

In my Twenties

Barlina McFarlane



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As I am writing this I am overwhelmed with joy. This journey has been a difficult one and this poetry book would not have been possible without the support of my family. They have always supported my passion for creativity. I am a medical student which brings a few opportunities in my life to showcase my writing. My parents have never said no to any of my ideas and instead pushed me towards execution. I would like to thank my friends who read all my poems and gave me constructive criticism which helped me to sharpen the blunt edges. I have chosen to pursue this journey and embellish poetry with both good and bad moments. They will always be my pillars and the reason behind my every accomplishment.

Introduction

You turn 20 and everything changes...

You find yourself in this cycle of insecurity, confidence, pain, happiness, era of aesthetic girl with their green matcha and a perfectly curated morning routine.

You are young enough to fly high and have the dream job but old enough to never make mistakes and you have to beat time with beauty.

In the end, you find yourself in darkness and it becomes your sole companion.

How do you find hope?

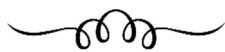
How do you find yourself in the darkness?

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Reminisce





1. The Little Girl

I am tired of feeling the pain in my heart,
My life is laid out in front of me,
And I still don't know where to start.
This is my melancholic plea,
And I don't desire any sympathy.
I want to meet the little girl,
Who once used to be happy.



2. A Tiny House

I didn't want much,
Just a tiny house filled with flowers and books.

A tiny room -
I could see the sunset and the moon.

I didn't want much,
I just needed a bit of love.
From the window,
I wanted to see the white dove.

A moment of bliss,
I took -
I played the song in the kitchen while I cooked.

I looked at the door,
It led me to my room.
The room seems empty,

I wonder,
If I was gone too soon.



3. The Red Dress

I tried to be okay,
But I failed every time.
I felt the shadows engulfing the light within her,
I had to tell that little girl goodbye.
I remembered,
The red dress with floral prints,
I would sometimes wear it at night.
Did my make up holding the princess mirror,
But, now I sat in my vanity room.
The light started burning my eyes.
How can someone lose happiness,
And still smile.
I wondered,
As my calloused heart forgot to beat,
As the time flew by.
That red dress didn't fit me anymore,
But I still kept it.
Hoping, it was never too late,
To say goodbye.



4. When I Used to Pray

I can't put my finger,
If it's you or me.
But amidst the storm and winter,
I tend to see.
I see the river,
As it turns grey.
It reminds me of the time,
When I used to pray.
The Sun turned red,
But the scars never left.
It was neither you nor me—
A soul too pure in this obscene world,
A soul too lost to be seen.



5. I Take the First Train

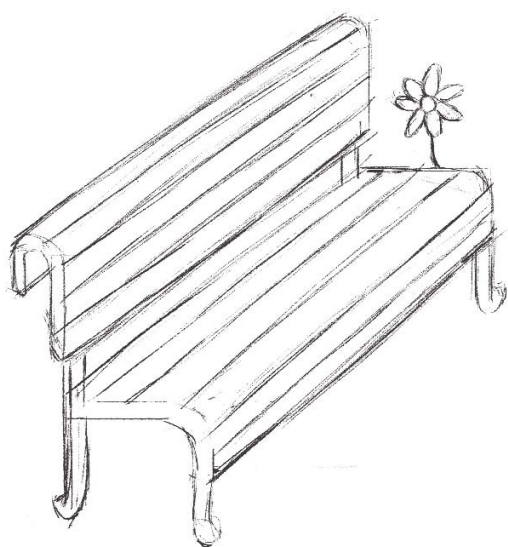
I feel empty as a jar,
Nothing to fill me in but my own tears.
I see them smoking cigars.
I take the first train,
With a hope—
That it takes me afar.



6. Our Song

I think it's okay to be lonely,
But you sing our song,
And do not cry.
The only song,
We played hundreds of times.

I did lose a part of me.
A part too precious,
That the world envied.
I did sing our song last time.
But I felt something foreign,
Something too heavy.
I kept looking through,
The veil of cacophony.
Oh, this song was no more mine,
But only lived in our memories.



7. The Empty Bench

You used to say,
Don't keep giving love.
Sometimes, your heart will give out.
As I keep pacing back and forth,
I looked at the bench where we sat.

Your head was on my shoulder,
We kept getting older.
Our hands intertwined,
As if the stars were meant to align.
I kept pacing back and forth,
Looking at the empty bench.

The words that were never said,
The voice I can never forget.



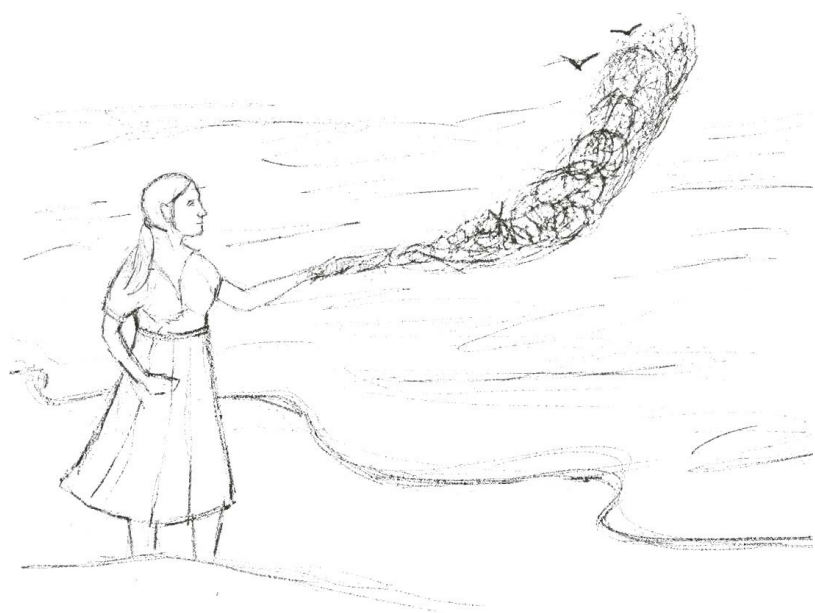
8. Raven Black Hue

One can choose if there will be a rainbow or a sunset,
 But I put my raincoat on—
 The only shield I have known,
 As my glimmer of hope is gone.
Some can choose to walk or run,
 But there is no choice left,
The only rhythm I know how to dance to.
 But it is already too late,
 Oh Lord—
I am drenched in raven-black hue.
 The soul is too hollow,
A soul that could never choose.
 My heart withers in agony,
 My eyes cry out in rue,
Drenched in the raven-black hue.



9. Melancholic Sound

I keep drowning deeper-
Not in your gaze.
But in that melancholic sound,
Which comes from the maze.
I wear my 1920s gown that has a hint of gold,
I stand on the edge of the balcony,
As I begin to behold.



10. In My Twenties

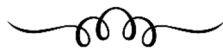
In my twenties-
Life can be so simple,
If you let go of your worries.
Worried about doing too much,
Then regret not living enough.
Worried about not being in perfect shape,
But missing out on your friend's birthday cake.
A little bit of you,
A little bit of them.
Too much to hold onto,
Loneliness will turn into despair.
But it's only you-
Who is left with you.
It's never too late,
To find kindness,
To hold your broken soul-
Let it heal and repair.

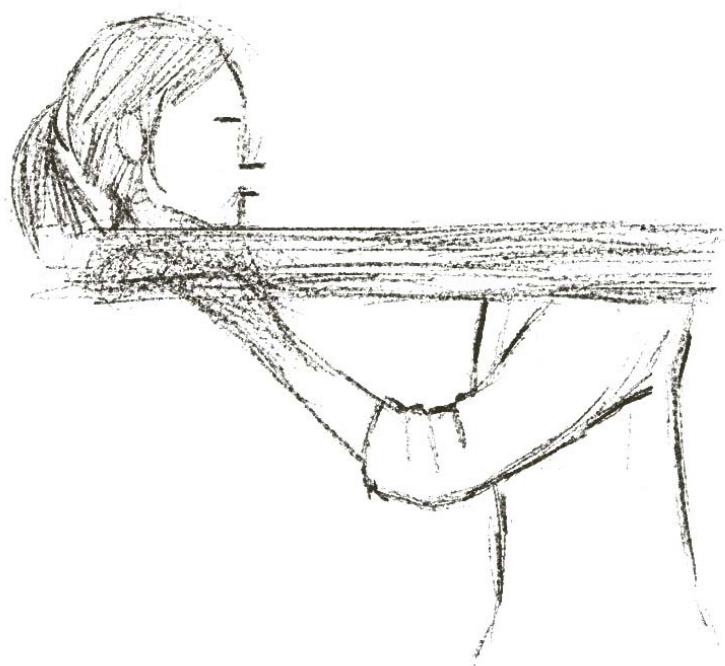


11. Will we get use to Darkness?

If there was no light –
Will we get used to darkness?
Not daisies, but fireflies.
Making the yellow,
Seem like magic,
In twilight.

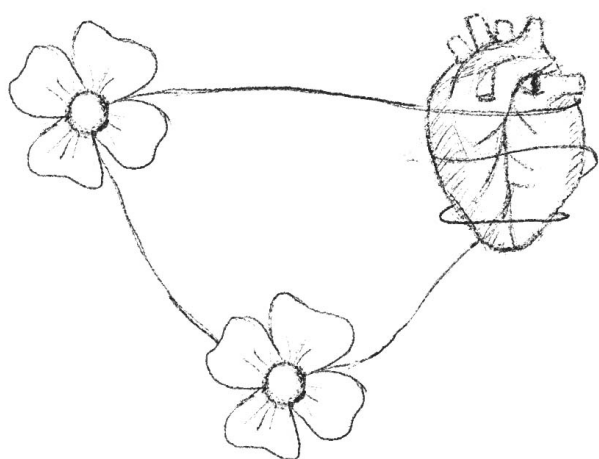
Grief





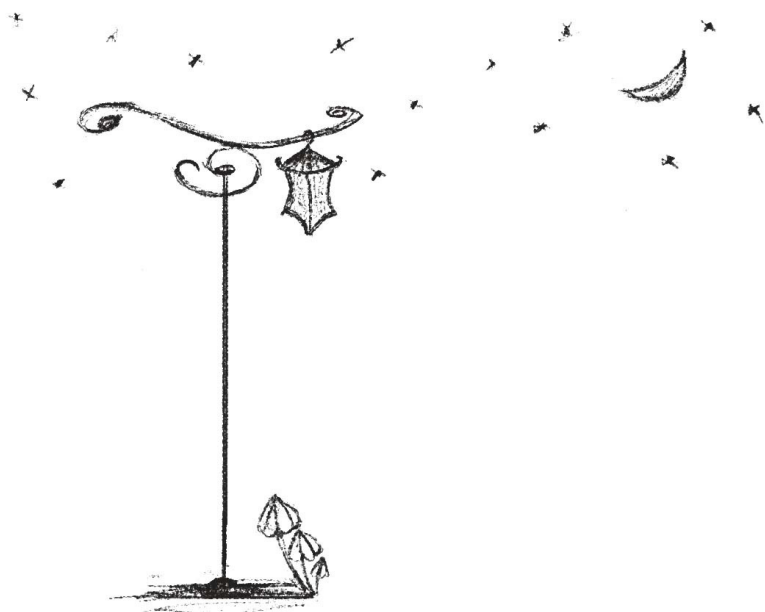
12. Bleed a Little

It is weird, isn't it?
I am still finding my way,
The farther I look,
I am overwhelmed with the thoughts—
I cannot convey.
I step ahead,
But I still get scared,
That's the irony,
When there is too much to care.
Sometimes —
You need to break free,
And fall too hard.
You might bleed a little,
But at least, you won't be stuck—
Within your own heart.



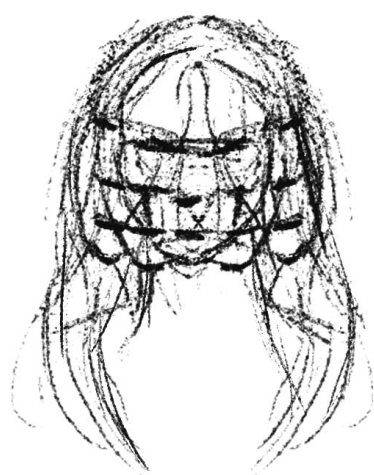
13. My Heart Withers

My heart withers,
But I hold on to the tendrils of hope.
A longing for warmth,
In this cold and broken world.
Your pain can be beautiful,
If you let someone play.
The strings that pour melodies,
The words that you could never convey.
My heart is too fragile,
My legs are too weak —
To walk on this terrain.
I fear I will no longer have a heart,
To know how beautiful was the pain.



14. Happy Soul

Today I dressed up as a happy soul,
I was wearing high-heeled boots, a puffy coat.
I walked on a muddy pavement,
I stood beneath the lamp post hoping.
But as I saw the lingering eyes,
I questioned if my clothes didn't fit right?
Yet, they danced all along.
The voice echoed when I reached the door,
Alas, my heart turned into crystal,
As it could bear no more.



15. The Girl who Never Raises Her Hand

I am the girl who never raises her hand in class,
The girl who never walks forward to take her chance.

It takes courage for me to sit in the front,
I am more scared of people than the sound of a gun.
I am scared of how their words can undress my soul,

I am not confident,

But I wish I was so much more.

I wish I could be as pretty as the rain,
Never care about failing or the unwelcoming pain.

I wish I could love life the way other people do,

The moment the sun rises,

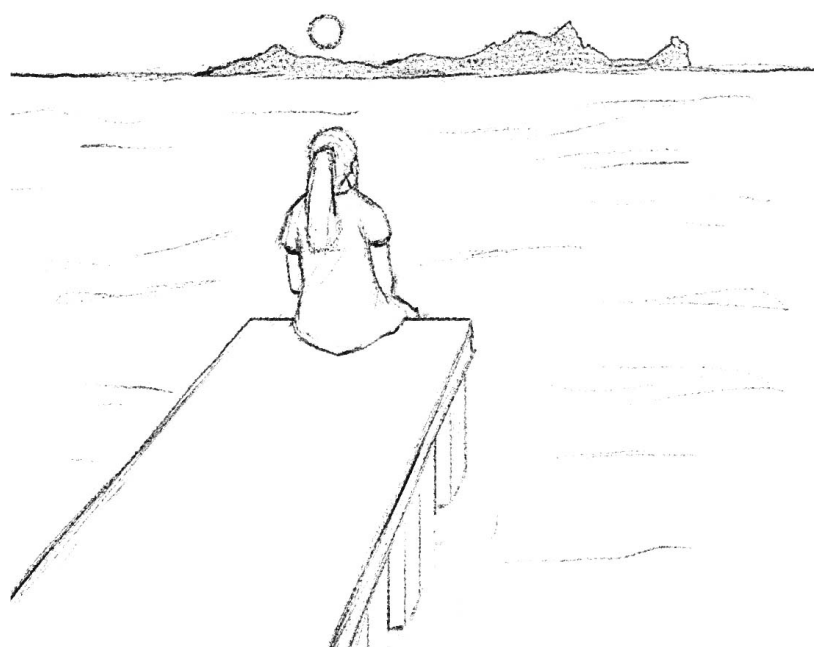
My hope rises too.

But it fades as I enter the room,

The room is full of who?

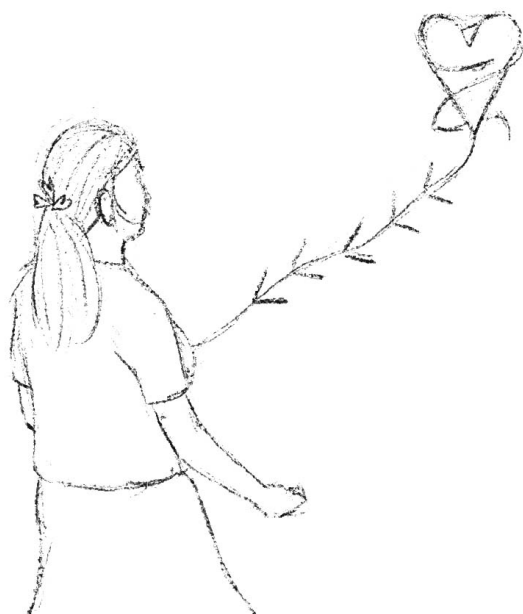
The place where my soul loses,

A part of me I knew.



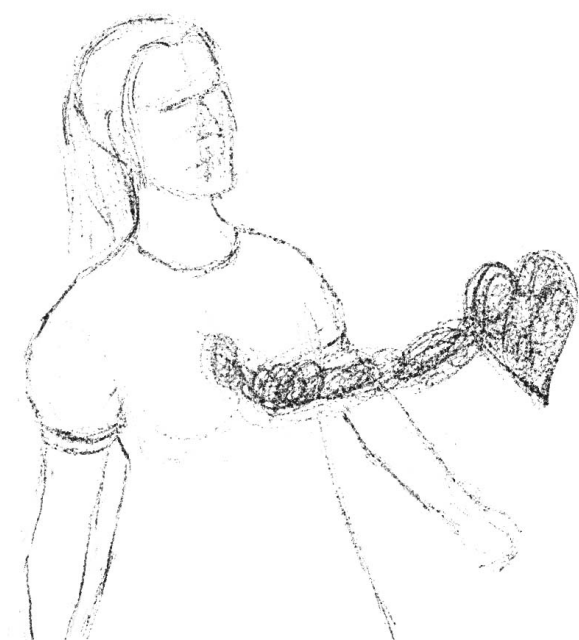
16. I am Tired

I am tired enough to say—
It's still a beautiful day.
How grateful I should be,
To see the morning sun's rays.
I am tired enough to breathe—
It will take a minute,
For the pain to recede.
My eyes are blurry to see,
The hope that resides in me.
I am tired enough to speak—
Speak the words to break free.
I am tired of being me,
Tired of wishing a life,
That was never meant to be.



17. Someone Else's Heart

I can get used to loneliness.
It is the only thing I know.
The emptiness in my heart is too heavy,
I have always been so unsure.
I wish life could cut me some slack,
As I run for my life,
And never turn back.
How am I going to raise my voice?
When I am never given a choice.
I burn inside,
Dreading for the next day.
I pray to God,
To grant me some warmth on the way.
I wish I was someone else's heart,
But not mine.
The pain too heavy, yet— unseen,
I have been carrying it all this time.



18. Blue and White Walls

I tried to love something,
The world told me to.
The blue and white walls trapped me in,
I sat and wondered,
What did I do?

The expensive cars,
And the white coat.
I stood there,
And I wore my stethoscope.

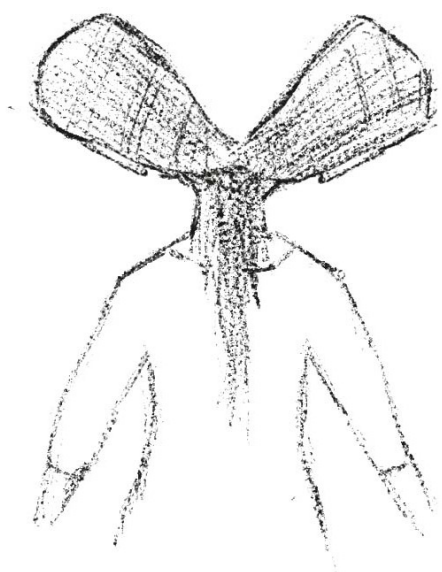
Surrounded by miserable eyes,
And anger in their soul.
I was drifted by the clouds,
It took me away from my rainbow.

I waited and waited,
My rainbow still didn't show.
I was obliged to become someone,
So I dressed up—
My Rainbow,
I did let you go.



19. I had a Voice

I always had to speak—
Not to feel, but to win.
If I didn't,
I was a coward.
A fish that forgot how to swim.
I had to fit in—
Because I had a voice,
I only knew how to sing—
And the world never learnt my melody.

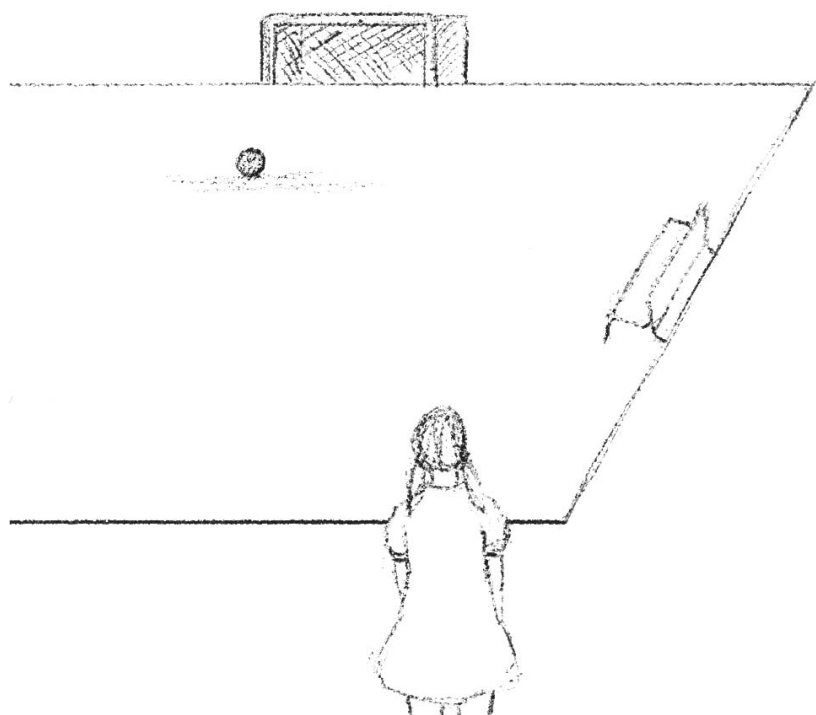


20. Fire and Fear

It's crazy how the molecules can turn into water,
The same water that turns into tears.
How can I compare anger with fire?
If it's the fire that burns my fear.
How can you be a human?
If you are the one who fails to feel.
The melancholic voice—
Becomes the bridge of every song you hear,
A heart becomes too heavy—
The song, I can no more bear.

Rage





21. I See the Playground

I see the playground,
Where you get to play.
But I stand afar,
And look the other way.
You have the bliss to choose,
But I abide by the rules—
The rules made by who?
The celestial bodies,
The moon or you?



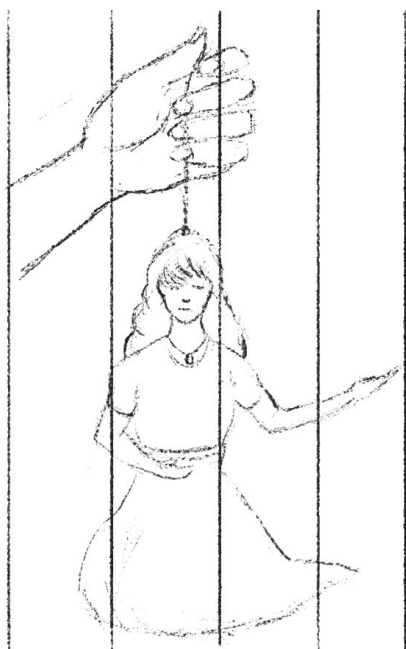
22. Sardonic Smile

The bars reach the sky,
You say to invite him;
To grant me wings to fly.
But my poor soul can never look him in the eye.
I hear the voices of anguish and suffering ,
But he only gives a sardonic smile.
I stay chained to the ground,
As he sleeps on a bed of feathers at night.



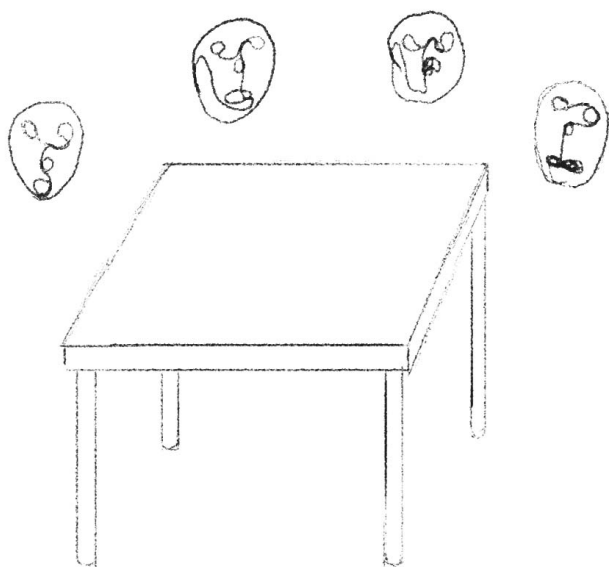
23. Demon in Disguise

You grin from ear to ear,
Wearing your white coat,
And speaking so clear.
Oh sir, why do I hear my name in your melody?
You hold the knife so no one can see.
I walk forward,
But you question the clothes that cover me.
You make a fist,
And your knuckles turn white.
You furrow your eyebrows,
I see darkness in your eyes.
Oh sir, you are a demon in disguise.
Living in this castle,
Your darkness slithered in every corner,
Leaving me no place to hide.



24. Inside a Paradox

I am trapped inside a paradox,
Where my scream turns into melodies.
What I wear tells my dignity,
My tears turn into banter with your colleagues.
And my words become your weapon,
The very weapon you avail yourself proudly.



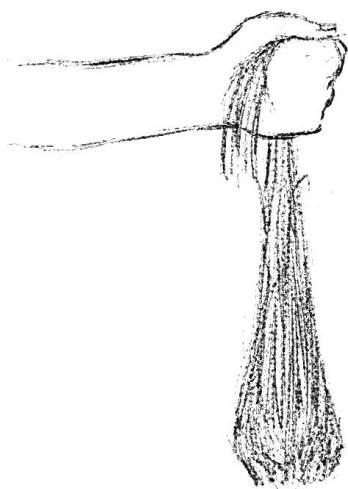
25. The Blame

I placed the blame on the table,
But you get to decide which side to choose.
You do have the money and power,
You cut down the petals.
I worked so hard to grow.
A liar and a master can be one.
The strings are pulled –
And I still dance,
No matter where I belong.



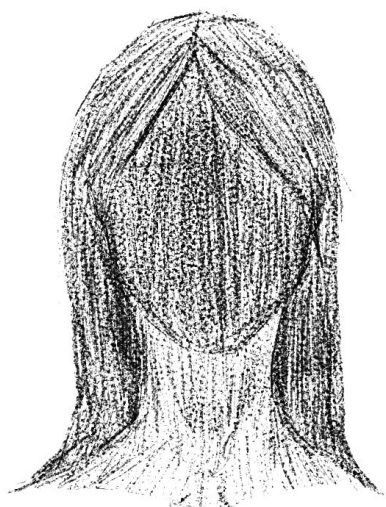
26. Am I A Curse or A Boon?

I walk into the woods,
Under the guidance of the moon.
I wear my white gown,
And let down my hair,
But am I a curse or a boon?
I see the fireflies making halo.
Is it for me?
Or for the world to know?
The world where I can't dance in glory.
But when I sit with a man,
I become the harlot in their story.



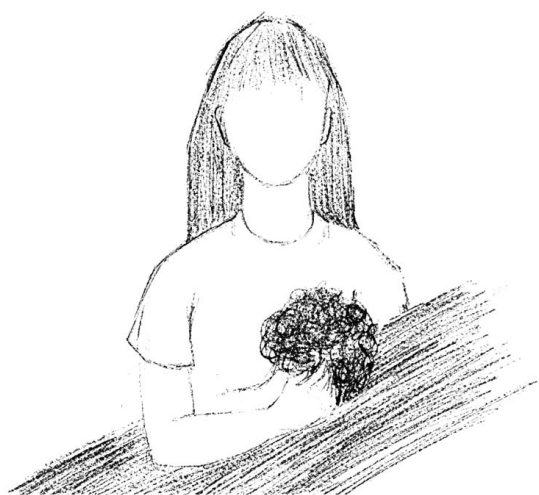
27. The Tiny Box

I lived through the night,
In that tiny box.
Dreading for the morning,
As I have to come out.
The heat is scorching my skin,
I shriek in pain.
You begin to pluck the strings,
Oh, how sadistically you play.



28. It's Just Period

I crave love and kindness,
Yes I do.
But I sit still in the classroom,
I feel the knife piercing through.
My blood pays the price,
I keep my dignity.
It doesn't matter if I stay or leave,
Because it takes a second for you to judge me.
I ask my friend if my clothes are stained,
You are safe as long as you are unnamed.
"It's just period", as the people say,
I keep looking for kindness till this day.



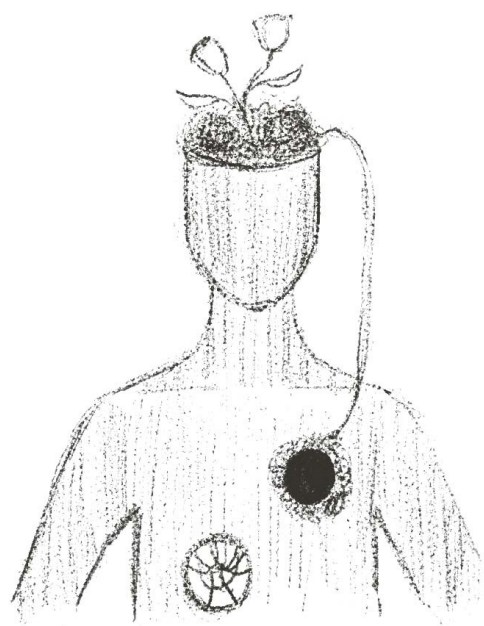
29. Someone Else's Deeds

It's funny you grew up thinking you could avail.
But you were told to bow down,
And the world prevailed.
A world where the grass is green,
And the birds can sing.
I knew you wanted to dance under that tree.
But you have to make sure,
You're covered from your head to your knee.
If you don't,
It's your fault-
But not the fault of the one who sees.
The world where your voice is drowned by your needs,
The world-
Where you are judged for someone else's deeds.



30. I Left the Door Open

How can I keep giving,
If no one ever asked what I wanted?
I left the door open,
You played my nightmare like a song.
You cut me through like a knife,
How can my misery be your delight,
When I was the one carrying all your plight.



31. I am a Writer

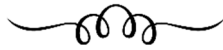
I am a writer.
I breathe in moments I can never let go.
I exhale in words and I say, "I told you so."
How funny the human mind is,
When they seek power,
And dance under their own shadow.
How funny they look,
When they kill one another,
And find happiness in each other's sorrow.
How funny it is to be a human.
It is their heart or mind,
They still don't know.
How funny it is to be one of them-
Questions-
That will never have answers.
Just like the pain,
That awaits tomorrow.



32. Sing the Hymns of My Cry

You wear jeans,
And I wear it too.
You become a good man,
But I turned into a strumpet,
Stuck in your ruse.
A deep planted patriarchy,
Which I can never unveil.
Oh you seem so happy,
In your own fairy-tale.
You cut my wings and grin like a child,
The birds gather around me,
And sing the hymns of my cry.

Death





33. The Cliff

I see months turning into years.

I tried to hold onto it,

But it was too much to bear.

I was scared of heights,

But I wanted to fall.

I thought I had wings,

I believed someone would call.

It was cathartic,

When I screamed.

As I ran to the cliff.

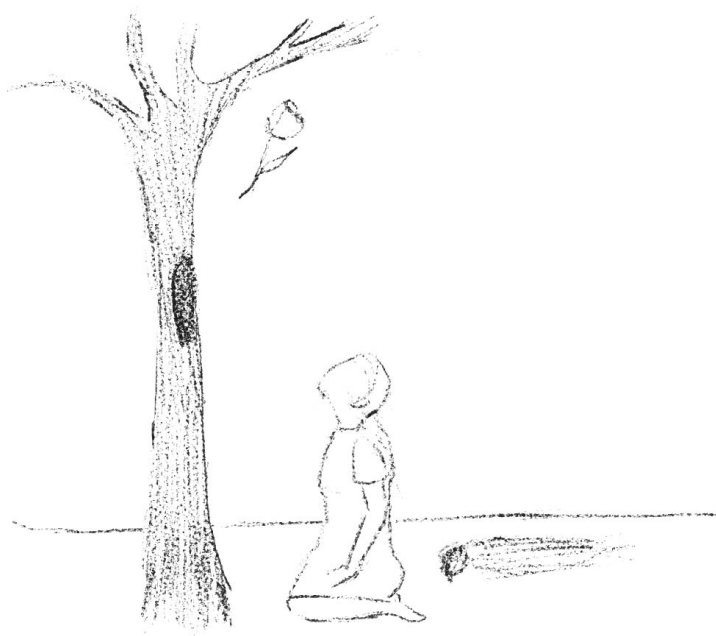
I never wanted to win,

I just wanted to live.



34. Death

I think of death in a thousand ways,
How can breathing be so fragile?
It gets taken if you look away.
I fear the pain that calls to death,
I fear how time will cease to rest.
Once I have taken my last breath,
I'll no longer see the stars nor the moon,
Or feel the air in the evening and noon.
My flesh will turn into soil,
And my insides will get rotten,
There will be no more turmoil.
The grass will be my only roof,
Will I still feel something somewhere?
As the sun sets in the horizon,
The coffee keeps brewing,
I am no more here—
And no more there.



35. My Red Coat

I saw the rose bloom,
Under the raging storm.
I let go of my red coat,
And I sat right next to it.
I said, "I wish I was like you."
You replied with your thorns,
As my finger turned crimson,
I knew you wished you were never born.



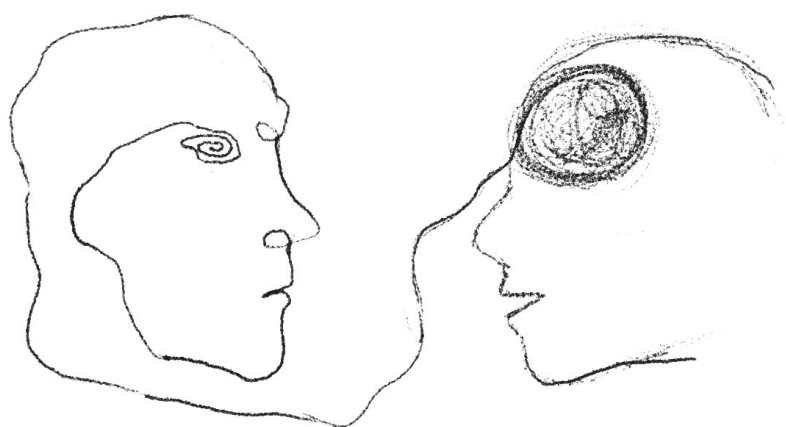
36. Make the Sky Blue

Sometimes, I can still be like the ocean,
Or quiet in the painting.
In this commotion,
There is the sound of your heart beating.
I said, “ Make the sky blue,
I am scared of the dark.
Don’t make it rain,
I want to dance while wearing my scarf.”
You cry as you paint my hair.
I wonder,
Why are you in despair?
The books you kept,
But never touched.
The parties you threw,
That only healed so much.
I can listen if you let me,
I am the colours of your memories.
I never saw the blue sky,
I wonder –
Was I a phantom ?
Penned in your stories.



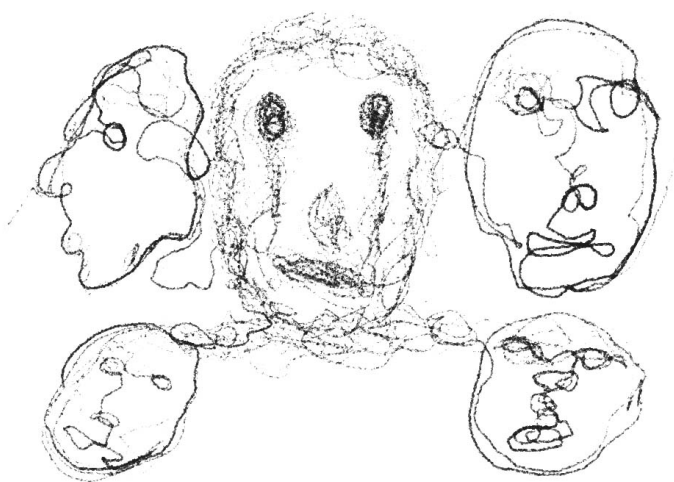
37. I'll Wake Up Tomorrow

It's funny-
I'll wake up tomorrow,
The same day and the same people,
Just a tiny bit more sorrow.
Some words,
Carved into knives.
A smile can be such a bittersweet lie.
I hold on to the grief,
But I calculate the time.
The time when I sit at work,
And the time when I cry.
Isn't it funny?
How happiness can be your disguise?
I'll wake up tomorrow-
And let the dawn remind me what is life.
It's the warmth and the morning dew,
A cup of tea and playing the blues.
Dressing up and dancing in the rain,
When life is easy yet there is too much to complain.
I'll still wake up tomorrow-
And get on the early morning train,
Seconds go by,
And with heaviness I realize-
My heart knows too much pain.



38. I Wonder

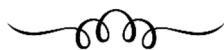
I wonder-
If I am dead for one day.
Will I miss living?
What if I live for hundred years,
Will I yearn to die?
There is no middle ground,
But a thin line in between.
That keeps me apart,
Just like the day and night.
I wonder,
If all this ceases to exist.
Will my pain subside?
Will my skeleton turn to dust?
And the voices will float in the air,
And no more be heard.
What if I cease to exist?
Will this pain be remembered?
Will I yearn to live for a morning coffee?
Will I yearn to live to say goodbye?



39. I am no More Real

Here is your name,
On posters and in gossip.
The life around your neck,
As your body lies still.
A heart, which no more feels.
Is this a dream?
Or I am no more real.
At 3 am,
There is no laughter.
But I think,
You do wonder.
How easy it is to forget.
To forget the marks—
On your body and on the paper.
A little bit of blue and red—
You forget to be happy,
But you still seek kindness.
I hope the end is the key,
To be forgotten is to be free.

Heal





40. The Feather

I couldn't let go,
But the trees shed their leaves.
I couldn't fall,
But the feather grazed the ground.
I was instantly on my knees.
I am lost as I see no way,
But hope is a scary path,
It keeps calling me to stay.
The words I can never comprehend,
But maybe I can-
If I dance in the rain.
Can I let go?
A rare glimpse of me,
Picking up the feather,
And walking away.