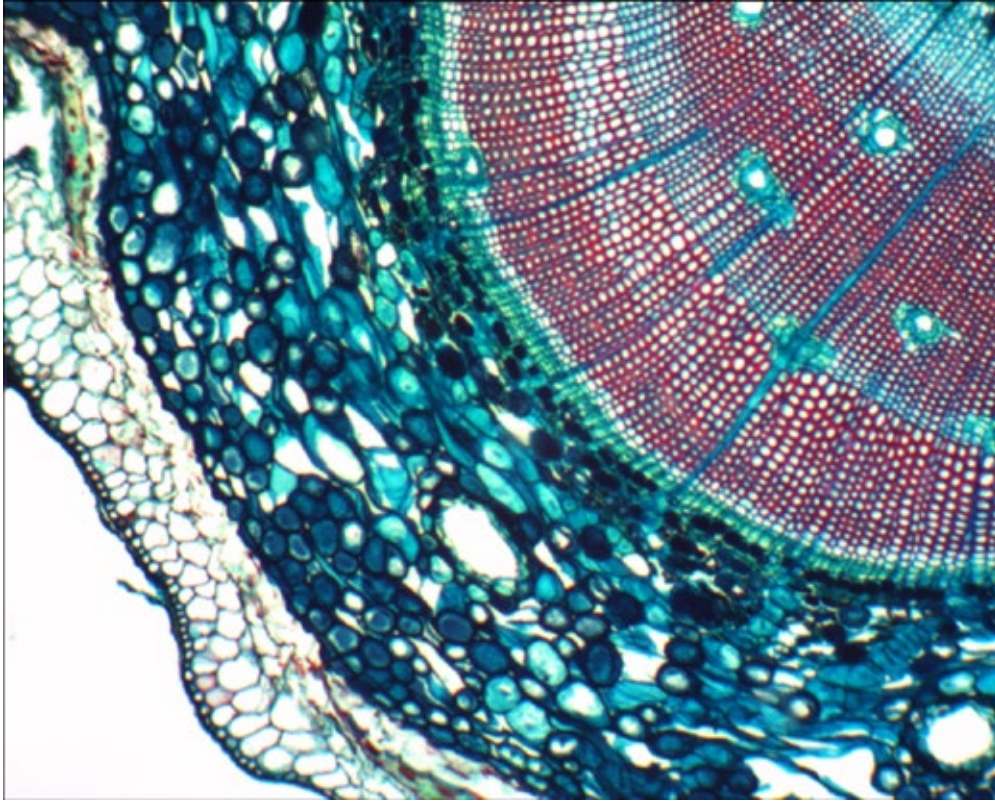
# PHOTO - GRAPHY

## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

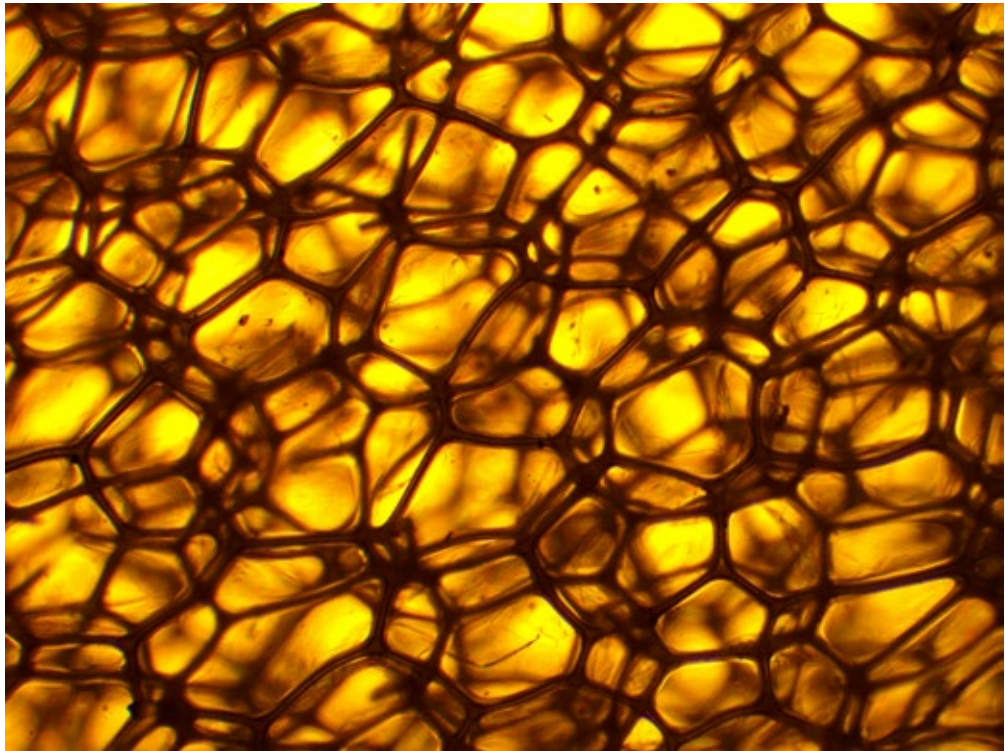
by Calvin Franklin

*Calvin Franklin is an undergraduate Biology major at Washington State University in Pullman, WA. Calvin believes that science is both interesting and beautiful. He uses photomicrography to show that. Some of his pictures are color enhanced to produce a better quality picture or to produce a more "artistic" style. He hopes to show the beauty and complexity of the unseen world through his art.*



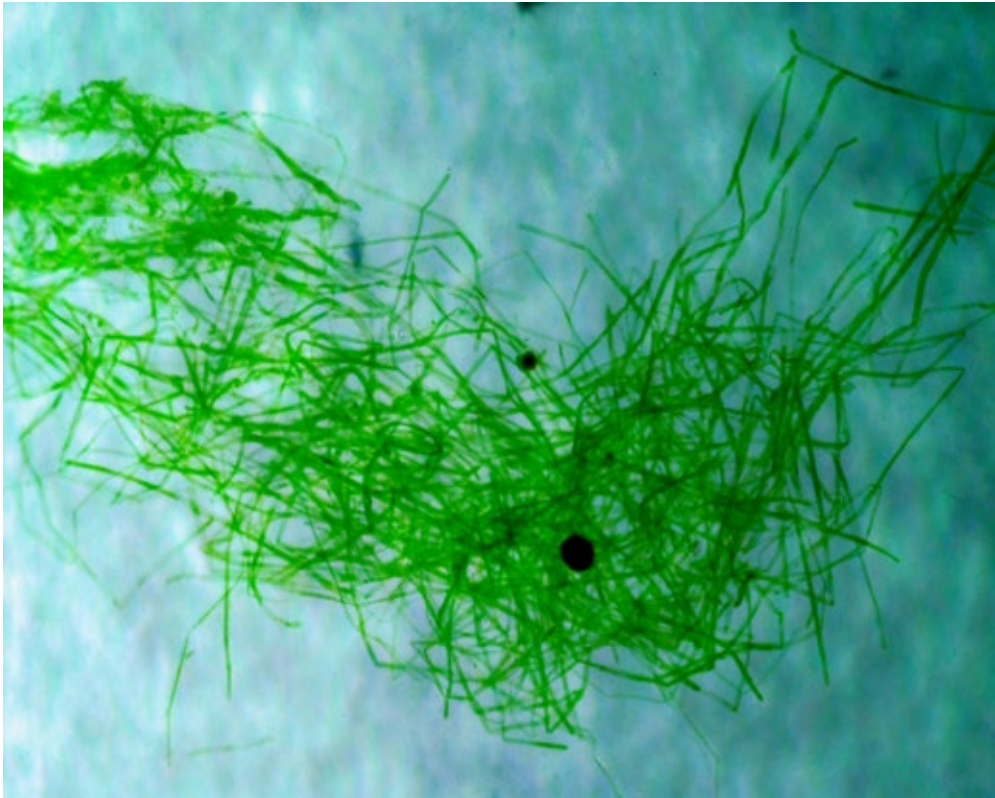


**Pine Stem** - A cross section of a pine stem under the microscope.  
*Colors were enhanced for better visuals.*

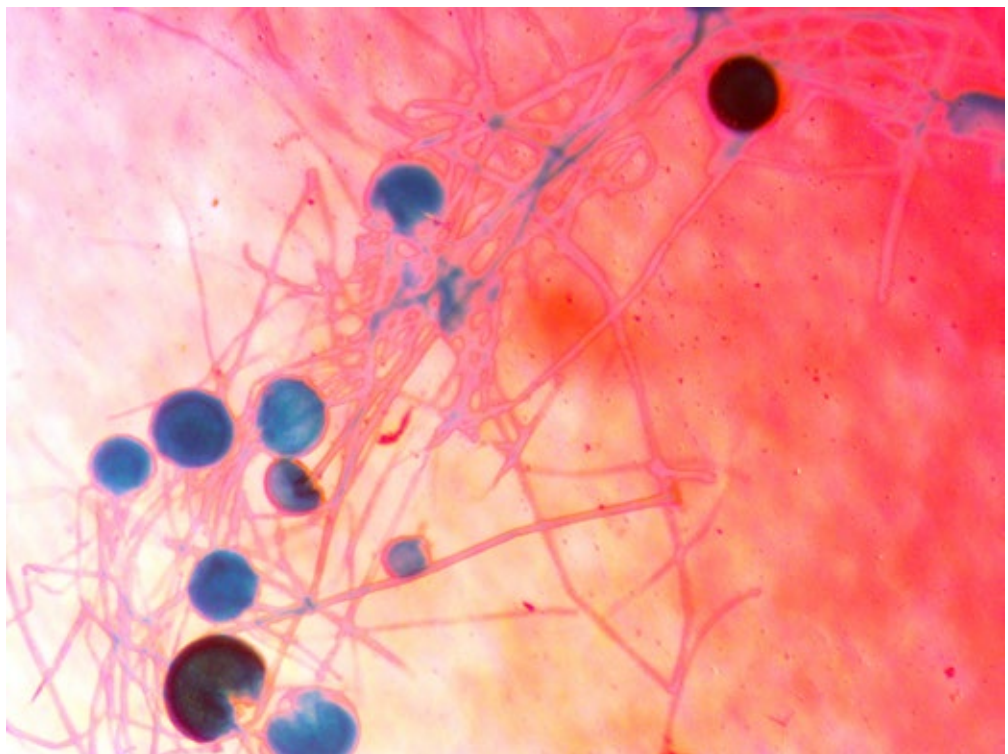


**Synthetic Sponge-like Material** – A spongy material found in the  
*microscope slide packaging. Colors were not enhanced.*

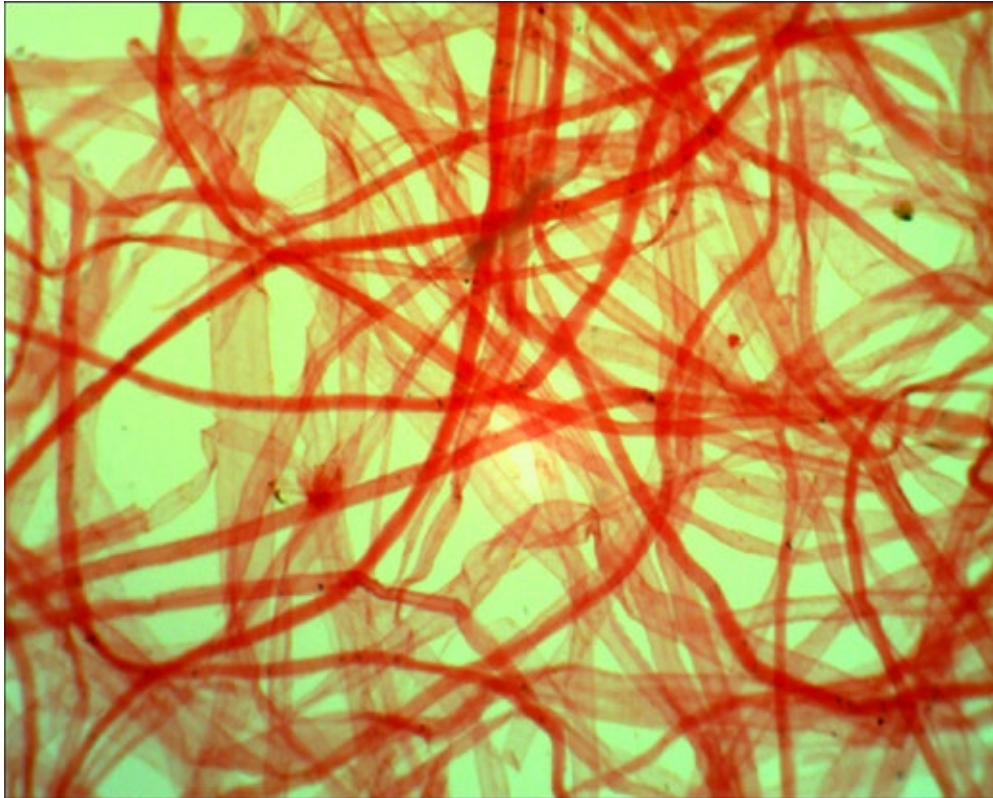




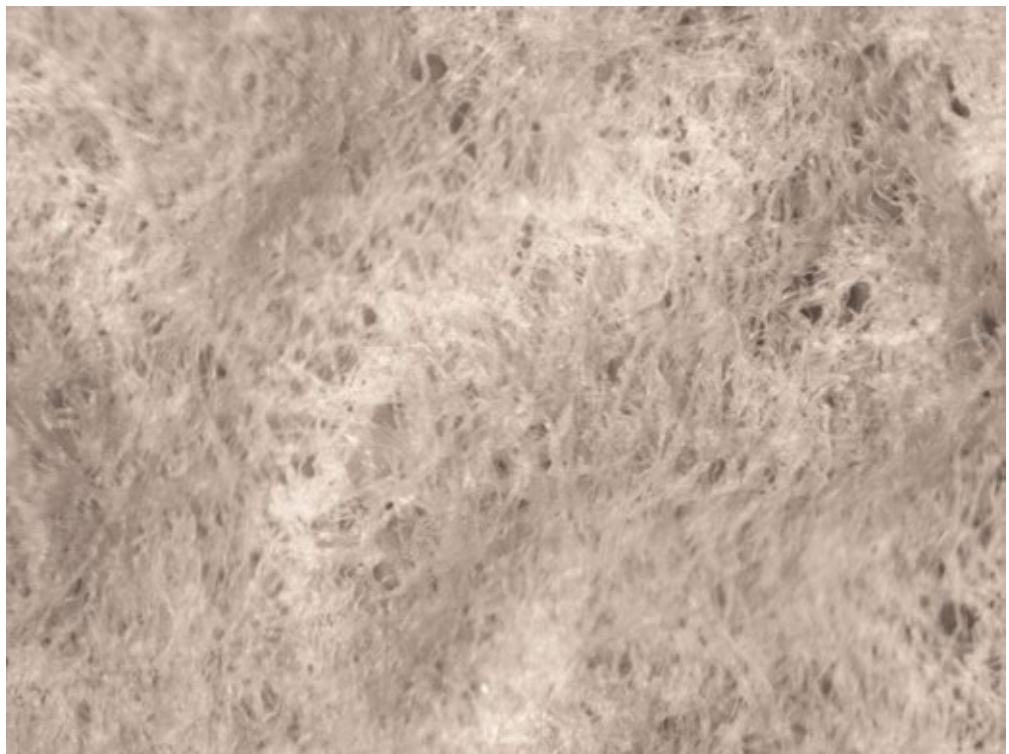
**Hair Mold** – A slide of hair mold under the microscope. Colors manipulated for better visuals.



**Rhizopus Nigricans** – Also known as "Black bread mold". Colors manipulated for artistic style.



**Fibre** – *Just some fibre of unknown origin under the microscope. Colors were not manipulated.*



**Napkin** – *A common napkin under the microscope. Colors were not changed.*

# SAVERA

**by Navika Kapoor**

*Navika Kapoor is a jack of all and master of some, with interests lying in areas of photography, gastronomy, writing, psychology and social work. Her photographs consist of pieces trying to find human emotion amidst everyday scenery.*

*She is currently a student of English Literature at Delhi University, and lives for the love of cheese and her dog, Spikey.*

This project was started with the purpose presenting in a few frames, devoid of human figures, the altered perception of mornings in the mind of an individual suffering from depression. It's devoid of human figures because while your mind is affected with this condition you tend to delve in your own thoughts, in your own self. You drown out the difference between self and the others. They become what you feel for yourself. Their purpose of talking to you, become how it affects you. It's in your mind and it eventually becomes your mind.

The series starts at a terrace, goes around the city in search of something that eases a sort of discomfort.

Emphasis also lies in the stark contrast with how mornings are usually perceived. There is said to be a new clarity, the feeling of a fresh start. Whereas we see different textures of blur in the photographs, which are meant to stand out for difference in perspectives within the mind going through this unrest, and the entirely different popular perception of mornings which is far from what the experience puts forward.

None of these pictures are edited.





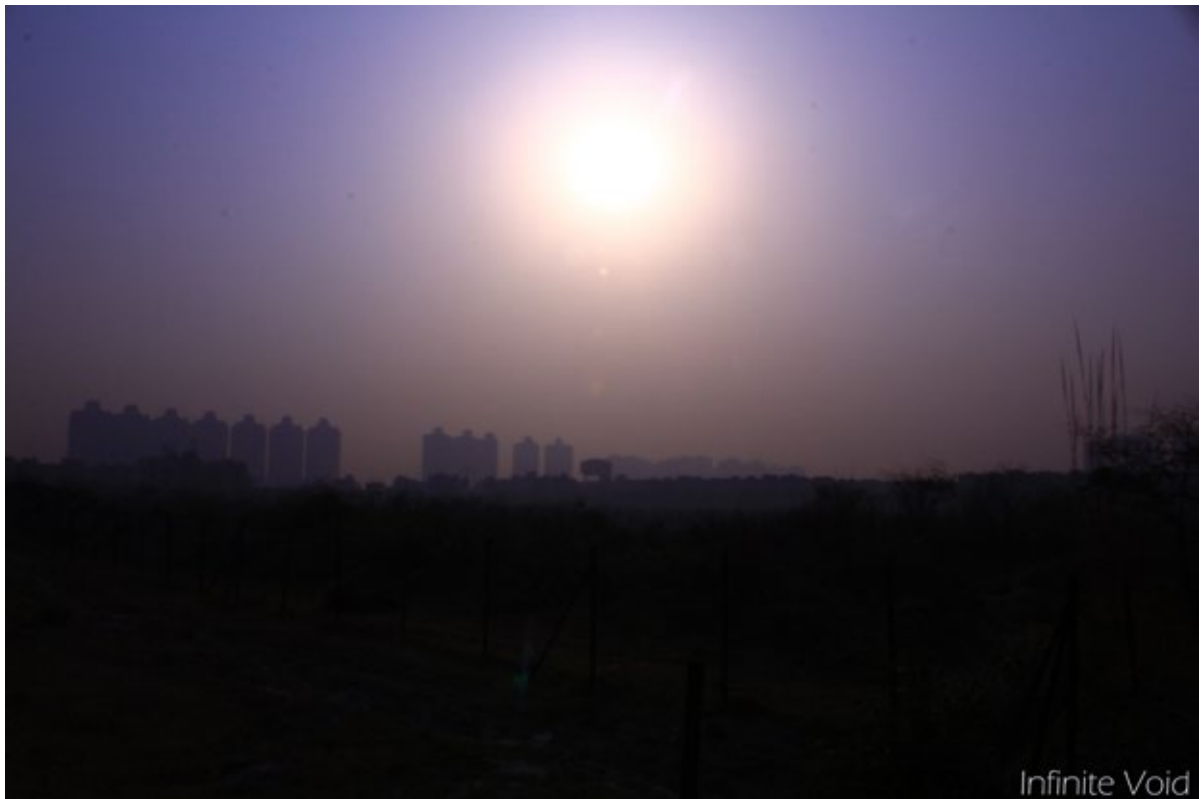
## **Melankholia –**

*It initially started out feeling like dry bread crumbs on my swollen, aching throat. It were as if I was looking for a void to pull me into itself, looking with an eerie sense of longing for something I've never known or felt. Something that brings the carcass of my mind's farthest locked reserves back to life and utility I wanted to be able to come home to me, and all that felt real was my utter inadequacy.*



## Eclipse –

*Do you ever feel like something came in the way of the world's light and you? All you see now is an empty darkness around you. As if something is entirely shadowing over your existence. It starts off as a slight dimness around you and slowly engulfs all you ever knew. Every single part of your life, every piece of you becomes uncertain of what it stands for; you lose sight of what you stand for. What you do see now, what shines right into your face is your inhibitions and insecurities. They become more defined as they start covering your sources of hope. They cut out all the energies that you once thought you could use to power your mind, to survive another day.*



## **Infinite Void –**

*Some mornings don't feel like a new day. They feel like a bitter aftertaste in the mouth, like a continuation of last night's breakdown. The endless spiral has a vacuum that pulls you in by your stomach; your chest feels heavy and so hollow at the same time that the uneasiness does not permit you to understand what's wrong.*

*You ask yourself again, what's wrong? What is wrong with you?*

*And all that answers this chain of questions is silent internal cry which seems to be the only noise inside your head in the morning. Insufficiencies cease to matter, and so do you.*



## Unredeemed –

*I'm walking into an endless jungle. There is desolate smog all around me. Humans along with their depravity are nowhere to be found. I'm lost in a jungle of my own projections and thoughts which have me confined in a mindscape I see no way out of. It's a long unending search for life that accepts me back into normalcy and its idiosyncrasies.*

*But I'm out alone, nobody know where I am and I'd stay lost here, unredeemed; till someone realizes that I'm missing from where I was before. Till someone cares enough to step into my convoluted jungle and find me. However, this time, that someone can only be me. "If I asked you to name all the things you love, how long would it take you to name yourself?"?*



## **Mirrored –**

*Some days, I wake up numb. It isn't indifference in my eyes, when I'm talking to you and you don't feel my active involvement. It's the exhaustion I carry on my shoulders, wrapped around my nape, that weighs my head down and I just mirror the life around me. 'I' ceases to exist, my being disseminates into the form of your conversation. I'm still but not tranquil, I mirror but don't reflect. I am right there in front of you, smiling at that picture of your dog when he wore his first sweater this winter which you were adoringly telling me about.*

*But is it me you're looking at or is it an image of yourself fading as I try to inhibit the flow of a never ending stream of thoughts in my mind?*





## Misdirected Focus –

*"Clearly, the state of security in this country is at an absolutely hapless state but at the same time releasing such an uncensored list, with evidence can actually destroy someone's life. Given the fact the people are very much aware of how offenders are let off easy, so they now try and make sure they give them a tough time."*

*"But you know, I think we all like giving each other a tough time anyway. Which reminds me, have you watched that fucking Durgesh meme? It's absolutely hilarious."*

*"This guy in a video that I watched was cat fishing a marine who died a martyr in the name of that fake profile."*

*"Pumpkin carving is a fun activity, don't you think?"*

*"I think I should just get back to our initial discussion now, I think I'm in the mood for some Thai green curry today."*

*Am I the only one or do you also hear a faint low buzzing in the air?*

*//*



## **Distorted –**

*It feels like I ran too fast and too soon, like all the blood in my body has left my head and I'm dizzy, I'm dizzy, I'm dizzy, and I can't breathe; except, I haven't even run 10 feet in these 10 months.*

*My surroundings are melting around me, and I'm drowning out all noises to concentrate on that consistent buzzing in my head and I somehow don't need to put in any effort. I'm standing in the middle of a chaotic hurricane but I can't hear the winds, I can't feel my skin and that buzzing is intensifying second by seconds, it's growing into a background score to compliment the elaborate mess in my mind. Goodbye, I don't think I can be a person today.*



## Confinement–

*You're in a box, and you feel the water trickling in through one of the corners. You have your knees to your chest, your heart in your mouth, your side on the ground and the water keeps pouring in, little by little it's creeping up to your left eye and soon it will inhibit you from breathing. Alternately, you could also have been in an apartment, surrounded by apartments, so much so that when you peep from your window all you see is a thin strip of sky. As slowly and excruciatingly possible, it's choking you out in different ways. In the box, people feel the reality of it creeping into their lives. In the apartment, you expend too much of your life trying to figure out why you're choking and what you're choking of.*

*Depression is like being in that apartment. The buildings blocking you out exist in your mind, and you're forced into that apartment space. Self curated misery is the hardest way to drown yourself out, as your inadequacies become the walls that hold those buildings high.*

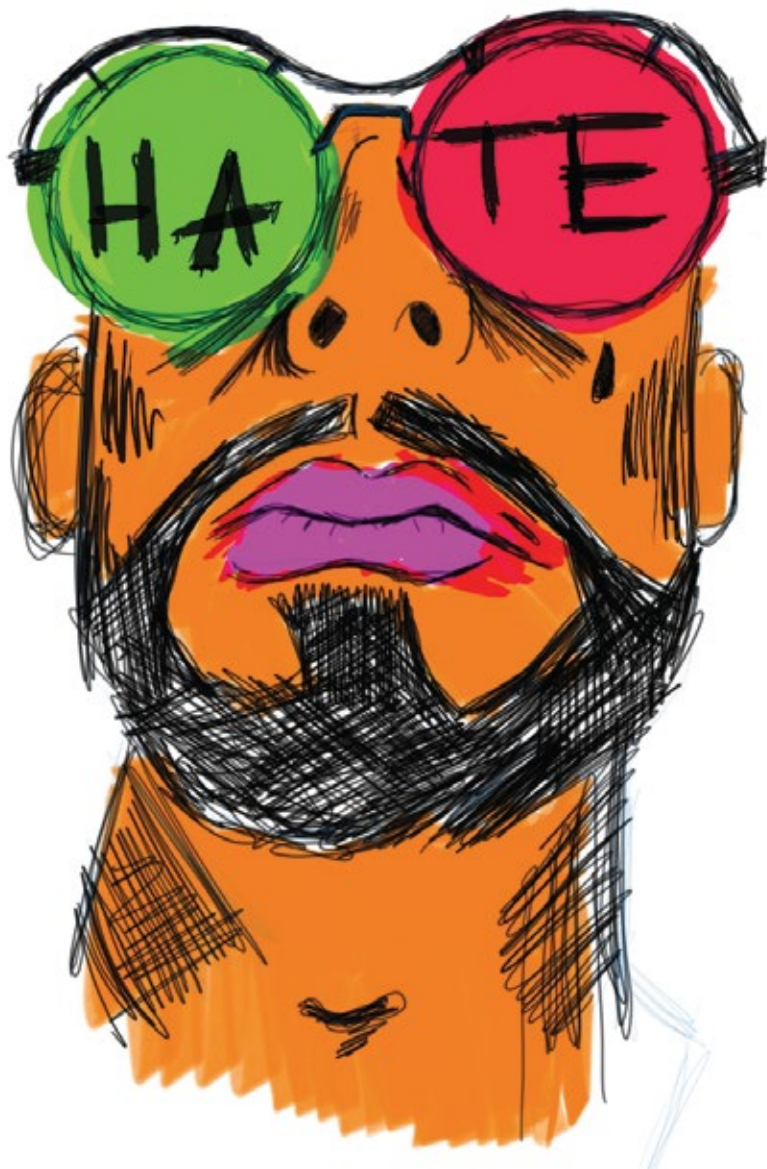
# A R T

by Julio

*"I was born on April 18, 1989 to Puerto Rican parents. I can't remember much of my childhood from that, but we as a family moved around a lot. I was a very unstill child and was always getting bullied and teased due to the fact that I didn't have as much as everyone else. Drawing has always been a part of me, and teachers would usually catch me in the back of class doodling on desks and anything I can get my hands on. I never took lessons and I learned by tracing and coloring exact copies. Even as an adult, you can catch me in meetings doodling or not really paying attention. (I have ADD). I love everything art. The colors, lines and visual of it. I've also been working on a spoken word poetry type YouTube channel that I'm still working on.*

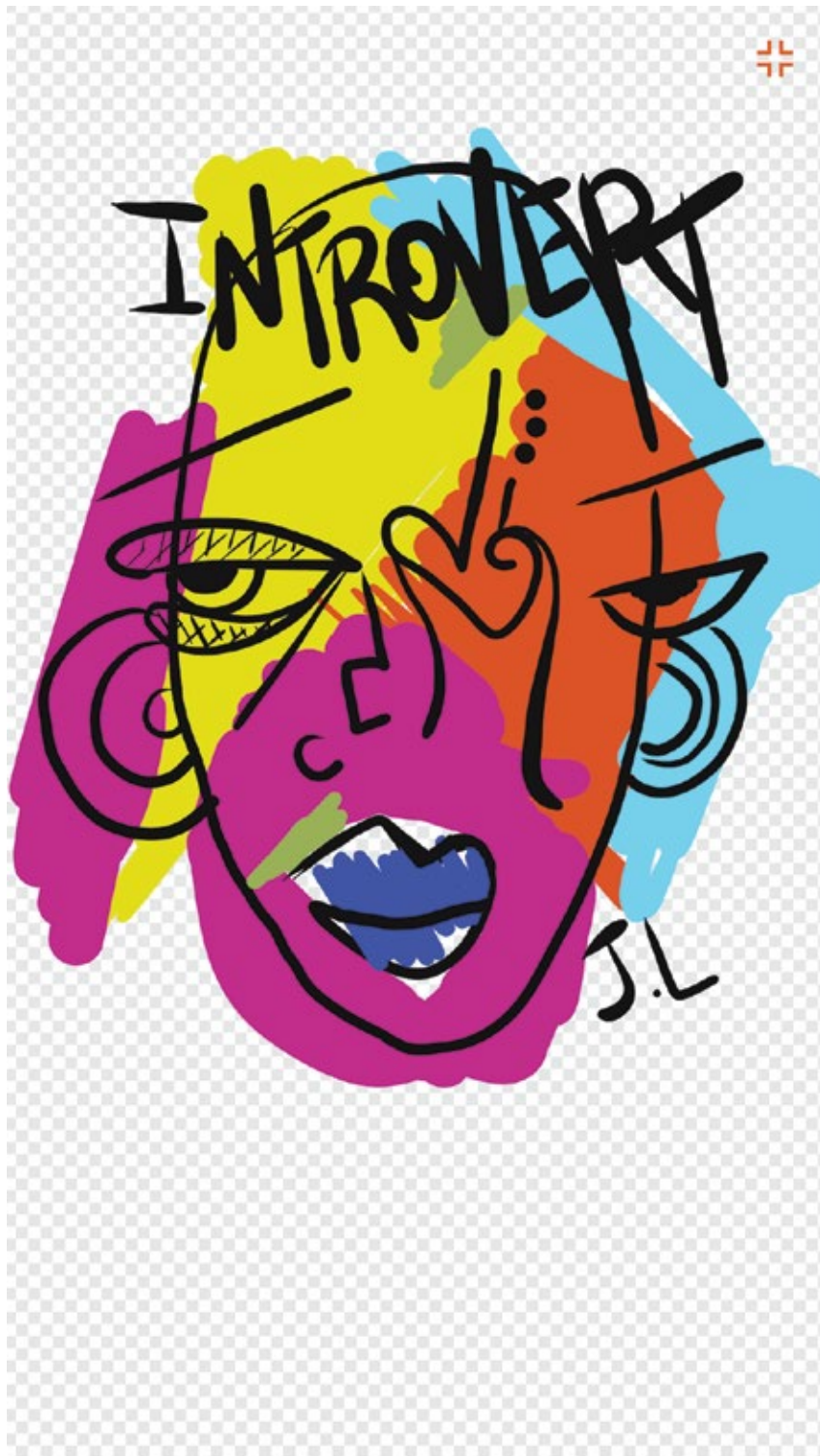
*I'm very introverted, so my art comes from everyday people, events and feelings. I wouldn't say everyone, but a majority of people avoid me because they see a tattooed, long haired, sterned faced Hispanic kid who doesn't take shit from no one, so you can imagine the way people treat me. As an adult I was diagnosed with Effective Active Mood Disorder, so that played a big role in the way I draw or interpret things. I would describe my art as a late night meet up at a seedy hotel with a complete stranger while your high on acid. As far as "inspiration" goes, the people that inspire me the most is Yash Pandit, J. Warren Welch, Edgar Allen Poe, Corey Taylor, Malcom X, Neil Hilborn, Shane Koyczan, Pablo Picasso and Frida Kahlo to just name a few.*

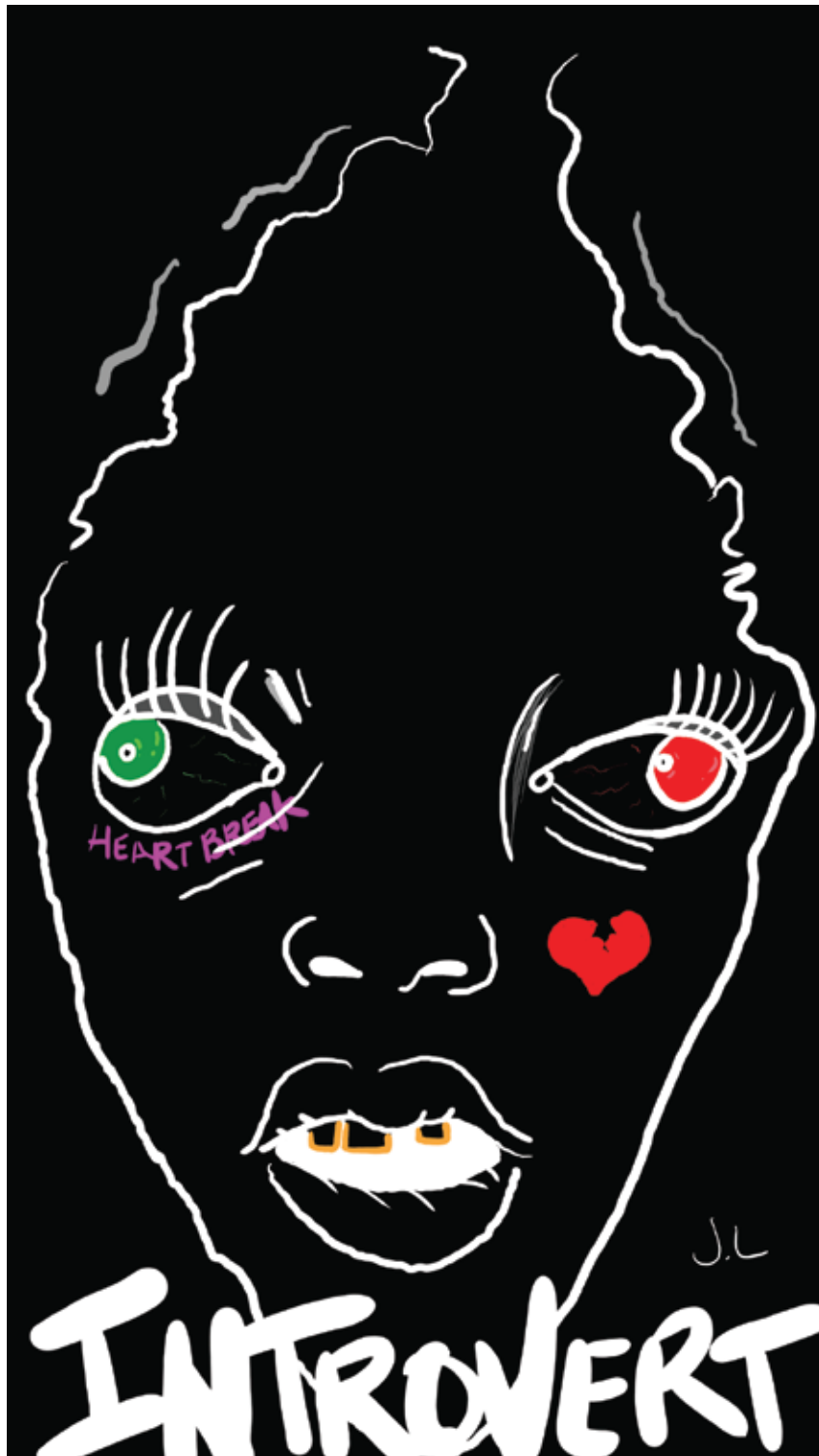
*I've chosen these specific pieces of art work for the magazine because I feel that these represent me the most. And I drew all of these during a dark time too. My past relationship of three long years was coming to an abrupt halt and along side being evicted and being homeless for a while on the streets of NYC during the winter mixed in with hunger and the need to survive, I had a lot of hate and resentment towards a lot of people and events happening in the world. Instead of going on Facebook and Instagram and bitching about it like most of this generation does, I drew, I went out there and rallied and fought. My artwork is always open for interpretation and never really has a set explanation, but they all have a story of how they became to be."*















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