

# **Unscripted.**

**They speak poetry**





**An anthology of poetry by:**

Munadiah Aftab

Nishat Ahmed

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Ambiea Begum

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## **Preface: About *Unscripted*.**

The poems collected in *Unscripted* emerge out of a project called *Reading/Writing Multilingualism*, held at Queen Mary University of London with a group of students from Morpeth School and St Paul's Way Trust School. These students are this book's authors.

Our project took place in after-school workshops over six weeks. In workshops, we discussed and explored poetry's power to extend and to challenge our own experiences of language, family, friendship, history, community, and place. We read together, talked together, and wrote together.

The collection you hold in your hands is the work of these young writers. Here you will find sharp sensory images, and witty wordplay; evocations of the past, and the urgent pressure of the present; poetry to make you laugh, and to make you cry. It has been a great privilege to edit this anthology, and we hope that you enjoy it.

Rachael Gilmour

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## **Munadiah Aftab**

---

### **- Apology -**

I'm not going to apologize  
I'm not going to apologize  
I'm not going to apologize

That's what I said as I wrapped the Union around  
the Jack of my hearts  
That's what I said as I sipped the cup of PG tips  
that simmered my speech  
That's what I said as I refined my cuisine down at  
the chippie, salt and vanquish  
That's what I said as I intoxicated with guilt,  
downing a glass of OJ at the Queen Vic'

I'm not going to apologize

Yet I feel the need to chant 'God save the queen' at  
my bedside  
Yet I feel the need to blare the Beatles as I drive by  
Yet I feel the need to staple red on my bloodless  
uniform  
Yet I feel the need to reassure Abbey, Downtown  
that she won't be at harm

I'm not going to apologize

Apparently my birthplace is only fact once I  
copyright it on Google maps  
Apparently my passport is only real once I renew  
my vows with the border force  
Apparently 'what I am actually' is determined by  
the CO<sub>2</sub> my ancestors inhaled



Apparently I am only a product of 'my people'

I'm not going to apologize

'My people' are brown, so is chocolate - does that make me irresistible?

'My people' are Muslim, so is Al-Khwarizmi - does that make me a scientist?

'My people' are Asian, so is Amir Khan - does that makes me a boxer?

'My people' are British, so what does that make me?

Munadiah Aftab

**- Power -**

It is pursued by a compelling desire  
To fulfil and aspire  
and connect with the one

It is woven out of rare courage and steel  
To submit and to kneel  
and connect with the one

It is chosen to act as an armour  
To protect and look after  
and connect with the one

It is held together by personality and laughter  
To enlighten and to charm her  
And connect with the one

Layers upon layers  
Courage upon courage  
Will upon will

As it rests upon her head  
Full of conviction  
Full of life  
Full of power

Munadiah Aftab

## Nishat Ahmed

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### - Her Fear -

*The awareness that not every woman in the world shares the privilege of independence or being able to stand up for herself is a worry. Whitechapel was once a very dangerous area for women in the late 1800's as their lives were under the constant eye of a murderous man recognised as 'Jack the Ripper'. Since his death in 1897, the lives of women have improved to a large extent in the United Kingdom. The atrocious attacks on women across the world by men who do not understand humanity are well noted and I wish for every woman to be able to stand up to the injustice they live through on a day-to-day basis.*

What was once there, is there no more.  
What is now freedom and independence  
Replaces the fear She once had of being murdered  
every night.  
The odd remains of the buildings leave an eerie  
memory of the horrors from the past.

To think, the very lane  
                                we  
  walk  
  down  
  today  
  Was  
the very lane She once ran down to save her life.

The pub She was once dragged out from, is the  
same pub where they now toast in joy.

Her dead body, found at the break of dawn in the  
very park where they now picnic.  
The investigation following her murder always  
concluding to him...

The Ripper.

Nishat Ahmed

**- Green Street -**

It's early morning and you wake filling your purse  
with hundreds and making sure you've got your  
debit card knowing that pure cash will not be  
sufficient.

Getting off the packed 330 bus full of Asian mums  
chattering of the upcoming wedding they're  
preparing for, you think why you hadn't stayed at  
home.

Entering the packed street, the instant smell of hot  
oil used to deep-fry samosas hits your nose.

You attempt to walk through the crowd without  
being barged but you fail to achieve your motive.

Looking ahead, you are unable to see the full view  
of the street but preparing to enter every shop  
from one end to the other.

Each shop-the same dresses, the same jewellery  
and that constant BANG of rainbow.

You stop at 2 o'clock for that lunch break, knowing  
it's either going to be an Indian curry or Dixy's.

Then you're out again, still searching and  
searching and searching for that perfect dress.

You get to the end of the street and realise it's  
getting dark but the spiral night lights are turning

on signifying the night life on the street is beginning.

You know it's time to travel back down the same street, back to where you started, re-entering all the same shops still hoping to find something. Anything.

You stop at Himalaya's for a quick on-the-go samosa and purchase 1kg of jalebis.

You're back to where you started and its time to go home. Waiting at the bus stop empty handed you're deep in thought of your own wedding till they say "we'll come back again tomorrow" and immediately your bubble breaks.

"I'm never getting married."

Nishat Ahmed

## Lipa Ayesha

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### - Grandad -

Not in the imaginary fields, not in my dreams did  
you appear

In my birth place, my place of origin, I saw you  
Your tired eyes, your pure white clothes and your  
neatly combed beard.

Your simplistic nature, generosity and endless  
talents, all instilled within me.

Your endless nurture provided me with love and  
empathy for the world.

Hardworking were you, who strived to be fair.

I would sit on your lap just outside the doorstep;  
hear stories that I don't remember now.

You would carry me on your shoulders,  
Oh lord how you never made me feel like a burden.

You were different

you didn't sit in the corner of the room engaging in  
talks about *Khaleda Zia* or *Hasina*  
the current political affairs

You did what you did best

tell stories of our countries independence  
and pass superstitions that led to a moral  
a life changing moral

Even with the curry smelling immensely delicious  
you would look for what is plain  
you were not like all *dadas*

you didn't have the same old same old wooden  
*laati* or *golah* as other people would say.

You were strong, immensely strong.  
even during your last breath.

I'm going to be the highlight of your shadow  
I'm going make someone out of myself.  
I'm going to make my *dada* proud.  
Ameen they would all say.

Lipa Ayesha

- **Big sheher** -

In my big *shohor* or *sheher* they would say.  
cars come and go  
like celebrations of joy and planned ploy.  
I live in a town where Eid isn't Eid  
without the *samosas* and *Pokoras* or *fulab*,  
pillar rice they would say.  
I live in a town where Christmas isn't Christmas  
without the turkey and 2 weeks holidays or gifts,  
*tohfa* they would say.  
I live in a town where all celebrations cannot  
continue without collision  
like the fusion caused by the firework occasion  
Guy fawkes night they would say.  
On the busy streets of our town, our city  
On the busy streets of the towering sky scrapers  
the tropical elements been taken out  
block colours, of the shade of black and white  
perhaps with a hint of green and pink  
just waiting for the fireworks night.  
New years firework they would say.  
And one will stand out of the crowd,  
*dipavali* I would say.  
I live in a town, where hymns remain harmonious  
I live in a town where surah's don't lose their faith  
I live in a town where the bible is positioned the  
same way.  
with all the collision taking place.  
Occasion I say,  
you never know  
on the busy streets of our town,  
you will never know.  
Just enjoy.

Lipa Ayesha



## **Ambiea Begum**

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### **- The struggles of Ramadan -**

My tummy rumbled as I waited to break my fast,  
The last 5 minutes were the worst,  
I could smell the delicious samosas,  
Laid out beautifully in front of me,  
But I had to wait 4 more minutes,  
My little brother mocked me and took a sip of  
water,  
*Just 3 more minutes*  
Everyone was shouting and running around,  
Bringing plates of food from the kitchen to the  
living room,  
“You have to help out or you won’t eat”  
Said my evil sister,  
*Just 2 more minutes left*  
I huffed and stood up  
“Sit down, you don’t need to help”  
Said my dad.  
I gave my sister a devilish smile  
*1 more minute*  
“IT’S NEARLY TIME!”  
Screamed the ravenous guests  
The children looked like they were in a race,  
As soon as the whistle would blow,  
They would jump out of their starting position,  
Onto the table spilling with food.  
ALLAHUAKBAR  
The children screamed with joy,  
Their little hands grabbing the dates and glasses of  
water.  
“I nearly died from hunger”

Said one child with a mouthful of *sana*  
I finally took a sip of water  
*Ahhhhh*  
“One down 29 more to go”  
Said the smiling adults.  
OHHHHHH  
Whined the little kids.

Ambiea Begum

**- The Great Winter Wonderland -**

One, two, three, four, five  
They ran after each other,  
Pretending to be cops and robbers,  
Screaming from the top of their lungs.  
They burst into the living room,  
With their finger guns,  
Clutching their fake gunshot wounds  
And dramatically falling to the ground  
Their parents looked at them,  
Straight-faced,  
And they stopped.

The whole house was quiet after that,  
Too quiet.

I knew something was wrong,  
They can never be quiet for this long.  
I crept through the quiet hallway,  
Until I came to the closed bathroom door.  
I could hear muffled giggles and shushing.  
As I opened the door, I gasped in shock.

It looked like a winter wonderland.  
The walls and floor were covered in a white foam,  
And so were their faces.

They looked like little old men,  
With white beards and white hair.

“Tara amare marri layba”

Screamed the mums,

“Tara gumayn na khene?”

Screamed the dads,

“WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU’RE DOING?”

Ambiea Begum

**Ambiea Begum, Safa Himat, & Anisha Kaniz**

*This poem is written by Ambiea Begum, Safa Himat and Anisha Kaniz. There are element of this poem only understandable to us, drawn from experience and memories together.*

**- "Guess what? I died, lol, I lied" -**

Battles were fought  
Losses cut deep  
Impatiently waiting  
Agitated,  
Sailing to the promised success  
Nights, hunched over binominals, pondering over  
the grave of Yeats  
The truth behind his unrequited love, for the essay  
due.  
Tricked by the creature's monstrous looks and his  
innocent heart,  
Frankenstein's terribly beautiful creation.  
The acidic drops of titration, like tears.  
We go home and the Tardis takes us elsewhere  
To Galifrey and 'silence will fall'  
We're high. Off boost, caffeine and Fridays lunch  
apple juice  
The image of Beardy, tugging his hair, next to the  
PFC box  
Refusing to understand the basic laws of  
teenagerism.  
Timer set, exams begin, clocks ticks, *tock tick*.  
We became warriors, battling the tide of questions  
But time is wild, reckless, transparent

And ours together is running out  
We must fight one more battle together  
To survive: the distance  
To win  
For win, we must.

S.H.A.B.A.K

Ambiea Begum, Safa Himat, Anisha Kaniz

## **Adnan Benachar**

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### **- As I Shadow -**

As I walk through my front door,  
I feel the spirit of my younger self,  
Brushing across my skin,  
As smooth as the wind.

As I progress through the corridor,  
I am confident where to place my feet,  
Certain that my path,  
Is optimum as could be.

As I remove my shoes,  
It is instinct that tells me,  
My body knows,  
My mind doesn't.

As I push myself up the stairs,  
I grip the rail for balance,  
Shaky, not to my surprise,  
From all those years of sliding down.

As I approach the turn,  
Prepared as can be,  
My body knows,  
My mind doesn't.

Adnan Benachar

**- Freedom in Poetry -**

Some may start like this  
Some may perhaps start like this  
It is up to you.

Adnan Benachar

**- Source of life -**

The reason why we live,  
Essential to us all,  
Cannot live without,  
And will soon pay the toll.

Never stops giving,  
Sometimes we forget,  
It won't last forever,  
Contrary to people's regret.

Deciding our fate,  
As it passes through time,  
Increasing its rate,  
Through paradigms.

You must know by now,  
There is no way you could not,  
The thing I speak of,  
Will eventually stop,  
And only then,

...

Adnan Benachar

**Enamul Hasan**

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## Winter shadows

The shadows shiver as the wind inflicts its pain,  
cold and unforgiving,  
Lurking in the shadows, the vast wooden monsters  
tremble with fear,  
The black sheet of darkness deepens further, into  
a bleak sea of misery,  
A misty white fog entraps us into its lair of  
unknowingness,

The night monsters have come out to play,  
Whispering deafening whispers,  
They remind us, haunt us, of their presence,  
They're here to play, they say.

Enamul Hasan



**- Optimism -**

I hated it. I hated my name. I hated the entrapment of life. I hated the fact that dad was strict. I hated gardens. I hated books. I hated pictures. I hated tyres. I hated hate. I hated whoever hated me. I hated clouds. I hated letters. I hated leaves. I hated trees. I hated this. I hated that. I hated you. I hated me.

I hated it. I hated crisps. I hated the woman I saw running across the other side of the street. I hated chairs. I hated that that thing they called love. I hated school. I hated the full stop at the end of this sentence. I hated the boy that sat two seats away from me in maths. I hate the way you're just reading this essay of hate. I hated brothers. I hated sisters. I hated cousins. I hated neighbours. Mum.

Yeah... I like that woman

Enamul Hasan

**- The championships -**

The day starts with a healthy breakfast,  
Minds anticipating,  
body adrenaline  
Never would we starve spirits of Christmas,  
Only if it wasn't the  
summer.

Gear on, on gear, stretches and crawlers  
Sun shining, moon hiding, nature singing,  
Never would we  
starve our warm ups. Only if it wasn't the  
Championships today.

We were finally ready and steady  
Because steady wins the race,  
I rush to the tracks  
as I see the eyes of many  
Mum would be proud, I was finally a professional.

As the sun looked over me, with proud eyes of  
scorching heat,

As I held the baton firm with clenched hands and  
won the race,  
As I emplaned onto the monstrous F1 car and  
awarded myself victory,  
I opened my eyes and saw nothing like a  
Championship.

As I realised the baton was only a spoon,  
As I realised the F1

car was only an Asda trolley,  
As I realised no one but my family cheered me on,  
I realised it were only mere memories.

As I wished adulthood was this fun,  
I wished we weren't so mature.

Enamul Hasan

**- Time -**

Hold on just a little while longer  
Let the spineless feathers trace your skin  
Fill you with ease, then,  
Crack your sadness into memories  
Like a shell  
Of the self you once were  
Stop the Wilful pursuit of happiness  
It's not as vague as it seems  
Once freed from the grasps of uncertainty  
The clutches of disappointment,  
And the deathly stillness of time  
bestowed by the Almighty  
Is it an undeserved gift?  
Or a toxic epiphany,  
A reminder of the ticking clock.

Safa Himat

**- The grand theft -**

The picture frame stills  
Silent  
Holding her most precious memory  
Her most unattainable dream  
But She dreams anyway,  
Of her warm smell and her safe chest  
Of solidness and love  
Oh how she dreams of absent love  
Her face, kind  
Weary, tired  
Completely drained  
Nights spent, sick, vomiting vile, the hair loss  
The stench, her face, sick, the weight loss  
The worsening cancer  
The casket  
Her mother  
Her beautiful, warm mother  
And the robbery  
The sickening, unapologetic robbery  
Of the chance to apologize

Safa Himat

## **Shayful Islam**

---

### **- A Forgotten Dream -**

I remember the past like a vivid image  
Painted in my head  
Slowly the paint fades  
As those memories deteriorate

My friends and family  
Lost in blank space  
Our connections, relationships  
Just not the same

The world revolved around me  
But moved too fast  
Everything changed without me  
It's time to grow up

Shayful Islam

## Mahmuda Kamalee

---

          w    i  
You  t          s  
          t          the handle open to reveal  
nothing,  
the occasional creaking keeps you company.

Rewind.

The BOOMBOX of voices bombard you as you enter  
the living room,  
beetroot red uncles screaming and screeching  
about political affairs.

You  T  
      U  
      R  
      N    to be greeted by your mother's palms,  
fine grains of rice smothered in aromatic curry,  
the tastes of Asia on her fingertips.  
The sweet sound of aunties giggling and cackling,  
Who did this and who said that, that's all to their  
worries.

The uncles come to life again.  
"Invest in this for your daughter, brother"  
"Brother, land will come to her use"  
"She needs gold right brother?"  
I'll never understand what they mean.  
Fast Forward.  
I never understood and never will,  
for silence is all I have left..

Mahmuda Kamalee

## **Anisha Kaniz**

---

### **- Paradoxes -**

We are remnants of lost souls,  
From those that got washed away,  
The integral part of culture in my  
Identity  
Fading away,  
Leaving behind a question  
Hanging  
At sea.

Filled with fragments of loose puzzles;  
Past souls,  
Torrent of emotions,  
Pinches of History,  
A hole of paradoxes,  
We realise  
We are Complete.

Anisha Kaniz



**- Ancestor -**

So, who am I?  
Where do I really come from?  
I need you to tell me.  
I deserve to know. I honestly deserve to know.

This heritage of mine  
Surrounded in flames by the insults of the settlers.

His name drowned by a rock.  
My beloved grandfather worked hard,  
A whole country helped built  
By the sweat of his brow.

Anisha Kaniz

## **Nazifa Khatun**

---

### **- The "Dinner Set" -**

Some fine looking plates, of course with matching cups and cutlery, never leaving the showcase, yet living the luxury.

Plain white, with delicate black flowers round the edges, to use on special occasions, she's made many pledges.

"We'll get them out when guests come" she says.

She had them flown over, all the way from Bangladesh, why she still has not used them? I'm still trying to process.

"We'll get them out when guests come" she says.

Taking up the corner of the living room, is the showcase filled with mother's beloved cups and plates, that she says she will use for all these various different dates. But that never seems to happen, because

"we'll get them out when guests come" she says.

Events after events, guests after guests, but that showcase is still filled with her plates, all looking their best.

"We'll get them out when guests come" she says.

Marriages, ceremonies, birthdays, but those cups and plates don't come out.

They will stay in there forever, without a doubt.

"We'll get them out when guests come" she says--

--Oh but she does get them out sometimes! but only  
for cleaning, they must always look their best,  
shiny and gleaming.

Come on mum, let's use these new plates I say,

"No, we'll get them out when guests come" she  
says.

Nazifa Khatun

## **Anika Protova**

---

### **- All that was said: words -**

Once the words have been spattered  
There is no taking it  
back

With every silent, steps in the hall  
Always leaping ahead  
The swarm of trouble builds in your mind  
An intense amplified buzz  
Only if this sting would not burn

Repeat: STICKS AND STONES may break my  
bones  
but words will never hurt me

Keeping your head in the game  
Eyes on the prize  
It's not sticks or bullets  
No Hangman or Russian roulette  
Just *words*

Shots fired at your back  
As you struggle to stutter a word  
Speechless

"Ignorance is bliss", they say

You carefully chose your words  
Pulling back your tongue  
As you draw closer to the hangman

Anika Protova

## **Imran Rahman**

---

### **- Broken arrow -**

I'm just a broken arrow

That's trying to fly

A broken arrow

That understands why

Why it can't fly despite how hard it tries

Yet for some reason it still denies

And to itself it lies

That it can if it works hard enough to get really  
high

A broken arrow

That tries its hardest not to cry

And keeps attempting to reach the sky

Imran Rahman

**- Dear Father, -**

What would you think of me if you met me now?  
Would you see all I've done and be real proud?  
11 years later would I live up to your  
expectations?  
Or would I disappoint and remind you of your own  
salvation?

The 6 year old you left behind on an empty  
promise  
Agreeing to keep visiting but you became a ghost  
It's a father that a boy needs the most  
I waited for your silhouette to cast itself under the  
front door  
If those footsteps were yours I could never be sure

I used to envy my friends and their dads  
"my dad did this" and "my dad bought me that"  
My dad should have done the same  
But where were you at?

The prospect of my father teaching me football,  
how to drive and how to fix  
Taking me to the gym, my first match, camping  
out with a fire made of sticks

It must've been me  
I must have done something  
It drove you away  
The unwanted offspring  
It must've been me cos you had another daughter

Yet your relationship with her you didn't  
slaughter  
Yet with her you didn't run away  
Making her grow up feeling alone every day  
For your arrival home she didn't have to pray  
A half-sister I'll never know  
I can only hope a father's love with her you'll show

I'd love to know what I did wrong  
What drove you away  
What made you forget me  
What made you refuse to stay

Most of what I remember has been shredded  
Your face faded from my memory yet  
the indentation of our few moments are still  
embedded

Am I a disgrace?  
Can you even remember the features of my face?  
In your mind is there even a trace?  
Or did you forget me the same way you left at  
pace?

'Father' is a credit you never had earned  
But you taught me the best lesson I could ever  
have learnt:  
I'll love my children and be with them always  
I'll protect them under my shade  
I'll care for them till the end of my days  
And I will be better than you in every way...

Imran Rahman

**- I HATE weddings :-**

The 'Asian wedding':  
A catwalk for girls  
And banquet for boys

The opportunity to be Kate Moss or Cara  
Delevingne  
More make up on their faces  
Than icing on the wedding cake  
But hey, maybe it's Maybelline  
So many selfies and pictures being taken  
You'd worry for anyone with epilepsy

The loud revving of supercar engines  
Ferrari, Lambo and a Roll's  
Boys taking pictures in the driver's seat  
When they can barely reach the pedals  
Men taking pictures the same way  
But they don't even have a licence

Uncles complaining about the lack of tenderness,  
flavouring or salt in the food  
Yet they've devoured more than 60% of it  
themselves  
Aunties dissing the brides dress, hair and  
anything else they can find  
Just cos nobody would have married them unless  
it was forced  
There's that one little kid high on Coke that does  
more laps around the hall than Mo Farah  
And that annoying baby who won't stop crying  
The epitome of good parenting

The groom has arrived and a horde of women with  
a banner of "No money, No honey"



Chanting as if they're an angry mob  
His forehead dripping with sweat as he hands over  
the ransom  
While he reconsiders whether the bride was really  
worth all the debt he's in  
Some of the girls decide to do a little dance for the  
family at the front  
Who the hell told them they could dance well?  
Half the guests disappear after the foods been  
eaten  
Gone like a ghost on Paranormal Activity  
I guess that two years' salary spent on this  
wedding to impress people they'll never see again  
was totally worth it  
\*thumbs up\*  
"Weddings are joyous days" they say  
Well I'm having a blast(!)

Imran Rahman

I am quickly  
Running  
Fast  
Escaping  
From their  
Cars  
Jets  
Flying past  
Punishment  
Falling harsh  
The image of a war  
With greed  
At its core  
I stop and turn  
In place  
My oppressor  
I now face  
Finger on the trigger  
Is he going to pull it?  
The pierce of his bullet  
The power of a gun  
Yet the world they still shun  
And continue in your fun  
While our times have come  
And we've all lost our mums

And now our lives are done  
As we lay here dying  
You disregard our crying  
This. Is. Why. I. Run.

Save me please حفظ لي من فضلك

Save me please حفظ لي من فضلك

Save me حفظ لي من فضلك

Imran Rahman

## **Samirah Rahman**

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### **- Culture Today -**

Culture today is like a vase,  
A vase that is sat alone upon a drawer  
complimenting the walls,  
A drawer that is silently placed in the corner,  
Filled with coloured petals, blossoming and  
merging, to gain a sense of belonging.  
Some are wide awake and others are slowly  
decaying away.  
Just like culture,  
It's just there, there in the background,  
Some are widely celebrated and others the fun and  
meaning is dying out,  
Going from the tall prickly trees, the sparkly  
baubles, tinsel strands twisted around the  
branches,  
And the children eagerly waiting at the fire place,  
To the explosive colours of the sarees,  
Aunties, uncles, nephews, nieces... Everyone,  
everyone together,  
Sweets are distributed,  
Gifts are given,  
And delicious dishes are prepared at home.  
Friends and relatives are invited to feasts.  
But now,  
It's all changed,  
It's not like how it used to be,

Samirah Rahman

**- Different -**

I'm different, your different, we're all different,  
That's what makes us all special,  
My friend from Pakistan tells me how much she  
loves chapatti,  
My friend from Bangladesh tells me how much she  
loves curry,  
My friend from China tells me how much she loves  
noodles,  
My friend from Italy tells me her favourite is  
pizza,  
My friend from Jamaica tells me she loves  
chicken,  
I told my friends that I've tasted culture, culture  
within my country, where it is diverse,  
I told you we're all different,  
The best thing is that we get to explore all the  
differences we all have,  
And that's what makes us different.

Samirah Rahman

## **Sravudh Tanhai**

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### **- And Again -**

You and I have seen it all again  
The half-raised flag goes down the same  
Path of men who look for signs of change  
Among cigar grey clouds. Of course,  
You and I will see it again. A startling intruder,  
The air-bound sirens who warns of  
Blood-splattered brick and mangled moaning  
And to let the kids in early today. But  
You and I have it before,  
Of engine-stutter rain and bomb-lit rubble  
Which make a waste of splendid tea  
Through walls of thought run red came  
The fall of sweets which hungry hands grab  
And savour from hot lead seething in  
Abandoned magazines. Vigilant eyes of  
A cold empire stamp rock and pottery  
yet wounded into submission by love songs  
Sung with scented voices in a  
Chain of held hands stretching  
Huge and defiant with the horizon's envy.  
And of the longing stares heavier than  
The train that tore him  
Away.  
You  
And  
I  
Will  
Survive  
This.

Sravudh Tanhai

- **Flight** -

Four thousand acres across sand  
A darkened speck swims up  
A sea of sky  
Wings of grace sail the blue  
Plains of lens flared light.

Fog ahead. Whirls serrated  
By wire down wooden pikes  
Rooted with concrete mesh  
And deceiving glass. Dust  
Born from square sealed bins  
And echoes of  
Wheezing cough that  
catch the ears of stone.

A crow lands on  
Crackling string.  
Its claw clenches metal.

Sravudh Tanhai

## Shohana Yasnim

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### - Sabr -

My world consists of...  
Brothers and sisters greeting one another  
with 'peace be upon you'  
People uniting five times a day  
A brotherhood expanding  
intertwined with joy and loyalty.

My reality consists of...  
Devils justifying their artificial norms  
in the name of Islam  
Bullets penetrating through the brains  
of the old, young and the unborn  
Walking through paths  
sheltered with a red blanket  
escaping from terror will not be freedom  
red, white, green and blue will be freedom  
death is my mother's freedom  
happiness is my brothers'  
uniting with the all-knowing is mine

Shohana Yasnim