

DEVANSH GUPTA

after gravity

THE FLIGHT OF POETRY



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Dedication

*To my family and mentors, who have constantly
shaped who I am.*

Preface

"Up is down and down is up."

Some forces in life are easy to see. Others are harder to name. A memory that returns uninvited, a question that refuses to leave, a sentence that lives in the mind long after the book is closed. Poetry lives somewhere between these forces.

If *Gravity* pulled us down by the weight of the world, *After Gravity* tries to rise above it. It is not about escaping the world, but about seeing it from a different height.

The poems in this collection move through three landscapes: the self, the systems we live inside, and the long memory of time.

They begin with identity—the fragile attempt to understand who we are.

They pass through society—where power, institutions, and history shape us.

And they end with time—where everything we believed begins to settle into perspective.

Sometimes an apple falls.

*But sometimes a feather slips from the hand,
and the air decides where it will go.*

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Identity and Doubt

Who am I?

Identity is supposed to be simple. You say your name, mention a few things about yourself, and the world seems satisfied with the explanation. But the mind is rarely convinced by such neat arrangements. It keeps returning to the same question in slightly different forms.

A future version of you appears in imagination and feels unfamiliar. A past version of you resurfaces in memory and insists it knew better. Even ideas that once felt reliable — intelligence, loyalty, respect — begin to shift when looked at closely enough.

These shifts rarely happen loudly. They appear quietly, almost without warning. A moment of reflection stretches longer than expected. A memory returns carrying a meaning it did not seem to have before. Something about the person you thought you understood begins to feel slightly uncertain.

It is in these small disturbances that identity starts to loosen its certainty. The person you were yesterday does not entirely match the person you are today. The person you imagine becoming feels both familiar and strangely distant.

Somewhere in the middle of these quiet movements the question appears again, this time softer but harder to dismiss.

Who exactly is the person these thoughts belong to?

The poems in this section follow that uncertainty as it moves through curiosity, contradiction, betrayal, and reflection. They circle the possibility that identity may not be something we possess once and for all, but something we continue approaching from different directions.

Perhaps identity is less like a fixed answer and more like an ongoing conversation — a set of questions that returns in new forms as we grow, remember, and change.

And perhaps the most honest thing we can say about ourselves is not a definition, but a willingness to keep asking.

Because the self is rarely still. It shifts with every memory we revisit, every mistake we reconsider, and every possibility we allow ourselves to imagine. What we call identity may simply be the shape these questions take as they follow us through time.



Advanced Book Search

I told the bookkeeper:
“I’m looking for a book,
but I can't recall the name.”
Her face fell awry.
She asked, “Sure—what was it about?”
“It might have had a pirate in it,
or maybe just a duck.
One of the two.
(Or both?)”
I could tell she was frustrated.
I just really wanted that book.
It felt like it needed
gnawing at your bones.
She asked,
What was the cover like?”

“The cover was blue—
or at least blue-ish.
Could it have been green?
Maybe tree green?
It was hard to tell.”
There she had it.
She bellowed,
“Do you remember the author?”
“Somebody... someone...
with a surname—possibly with the letter Z.
Definitely wrote words.
Quite a few, I think.”
“That’s a start!
What was the plot about?”
Was that sarcastic?
Anyways, I continued.
“Let me think.
There was a girl.
Or a wizard.
Or a girl who became a wizard
because the internet was down.
Anyway, it promised to change my life.
And here I was—
utterly stupid—
believing in it.”
“Do you have it?”
The bookseller blinks,
nods with the wisdom of ages,
and says,

Devansh Gupta

“Yes. We keep that one
right next to the meaning of life.
Aisle three, behind the coffee table books
on decorative fungi.”





Dear Future Me

There is beauty in being incomplete
Incompletion breathes desire-
Avid and restless, desire seems to fill the boughs of life,
Driving determination through every hollow space.

Even if the right purpose remains hidden,
the yearning itself becomes a compass.
There is a passion for fulfilling desire,
Yet sometimes that pursuit, wounds others in its path.

Just as lightning strikes, with reckless precision,
it relieves the burdens of the earth.

The rain then inhales both sin and storm.
To strike well, it must fracture clouds along the way—
that too, is a form of becoming.

Devansh Gupta

Right or wrong may remain uncertain
and so guidance is sought, from the future self—
one who has seen further, stumbled longer,
held more questions than answers.

And as this letter drifts toward its quiet closure,
everything feels tilted, unsettled,
As it should be—
For even now, incompleteness
is the most honest shape of growth.





The Me That Awaits

I have now braved the clouds
that came to burden me,
but I have yet to brave
both the foul and the fair.

For now, life merrily rocks
on the cradle of uncertainty.

Insignificance does not ignore me—
it merely leaves me unseen.

Like a stranded boat
that continues and withers,
I seem to find strange comfort
in searching for fertile soil.

Devansh Gupta

I am yet to realize
that I am not happy.

No one can actually be,
can they?

Somehow, I am told
maturity shaves from manner.
Realizing that
seems enough for now.

But I find no true joy,
though I seek it everywhere.

Like a hungry fisherman,
I love being desperate.

However, the difference lies
in the ways.

Some things
I am not ready to say.

The search never ends.

Just as I rock
on the cradle of life,
so do others.

But these rocks
sometimes grow harsher.

They sprain,
they bruise,
but they never break.

School has changed
the way I look at things.

And now
things look at me.

But I have learned
not to care.

Letting the grapevine
grow with others
seems to nourish it better.

It is like a phantom
that harnesses me endlessly.

I know
I am being too metaphorical,
but that is the purpose,
isn't it?

I have good days
that make me the pinnacle,
and bad days
whose pinnacle
never seems too far.

Devansh Gupta

And as I share myself
with you,
I realize
I have nothing to lose.

Future me,
I know you are developed—
more enhanced
than I am right now.

But as the icebergs of memory
melt for you,
I want to channel them
into fresh water,

so that you look at yourself
as a developed man,
a successful man.

But I leave that
to later.

For you know
you are the master
of everything you desire.

But right now,
the most gravitating expense
comes at the cost of me—
living like me,

living for me,
but with others.

School has taught me
two things:

one to snatch,
and the other
to strive.

Something
I am very good at right now.

But this verse
is only the introduction
to my letters to you.

And I hope
you read them.

And reply back to me.

For I will be waiting—
waiting back in time
endlessly.





Someday I'll Briefly Love Devansh Gupta

Night skies bear exit wounds—
wounds that hurt but never heal,
oozing traces of sobriety.

A cigarette once lit—
its light meant to be knowledge,
yet the light only burns.

The cigarette left behind
chafed me grotesquely.

Flowers are meant to celebrate,
yet I celebrate myself
with those who mourn.

And the pyre for whom I grieve
is kindled
by that cigarette's ember.

I read Whitman, I read Yeats.
I read Frost, and I read Keats.
But the pen I write with
is not meant to honor them,
but to honor their pyre.

The pyre—should it roar?
The pyre—should it be sung for?

That pyre that shadows me
whenever I try to run away
is no one else
but the person who once delighted in the world,
savored life and all its gifts—

as me. It is me.





Trade a Vase for a Vice

Look at a vase.
See how it silently attracts beauty.
How even the smallest scratch becomes part of its grace,
magnetic and solemn.

Look at a hammer.
See how boldly it attracts respect.
How even the slightest imperfection
strips it of strength,
confident, yet fragile.

Now look at yourself.
See how you witness the vase getting smashed.
See how the pieces beckon you for help.
You are not able.

Where do you stand—
between a hammer and a vase?
Nowhere.

Where should you stand—
between the hammer and the vase?
Somewhere.

That somewhere is guilt.





Where Respect Does Not Live

A wave of mockery strikes without warning
Mockery—origin of diminished esteem—
leaves behind a terrible ache.

The air is fragrant with perfume,
yet the nose forgets how to sense it.
Shelves overflow with bottled beauty
while the soul yearns, for the scentless atmosphere.

Lord Krishna says: do not go where respect does not live.
Yet footsteps often return to those very places.
And when laughter points its cruel finger,
self-consciousness begins to settle in.

Capability lies dormant, but when shadows interfere
even the divine spark may flicker.

Unethical paths become easier to tread.
Mocking replaces kindness.
Connections unravel for the price of shallow illusion

Memes and jokes flood the landscape,
and slowly, nectar turns bitter with insecurity.
The knowing heart mourns the change.

Self-reflection births the finest form of growth,
but growth requires clear intention.
Belonging to the loudest crowd
may not be the wisest choice.

Care is offered quietly by the truest hearts,
yet kindness is dismissed for entertainment.
Until karma bends the arc in return.
And it becomes clear—
those who remain do so not out of pity,
but out of sincere affection.

Folly becomes both companion and distraction.
Even those who care are mocked and pushed away
when all that is needed is authenticity
Then, the weight of pretense
washes off the quiet purity of purpose.

Until next time—
when change becomes the plan again!





The Pill

I am argon-colored.
Well, not argon — but bicolored:
white and argon.

I am oval.
I am the civilized shape of relief.

Take me with water.
Take me with wine if you must —
I do not judge
the circumstances of your misery.

I cushion the blow
of Mondays,
of mirrors;

of Tuesdays,
which feel like Mondays
but with worse lighting.

I soften the specific texture
of a Wednesday afternoon
in a closed-plan office,

where someone is eating
a hot lunch at their desk
and nobody says anything,

because we have all agreed, silently,
as a species,
to simply endure.

I treat the sensation of news.

The news again.
The news, refreshed,

which is the same news
but somehow worse,

formatted for your convenience
into a rectangle you carry
everywhere you go —
like destiny.

But most importantly,
I make you feel smart.

Devansh Gupta

I make you feel like a genius, and how;
the dumbest thing you can do
is not be smart.

And it works.
God, it works.

Until you find yourself
seeing through everything:

the linen shirt,
the gratitude journal,
the nine-step framework
to becoming Steve Jobs.

You are devastating
at seeing through things.

And then, quietly —
like a Tuesday —

you begin to miss
not seeing through things.

You miss the man
who heard a song
and simply moved.

Who was wrong about something
with absolute conviction

because he'd read it once,
in a waiting room,
in 2025,

and it had felt
true enough.

You miss not having opinions about coffee.
You miss not having opinions
about opinions about coffee.

You miss the breadsticks.

The breadsticks
of a free man.

And now you know too much
to enjoy a breadstick,
and not enough
to enjoy not enjoying one.

Do not ever buy me.

Hire me.





Dearest Traitor

Dearest traitor,

I am not responsible for your assumptions.

Ha! You failed to crush me—
for every time you try,
I bounce back higher.

My original energy
outlives your words.

While you weave new strings of foolery
to cocoon yourself in lies,
I stay unbothered.

I have nothing to lose,

dearest traitor—
my rebounds are larger than yours.

Still, I do not condemn you.
You matter—
more than the well-wishers.

Because as I listen
to your hollow monologues,
even gravity feels heavier.

You become
my human shield.
The gunfire lands on you instead.

And don't worry—
I won't hide my darkest desires.

You, after all,
are a useful weapon.

But rest assured,
I will not become you.

I will rise
to muse musings
larger than the stars.





Society and Power

What kind of world do I live in?

Long before we learn to question the world, we learn how to move inside it. Words are given to us with quiet certainty. Buildings are called institutions, stories are called history, and the voices that speak the loudest are often treated as the most trustworthy. The arrangement appears natural at first, as if it had always existed this way and always would.

Gradually we begin to notice how carefully that arrangement is maintained. A letter arrives with an official stamp and suddenly something becomes true. A title is placed before a name and the person begins to carry authority. A version of the past is repeated often enough that disagreement begins to feel less like curiosity and more like disobedience.

By the time we start recognizing these patterns, they already appear older than us, larger than us, and therefore slightly beyond question.

But permanence rarely survives close attention. What once seemed immovable begins to show small cracks. A coloniser leaves, yet the language of power continues quietly through habits of thought. Institutions promise care while deciding, often invisibly, who is worthy of it. Honour appears polished and noble until one notices how often it functions less as virtue and more as armour.

Most of the time people move through these structures without resistance. We learn their rules early. We repeat their language without noticing. Sometimes we even defend them, though we cannot quite remember when we agreed to their terms.

Yet every system, no matter how confident it appears, carries its own small fractures.

A document that feels strangely absurd.

A tradition that begins to look faintly theatrical.

A story about justice that quietly contradicts itself.

In moments like these the machinery of society becomes visible for a second — like seeing the hidden scaffolding behind a carefully painted wall.

And once that happens, the world stops looking inevitable.

The poems in this section pause in those brief recognitions. They move through questions of power, loyalty, belief, and conflict — through the quiet realization that the systems surrounding us are not as permanent as they first appeared.

Because when the structure becomes visible, another question begins to follow us.

Not loudly.

Not angrily.

Just a thought that refuses to disappear:

What kind of world is this,

and how did we agree to live in it?



Pain

The residues of my body
that daily viewed blood and
probably flesh and viscera, have faded me.

It feels like a sharp needle pierce
right through the middle of my arm,
where that little depression exists —
and juttet my body with malice.

Random pains crop up and move faster
than the swarm in my heart and
fight my body — and overwhelm.





How to Spit out A Colonizer

First gather your tongue
Not the one your history teacher taught you -
The one that your great grandmother burned under
Mix in your history, un-sanitized.
Boil it with fury until thick
Aim for the boots. Always the boots.
They have been known to crush prayers mid-way and call it order
Let it ferment on your teeth -
Centuries of blood baths through grated breath
Pick him up - chew his tiny little sword
No matter, it pierces your tongue - its already cut
His flags are like fondant - enjoy their sweet, mushy taste
His taxes are layered sponges - they leave air when meaning
evaporates
Now comes his weapon - your birthday candles

Devansh Gupta

Don't blow them out just yet

Wish him a happy birthday - and then blow your spit

From my side - just leave only one

That's what hope takes -

Its redemption





From Postal - P840

Dear Ma,
The call for war may sound anytime;
but do know, that even if the letter your son
intends to send is half complete;
it would be planted into the soil
and surrendered to you forever.
It's quiet tonight.
Too quiet.
The dark clouds send their greetings
from heaven through chilly airs.
Even the wind sympathizes
by not rattling our tents and waking us up.
I keep thinking about home.
About that small yellow light in our kitchen
that never went off,

Devansh Gupta

and how you'd wait for me
even when I was just late from school
The time feels different here.
The nights are like old scars.
I don't tell you much,
but Ma, it's cold.
So cold that the blanket you gave me
has withered into fibers waiting;
waiting for the wind to redeem them home
Sometimes, I forget what warmth feels like,
until I remember your hands
pulling mine out of the winter water
and rubbing them till they hurt.
They say soldiers don't cry.
They say soldiers shouldn't cry.
But when it rains,
and the tents leak,
and I smell mud and metal
I think of how you'd cover the windows
during storms,
and say, "Let us watch a good movie on patriotism"
Well, Ma,
Have I become a patriotic
by filling cartridges into guns that shoot
another patriot doing his duty in another language?
Ma,
if this letter reaches you,
don't be scared by the silence between these words.
It's just the part I couldn't say out loud.

If I could,
I'd walk back through all the foreign noise,
every gun,
every night that took someone's son,
just to sit by you
and eat whatever you made -
even if it was just dal and salt.
Tell Papa I'm okay.
Tell the house to wait a little longer.
Thank you for being so strong and being the sculptor
of my destiny.
And Ma,
if you ever hear footsteps at night,
and the dogs don't bark -
that's me.
I finally found my way home.
I love you Ma.
Forever,
Your son





Tired, Pitted, Won

I race endlessly,
like that one F1 car that burns rubber
but still continues;
like the one F1 car that bears the black flag
but still races.

And the best part is—
I know what I race for.

Some say I don't like competition.
Some say I don't like the inception of anti-bitterness.
And I concede.

But how does it bother them?

Ferrari has speed, Lamborghini has brakes.

I would go to the Ferrari,

even though I know

I will lose control

in the entire process.





Doctors Without Fees

Trippers and askers gather near,
content with life as it is lived,
yet restless
with how it moves forward.

An unspoken hunger
for more remains.

Each morning
brings the same question:

What purpose
guides this day?
What meaning
honors it?

Partial answers
arrive each time.

Friendships are sought
that nurture and respect,
yet none reveal their truth
until they break apart.

Relations are strands
of fragile hope,
with spiders
at the center.

Webs built through
layers of care,
spinning silk toward others,
waiting for respect
to thread the web.

Social ties
remain complex.

Some climb the ladder
and offer hands.

Others
push from behind.

But mostly
those wielding chainsaws above
bring unease.

Devansh Gupta

Social energy
flows restlessly—
reactions, responses, rebellions.

Too much emotion
to remain calm.

Behaviour shifts
with each new face—
a strange and shifting dance.

Most encounters
gleam with hidden malice,

like clear springs
that lure
only to burn the tongue.

These are
the poisons of the day.

Few dare
straightforwardness.

Many choose instead
to wound emotionally.

Hypocrites fall
beneath firm steps.

Close friends
serve as breathers
when days grow heavy.

They heal
and restore—

like skilled doctors.

When bruised deeply,
the perfect cure
is given.

It stings,
but shields
from harsher wounds.

These doctors
ask no fees.

Only a smile
in return.

Content with that
small gift—

the true makers
of the day.

In the end,

Devansh Gupta

those who truly care
stand victorious.

In the silent battle
of heart and mind,
the power remains
to shape the rules—

to craft life
as desired.

Isn't that
the sweetest purpose?





No matter dove, you shall be free

What is the prize that men pursue?
A crown of stars? A throne of dew?

Who chases the sky with blistered feet
bruises more on the stones of defeat.

He works not on dice tossed by void,
no game of fate with threads employed.

Yield to deaf ears, O dear dove—
no coin is cast for your kind of love.

But dreamers walk where banners fall
and build bright towers with transparent walls.

Devansh Gupta

Their songs are sung by wind and rain,
then lost to time and born again.

O many hands have shaped the clay
that kings now tread and call their way,
yet none remember who first dreamed
the meadow's hush, the sword that gleamed.

What care the stars for who shall reign?
The soul that burns must burn through pain.

And you, poor dove, with aching breast,
may find no home, may know no rest.

Yet still you rise on ghostly wing
to chase a dawn no crowns can bring.

For beauty lives where none shall see,
and truth is old, and rarely free.

So fly, though wind may break your cry,
though silence heap beneath the sky.

The gods are deaf; the world is blind—
but heaven remembers the noble kind.





Knights in Armor

I was walking along the road
when I came upon a statue
set there by the prince for the town.

The Goddess of Victory stood tall—
a spear lifted in one hand,
and on her arm a shield
catching the light.

It shone in two colors:
silver on one side,
gold on the other.

As I watched, two gentlemen approached.
stopped before the statue
and soon began to argue.

Devansh Gupta

One, dressed in white,
pointed upward.

“Look,” he said.
“The shield is silver.”

The other, clad in black,
laughed sharply.

“Silver?
Are your eyes so weak?
It is gold.”

Their voices rose.
Each swore the other blind.

Hands tightened.
Tempers sharpened.
Soon steel flashed.

It was clear they were in a rage.

Then a passing sage drew near.
He parted them
and healed their bruises.

“What quarrel is this,” he asked,
“that leaves both men wounded?”

They told him.

The sage listened in silence.

Then he led them
around the statue.

They stopped.

For a long moment
neither spoke.

The shield shone there—
silver on one side,
gold on the other.

They





Losses

Losses lumber like lazy leviathans.
They mumble loudly and sharply, like customary teeth do.
For should you try to cover such so,
be stuck in the quicksand yourself.

Macbeth; they are curses similar to death.
Poisoned arrows; tearing prey that is bigger and larger.
For the smaller prey that exist as whispers in the tall grass
is not worth for the arrows to be shot.

Losses lumber like lazy leviathans.
They corner you with their loud teeth and large dread.
Grey the sky, green the Earth.
Arrows strikes in between.

Muddy puddles that float in the sky
fog your vision between triumph and terror.
Filter clarity into venomous rain
that turns the tables on the green Earth.

Care should you not, success may still trample.
Come the day that such should happen.
Should you feel the sweet rainbow rise
and follow you till its very end,
be you find the leviathan lying patiently again.

Embrace this arc, this moment that burns slow and long
and bleeds you with hurt larger than another.
Think you, the arrows have honored you.
For you are the bigger and the boldest,
and the blood you ooze is colorless.





Time and Memory

What does it all mean over time?

There are things that only become visible after they have already passed. A moment happens quietly, almost without consequence, and then years later it returns carrying a meaning it did not seem to possess at the time. Memory has this peculiar habit of rearranging life long after life itself has moved on.

The past rarely stays where we left it. It drifts into the present in strange forms — in the language we still speak without noticing where we learned it, in the small beliefs we inherited before we knew they were being handed to us, in the habits of thought that feel personal but are often older than we are. What we call memory is sometimes less about remembering events and more about discovering the invisible threads that were always there.

Time does not move evenly either. Some years disappear into a blur, while a single afternoon can remain startlingly clear decades later. A voice, a sentence, the texture of a room at midnight — these things stay behind like quiet witnesses. They wait until we have lived long enough to understand why they mattered.

And then there is the strange generosity of time: the way it gives us distance from ourselves. The person we once were slowly becomes someone we observe rather than someone, we are. Looking back begins to feel like reading an earlier draft of a life — familiar, but written with a certainty we no longer fully share.

The poems that follow move through these quieter territories of experience: the long shadow of inheritance, the patience of memory, the weight of what accumulates over years, and the moments when time briefly reveals what it has been shaping all along.

Nothing in life remains exactly where it happened. Everything travels forward with us — altered, softened, sometimes heavier than before.

And somewhere between what we remember and what we have forgotten, time continues its quiet work.



The River Remembers

I watched the river once,
twisting like ribbons through hilltops and glades,
gushing its water over pedestals of rock
that resemble the faces of forgotten kings.

It filled my ears with memories of my ancestors—
those who died before I was even born.

I watched the river again,
dripping away from the elders,
and furies of droplets taking birth—
droplets of blood of my past.

I watched the river flow.

A plastic bag tangled in reeds
hangs low like a flag after abandoned defeat.
It has sticky remnants of a poor man's food.

The river accepts the gift and dissolves it,
and so much so, the horizon feeds on it.

I watched the river veer.

The water smells like iron and sorrow.
I imagine hot coke and suffocating smoke,
every spilled chemical
as a bruise on its skin.

The river remembers each one.

Do we ever notice?

I watched the river from afar—
children laughing on the banks,
their toes skimming the surface.

And I wonder if they feel
the weight of all the hands
that touched this water
before them.

The river does not forget.
It seeps in the unwanted guests.

Devansh Gupta

Even when we walk away
to greater heavens,
it carries our absence—
our names,
our fame.

Those emotions we feel.
Those secrets we hide.
Those small betrayals.

It gifts all that karma,
like driftwood drifting forever.

To whoever touches it,
to whoever needs it,
to whoever deserves it—

the ocean waits.





Inheritance in a Mother Tongue

At school,
I say my name the way they taught me;
sharp, like a spiked gate closing
The teacher repeats it
The friends repeat it
Everyone repeats it
until even the air grows tired
of holding on to its shape
At home,
my mother says it differently -
soft, almost breaking the syllables
so the meaning can breathe.
When she says it,
the vowels bow their feathery heads.
They dissolve me the way rain carries dust

Devansh Gupta

pollinating me to fresher gardens,
such that a part of my great flower
is secured a lineage
I used to correct her.
Now, I correct the mirror instead.
Each time I open my mouth,
a border crosses me.
My tongue, a small animal
learning which silence to trust.
Mother,
you once told me language
is the only country we can never leave.
But what if the country forgets
its own anthem?
What if the anthem forgets
how to begin?
Some nights,
I dream the alphabet
melting back into river water.
I hear it whisper your name
as if praying to remember
the sound of its first wound.
When I wake,
my mouth is wet
with words that no longer exist.
Still, I lift them
one by one
to the light,
and watch them breathe.
In the end,

it's not me who mispronounces.

It's the language

bending low, ashamed

saying,

I'm sorry.

I forgot you first.





The Toll

Do you think it comes as easy as that?
That is the weight some people bear for just that.
It's worth extracting from the depths of your skill,
and far harsher than the butcher's will.





Aubade in Droplets of Water

Oh sea, I surrender wholly to you—
I mean what you mean, I move as you move.

Oh despairer, lean your weight upon my shoulder;
by God, you shall not sink—hang heavy here with me.

Aubade, wrapped tight in salted skin, is a prison—
let oysters shatter their pearls, devour
those binding salts.

By all that lies beyond this shared burden,
Aubade is fierce flame.

We, the dwellers of land, treasure your minerals,
yet Aubade is fettered by those very crystals.

Devansh Gupta

I am but a silent sentinel,
bearing quiet empathy,
and I refuse to let it slip away.

Do not despair; my desperation is infectious—
Aubade cannot yet break free;
the hour is late.

The earth from which I send my regard
is swallowed by the swelling sea—
the sea, the harshest measure of empathy.

Ha.





Instructions for an Inducted Soul

Welcome, wanderer.
It's not what we promised—
but it's good enough.

The sky forgets its blue some days.
Rivers reroute themselves.
The purple flag gets sewn
into someone else's blue.

People lie—
not out of malice,
but exhaustion.

You'll be given a name, O wanderer,
before you've done anything
to accept or reject it.

Devansh Gupta

It will fit like a shirt
left too long in the rain—
tight in all the wrong places,
clinging when you need air—
and somehow
you never outgrow it.

They'll teach you rules
as if the world isn't already unraveling
in a hundred quiet ways.

Break them—metaphysically.
Then rebuild something softer.

You'll meet people who carry laughter
like a blade,
and others who cup it
like water.

Learn from both.
But don't become either.

Grief will arrive uninvited,
wearing familiar shoes.
Offer it tea.
Let it stay a while.

Then walk it to the door
without asking
when it will return.

You might fall in love
with someone who doesn't see
the cathedral blooming in your chest.

Still, let it bloom—
even if no one lights
a candle inside.

The world, wanderer,
is not kind.
But it's not cruel either.

It's just... tired.
Aching.
Trying to hold itself together
with whatever thread we leave behind.

So leave the thread.
Even if it's made of stammered words,
shaky hands,
bad poems.

Leave it.

And when you feel most lost,
stand still.

The world will circle back.
It always does—
not out of love,
but gravity.

Devansh Gupta

Welcome, wanderer.

It's not what we promised.

But it's alive.

And for now—

that's enough.





A Passion for Plenty

People are poor.

People are rich.

And those in the middle imperfectly switch.

But the ones who are gold and generosity in excess,

Are often the ones most burdened by success.





Burden

Life is distraught.

It is bound by the growing of mis-happenings,
and chained by the steel-grey cuffs of solitude
in a room where light fare enters.

Is chaotic,
and positivity cannot bail out—
pelting insults, stones, and sticks,
while continuing to smell a spear blade of betrayal
where dew drops see as a devil.

To whom can grief be torn?
Many that care, many that help,
but seeking to be informative.

And as the battle continues, cuts bleed.
It's bad.

Loathing the shadow, yet inviting it to linger—
and this burdens me deeply.

All the things the universe brings!





At Midnight

When I finish my tea and biscuits,
I make it a routine affair
to rush into the plain old box-room
where a casement blankly stares.

Ensconced in dull white brick,
with plastic curtains all around—
creaky and noisy too,
making quite a lot of sound.

But if you peer out of it
and gaze till nine,
you'll see a bicycle rider
with a ladder that shines.

He daintily steps down,
as light as a hare,
then fixes his ladder
upon a pole with care.

Quickly he climbs to the top,
where a fused light barely glares;
a knob he turns, then rushes down—
and a sudden spark flares.

Oh Leerie! Oh Leerie!
let me work with you.
I have long waited—
please let me do.

For I would like to light the way
for many travelers to come,
lighting the earth with glee
with your peculiar torch-gun.

Then the clock strikes midnight,
and the casement turns dull;
to bed I wistfully go,
waiting for another Leerie to come.





In the Old Age

I wonder what used to happen
When the dinosaurs roamed the earth,
When the weather was pleasant and cool
And the soil was rich with loam.

Did paper replace the slates?
Did choppers replace the pterosaurs?
Were animals people's fate?
Were there lions left to roar?

If people discovered fire,
Did they not also discover light?
Then why did Edison, sir,
Invent the lamp so bright?

Were there any aliens then
Who rode the saber-toothed tigers?
Were there mountains left to climb,
Or were the roads much wider?

Alas, I could write and write
Until the sun sinks down,
But my hand bears no more might
To carry these questions on.

So, will you answer my doubts,
Dear friend,
Before I bid you adieu
At the journey's end?

For some questions wander
Across the ages still—
Waiting for minds like ours
To ask them again.



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Note on the Poems

The poems in this book were written over several years, often at moments when questions felt more interesting than answers.

Some began as small observations — a conversation, a memory, a passing thought that refused to disappear. Others emerged slowly, returning again and again until they found a shape that felt honest enough to keep.

Although the poems move through different subjects, they tend to circle a few persistent concerns: the attempt to understand oneself, the strange systems we live inside, and the way time reshapes both memory and meaning.

Poetry rarely solves these questions. It only gives them a place to stay for a while.

If the poems here do anything, I hope they invite the reader into that same quiet process of noticing — where uncertainty is not a problem to be fixed, but a space where thought can continue to grow.

*Sometimes a feather slips from the hand,
and the air decides where it will go.*