

# Unsaid

asmita rajiv





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## **Unsaid**

Some tease, provoke, entice  
Some run away, some hide.  
A memoir of my thoughts...  
The ones that I could catch.

**Asmita Rajiv**

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You can reach the author at:

**[contact@asmitarajiv.com](mailto:contact@asmitarajiv.com)**

**[www.asmitarajiv.com](http://www.asmitarajiv.com)**

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**FIRST EDITION**

To Rajiv

However high my dreams may take me, my soul always returns home to you. You are the strength behind my quest to take my flight higher and my roots deeper.

To everyone

Who were an inspiration for my paintings, prose and poetry. Who lent me their eyes and heart so that I could see and feel the world in a million different hues.



*Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.*

*Maya Angelou*

Indeed. So beautifully and simply captured and yet so difficult to pursue. We are so pre-occupied by the monotony of our daily existence, that often the moments that take our breath away are perhaps the ones where we are actually holding our breath owing to some anxiety. Where then, is the time to pause and smell the proverbial roses? Where then, is the time to be grateful even for the breaths that we inhale?

As we live our lives in this rigmarole, the constant jolt of our thoughts and emotions to our senses leaves us even more overwhelmed. So much so that the only easy way out is to shove these thoughts and emotions under the carpet of our minds and to deal with them later or perhaps never.

But we forget that these thoughts are still inside our minds. We forget that by ignoring them constantly, we are only making them more desperate to be heard and felt; by looking the other way, we are perhaps also looking away from some of the gems of wisdom and learning that our mind churned out for us.

What if, when the next time these gems come knocking, we open the door and let them in. What if, instead of ignoring them, we acknowledge their presence and gather courage, patience, and compassion, to look them in the eyes as an expression of how we have been living, thinking, and growing as individuals. What if, the chronicle of these thoughts and emotions becomes an evolving memoir of our ongoing evolution as an individual.

Some may dismiss this as a bothersome exercise; but as for me, I write.

‘Unsaid’ is an account of my conversations with my mind, in no particular order of time. Some of these thoughts were initiated as a result of my own personal

experiences and struggles, while others crossed my path during my interactions and observations of people around me.

No matter the origin, they surely helped me understand myself and others a little bit better. They helped me make sense of the different ethos that makes people react differently to the same situation.

Some of these thoughts are only a line or two long, but despite their brevity, they articulate their essence with surprising clarity.

Our modern lives, with their encompassing triumphs and trepidations, have ascertained at least this much, that no matter which corner of the globe we may reside in, which classification of social existence we may be assigned to, as we navigate our lives to fulfil our aspirations, the most difficult battles are the ones that are fought inside the labyrinth of our minds.

By penning down these thoughts, it is my effort to share with you some of the understanding that I could garner, that helped me make a little more sense of the numerous strings of life that pull us in different directions, and influence our behaviour. In no way am I trying to impart any kind of wisdom or have any false notion that I know the answers. On the contrary, I know with certainty that I am a long way from having the answers. I offer this book as a memoir of my own learnings and realizations, with a hope that maybe these thoughts will speak to you in the same way they spoke to me. And however sketchy or incomplete these learnings might be, I offer them with complete humility and gratitude.

If you could take a few moments to hold these thoughts, embrace them, feel them, and reflect upon them, maybe you would find your own unique interpretation coily hidden in these words. Maybe they will trigger your thoughts to appear before you in a never-before seen *avatar*. Maybe some of these words will gift you your eureka moment as they did for me.

*As I opened my eyes to the world that I knew  
The echoes of my voice, as clear as morning dew*

*The words that I spoke  
Since I thought I made sense  
From the time I became me  
Till right now, in my present*

*These words that I hear  
I would like to share with you  
'Cause the echo of my world  
May resonate with yours too.*

I hope they will. I know they will.

Yours truly,  
Asmita





My company  
my thoughts  
my silences ...

Sometimes  
that's all  
I need



## *Closed eyes*

Speak to me, he whispered in my ears  
Share your words, however few  
Does your heart, beat for mine?  
Can you hear mine, beating for you?

Speak to me, I whispered in return  
What we have, is that enough ?  
Will it last when the sun goes down  
Will it fade when the rays fall tough?

And as we spoke to soothe the aches  
A meagre few words reached the other  
Some got lost in the crowd of noises  
Others fell prey to the filter between ears

But when the eyelids draped the vision  
Surrounding quietness gathered around  
Our hearts then covered a million miles  
And finally, we heard their beating sound

## *Fact or Fiction?*

The mind is our personal realm of wizardry, where we not only close our eyes to reality and call it an illusion, but also weave our favourite stories and believe them to be the reality. The more adept we get at this sorcery, the harder it gets for us to distinguish between what is a fact and what is our interpretation of it. Our inner world becomes a cloak of so many self-conceived truths that it conceals who we truly are, not just from the world, but also from our own selves.

Our vivid stories give birth to a false self that we present to the world as the real us. Every time we cover our eyes with a patch of a new story, we begin to see the illusion of ourselves that we created for others. Slowly, we start losing sight of the real us. So enamoured are we by the beauty of our patches, that we forget, however colourful they may be, they still blind our vision.

Having the courage to love,  
even when we know  
that it'll be short-lived,  
is perhaps  
one of the greatest wounds  
and the greatest healing  
we can gift to our heart.



## *Pain that sings*

From pain and sadness come the most beautiful, soulful, and meaningful words.

That may be because, in the moments of happiness, we are so engulfed in enjoying the emotion at a peripheral level, that we forget to dive into the depth of its roots.

Pain and sadness, on the other hand, do not give us a choice. They pull us right from our core and throw us into their alchemy, till the time every iota of our being is drenched in them.

And then, when the words come out, they create soulful poetry.



Sometimes being unreasonable  
is the only reasonable alternative left,  
to fight for something that's worth fighting for.

## *Diving Deep*

Often many do not dive deep into a relationship for fear of getting their hopes and hearts broken. But the question is not whether that may or may not happen, because it most likely will.

The question is, whether despite that, is it still a worthwhile journey to pursue? The question is when we keep a broken heart and a fulfilled heart on the opposite sides, which way will the balance tilt.

To discover the beauty that lies in the ocean's depth, we have to let go of the safety of staying afloat. Diving deep doesn't always mean sinking, it just means we need to learn to swim better.

One of the biggest disservice  
we do to ourselves,  
is to continue  
cradling denial.



## *The Autumn Leaf*

Once upon a time  
There was a me

Wandering about in stupor  
Through some lit and unlit gashes  
Between shiny and duller patches  
Minding my own business  
Finding my own bearings  
Treading as taught and learnt  
On wavy mounds of greenery

And like always  
I played my favourite game of hopscotch  
The hopscotch of my life

cont.

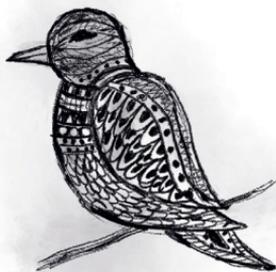
And as I bent to pick up my pebble  
I saw the fallen autumn leaf  
There, it lay...

Quivering yet unafraid  
Completely devoid of any shame

For the leaf knew, that its okay  
To rest when fallen down  
To surrender to the meaning found  
To let the earth embrace its pain  
'cause in healing there is no shame

When I turned the leaf over  
I found my face smiling back at me  
And just like that on that autumn day  
I found a piece of my broken me.

As an idea began to take shape in my mind, all that was required of me was to make space for it. For who was I, to come in the way of something brave enough to show it's incompleteness with complete nonchalance.



## *The Safety Net*

To get past the fear, one must believe in something more significant, more reliable, and more powerful than the fear itself. For most, it is God.

For me, as I was about to dive down from 15,000 feet above the ground, what gave me a real sense of faith and comfort, was the miracle of engineering. It not only made the seemingly impossible, possible, but also safe enough for my hesitating mind to bow down to gravity against its wishes. Not to say that science is more magnanimous than the Almighty. But at that moment, science felt more tangible, something that I could touch and feel to ward off my fear.

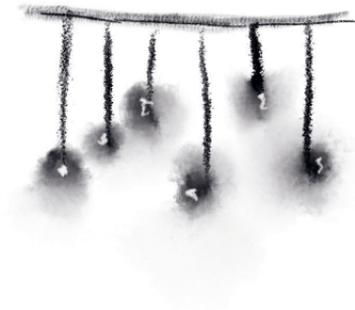
On that beautiful September morning, science was the safety net ready to catch my fear as I dived down to take that leap of faith.

## *Too Honest*

There's no such thing as 'being too honest.' Honesty is just '*plain vanilla*' honesty. It is how honesty is delivered, and how it is received, that changes its flavour from vanilla to '*bitter cocoa*' or '*sweet cookie dough*'.

If the speaker takes care to be honest without being inconsiderate, and if the receiver takes care to listen without weaving stories, then honesty can be given and taken honestly.

Ice cream anyone?



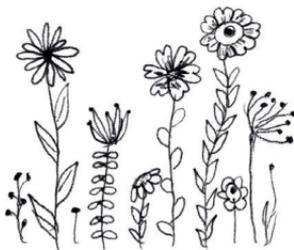
Our actions are often in the ‘mute’ mode.  
We need to significantly increase their volume  
to make them louder than our words.

## *Rooting for Ourselves*

We often mistake our current inability to live a fulfilled life, as the only plausible way to live. We take the easy route and define a fulfilled life as the one that makes the society dance, rather than the one that makes our own world sing. Life, which should give us joy, is reduced to a game of mere social survival, a game so addictive that it robs us of our time to unearth, seek, and author our own manual for living. We neglect to acknowledge that the rags we considered as a burden and threw behind, were the fragments of our happiness without which our attire may never be complete.

We willingly sacrifice ourselves in the hope that one day it will all be worth it. Well, that one day is today. Has it been worth it? Are we living a life that feels fulfilled to our own selves, in our own eyes? If yes, bravo! If no, it's time we start rooting for ourselves because no one else will do it for us.

To delve deeper inside our minds with complete honesty, is an act of bravery. For we may not be prepared to come face-to-face with what may present itself.



## *The Adventure*

When the heart is chosen over the mind to lead the way, it is a journey we seldom forget.

It is a wanderlust of gratification, self-expression, enrichment, and ardour. An escape from the carefully manicured lawns to the laid-back expanse of the wilderness. A transition from a handful of measured steps to an endless unimpeded run. A deviation from plush, velvety landscape to arid, thorny terrain.

Sure enough, we return home wounded, but never empty-handed. We bring back with us a bouquet of scars, each raring to tell an unforgettable story.



Only when our inner world sings,  
can we hear the melodies of the outer world.

## *Tug of War*

My mind is where I force myself to live  
My heart is where I hope to forever reside  
They are distant neighbours sharing a wall  
They are often two coins of the same side.

One pulls me towards balancing the weights  
Other pushes me into a steadfast disparity  
One asks me to carefully tread the greys  
The other cherishes colourful unfamiliarity.

These all-consuming forces twist and twirl  
Creating tangles of do's and dont's  
My should's and shouldn'ts, fall out of line  
In this war of yes-es, and these battles of no's.



Courage is weak. It meekly resides inside all of us.  
We just need a strong enough reason to look for it  
and bring it out in the open.



## *Being Present*

Self-limiting beliefs arising out of our past experiences and sub-conscious conditioning cast heavy shadows over our current reality. Like fools, instead of letting these dark clouds pass so that we can bask in the warmth of the sun right above, we drag them along with us in search of sunshine.

For some time now, I have been making sincere efforts to release my grip over these clouds and to let them pass naturally the way they are supposed to. I am training myself to act, not from a place of fear or doubt, but from a place of being present.

By consciously focusing on the 'here and now,' I find myself relieved from the constraints of my own mental blocks.

cont.

I am noticing that when my mind stops loitering aimlessly in the corridors of the past, I can overcome my unfounded fears and doubts with a sense of ease that I could never experience before. I am beginning to feel more alive, happier, carefree, and excited with the possibilities that life has in store for me.

My experiences are becoming more enriching, be it learning to ride a bicycle, getting my driving license, learning to ski, focusing on my health, traveling solo, starting a business, making myself a priority, forgiving, letting go, moving on, etc. etc. etc.



How fulfilled we live our lives, depends on  
- the strength of our dreams, and  
- the constraints of our beliefs

## *Contentment or Excellence?*

‘Contentment’ and ‘striving for excellence’ need not be at the opposite ends of the tug of war. Even though they may appear to be contradictory, both these states of aspiration can and should go hand-in-hand.

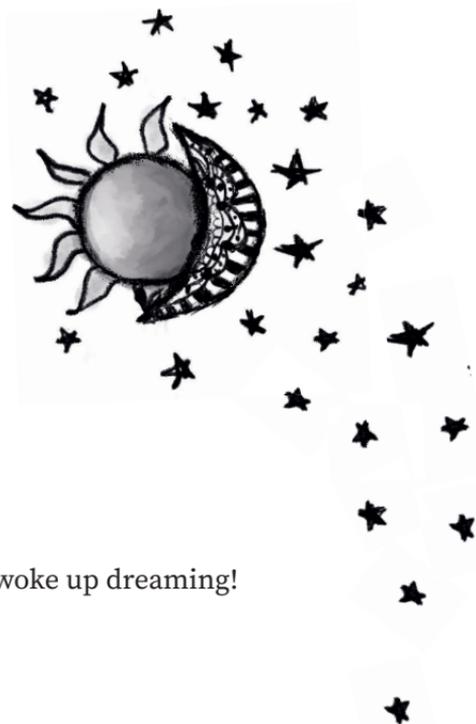
While a drive for excellence is essential for creating the orchard of our dreams, contentment is of paramount importance to sit and enjoy the fruits of our labour, before we continue planting more trees. One need not be sacrificed for the sake of the other. In fact, one must be compulsorily followed by the other.

What is the point of creating an orchard when we can't relax under its shade, enjoy the ripened fruits, or listen to the birds sing?



We all have to fight our own battles, carry our own burdens, and confront our own realities.

But having someone next to us makes this struggle a little easier.



Today, I woke up dreaming!

## *We the Pinocchios*

We start our humble journey  
With fears and few dreams  
With our rights and our wrongs  
Firmly guiding all our dreams

Everyday on this path  
We keep piling up our loot  
Success, money, and pleasures  
And with them some accolades too

Soon this loot gets heavy  
But we don't let it go  
Instead we shed the layers  
Of moral suit we always wore

cont.

And so goes out of window  
Beliefs we held so high  
We let go of cherished values  
Slowly, one at a time

But the one who's still walking  
On thorns of moral ground  
We look with awkward glances  
We lost, what he has found

We know where this has led us  
We know the cost of win  
We know we are all Pinocchios  
Only he had just one sin

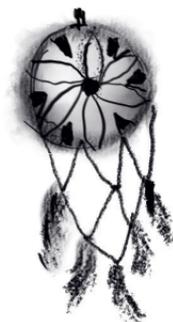
## *No one is Ever Gone*

We carry within us our ancestors. Not just our parents or grandparents, but every single one who came before them. Each has played a role in forming our physical and mental being, in the same way, that we will be doing for the ones after us.

Our ancestors have a home inside us. They continue living through us. Just like we will continue living through our children and their children.

No one is going anywhere.

No one is ever really gone.



The only thing that matters  
is how we are living  
the only life that we have.  
Rest is just filling the gaps.

The toughest battles are the ones that are fought  
in the labyrinth of our minds.



## *The Canvas of Life*

As an artist, it is in my spirit to appreciate all the shades that lie in between the two extremes called black and white. While it comes effortlessly in art, it is the life outside the canvas that needs a mastery to recognize situations beyond the rigidity of black and white.

It requires a consistent and deliberate effort to open up our mental palette and dilute the blacks and stain the whites. It requires patience and courage to look at life in its myriad other hues.

In that sense, we all need to be artists.

## *The Black Hole*

We open our eyes, to this life of today  
We don't like what we have  
It's what's missing, that we dismay

Looking far and beyond  
With tired searching eyes  
It's the future we believe  
From where our dreams arise

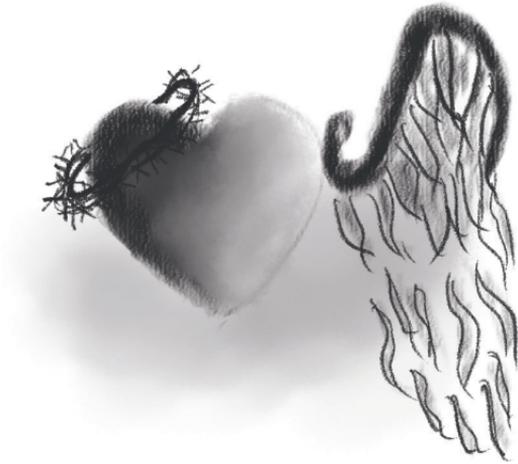
The 'now' is dark and gloomy  
The 'now' is never gay  
The pastures of the present  
Are greener, but some other day

And each day as we catch it  
We look with harsh resent  
The reality of the future  
Mirrors yesterday's present

cont.

We begin to grasp reality  
And see the time we've lost  
Hunting for what we all had  
Already tucked away in the past

The future is just a bubble  
Reflecting empty soul  
The outer rings entice us  
The inside is a black hole



Despite the agony, the heart always wants to seek out the adventures of life.

It prefers suffering the pain to wondering 'what if'.

## *Desires*

Why do we tend to stack our desires in the same bin as sin?

When we consider a simple act of relishing a dessert as an indulgence, when we describe a sumptuous cake by the word 'decadent' (meaning corrupt, immoral, self-indulgent), it's no wonder that we associate our more significant desires with even greater guilt or remorse.

What is it about our desires that make them tainted in our own eyes? Is it that our desires are unrighteous for us, or is it that we have not built ourselves righteous and worthy enough for them?

## *The Cost of Following Passion*

Creative people give their hearts and souls to their craft, right from the time of conception of the idea, until the last push, to bring their art alive. These proverbial nine months are nothing short of a ride fused with feelings of excitement, purpose, fear, anxiety, responsibility, and joy. At the end of this process, when they finally present their creation to the world, they are in the dark of what's in store for them. They don't even know whether their labour of love will be received with applause, disapproval, or even ridicule.

Nevertheless, they keep doing it over and over again. Each time gathering enough courage to expose their vulnerabilities to complete strangers.

I guess that's the price one pays to go after one's passion.

I am not trying to be good at being perfect. I gave that up a long time back. But what I am trying to be good at, is to let my uniqueness shine through.

Now, that's an art worth perfecting.



## *Settling for Less*

When it comes to our career, money, and success, we don't want to settle for anything less than the picture-perfect life. We leave no stone unturned to be ahead of the rest of humanity. But when it comes to our relationships, we often give up too quickly.

We look around our world and gather evidence to support the fact that just like us, the majority is living a half-hearted life with shallow and unfulfilled connections. We convince ourselves that it is the way of the world. After all, the majority can not be doomed or delusional. So very promptly, we reach the conclusion that this is the best we will ever get.

And we stop trying.

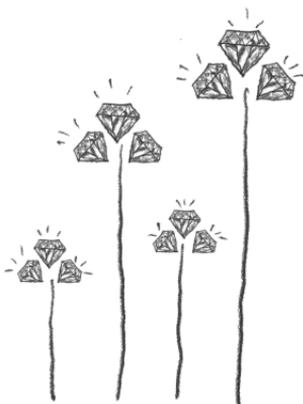
cont.

We stop trying to search for the one who we are truly meant to be with. Perhaps that one person is hiding inside our current companion, waiting to be seen, heard and re-discovered by us. Or perhaps that person is somewhere out there in the world in search of us. Either ways, we will never know if we continue to settle for less.



Beware, silence is not always golden.  
If exercised at an ill-timed moment,  
it can also be perceived as  
a lack of sensitivity, love, or courage.  
Sometimes, all of the above.

If you meet someone you can connect with intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, treasure that person with all your sincerity. In a world that is full of shiny stones, it is no easy feat to find a real gem for yourself.



*Burns like a sting*

I see wavering flames in a tiny dark pit  
Flames from a fire so small,  
That it can hardly be called a fire  
But when its fledgling flames  
Touch the skin  
It burns like a sting.

How such a minuscule entity  
Can be so ferociously strong  
To burn what it touches  
And leave a bold scar  
From where does it come, I wonder  
To burn like a sting

I silenced chatter of the mind  
My eyes saw, removing their blind  
From inside me, the fire springs  
No wonder, it burns like a sting.

## *Our Beautiful Garment*

The biggest irony of our life is that we, the owner of our body and mind, do not really know the person residing inside it. We believe that who we are is so utterly flawed, that if we appear in our naked forms we will never receive acceptance from the world. So, to escape rejection, pain, and shame, we begin to dress ourselves in the gown of our dreams. We keep embellishing our garment by stitching satins of myths, sewing sequins of lies, and embroidering silks of pretence.

But there will be a day when instead of giving us a sense of security, these layers will make us feel confined and claustrophobic. We won't be able to stop ourselves from wondering who was the person we buried inside us.

And that will be the day, we will start ripping the layers apart, one stitch at a time.



I don't know what will happen  
in all my tomorrows.

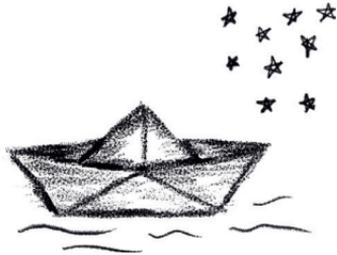
But as of today,  
I am just happy that  
whatever happened,  
happened.

## *From Pebbles to Mountain*

There is a sense of comfort, assurance, and optimism in the simplicity of aggregating the countless trivia in order to build something significant. It makes a laborious task of creating something meaningful appear less daunting.

It doesn't matter how tiny each pebble is or how many of them there are, as long as we keep piling them up one at a time, a mountain is bound to emerge from their shadows.

To that extent, nothing is ever insignificant. A pebble just needs to find the right mountain to carry upon its tiny shoulders.



When we know what our heart truly desires,  
by delaying to walk towards it, we are only depriv-  
ing ourselves of the fulfilled life we truly deserve.

## *Watering the Ego*

Stereotyping and diminishing another person's identity is often used as a quick-fix solution for glorifying one's own false ego. Stereotyping a single individual or an entire community may start as a harmless humour, but it soon turns into a bigoted satire that is no longer hidden behind subtleties.

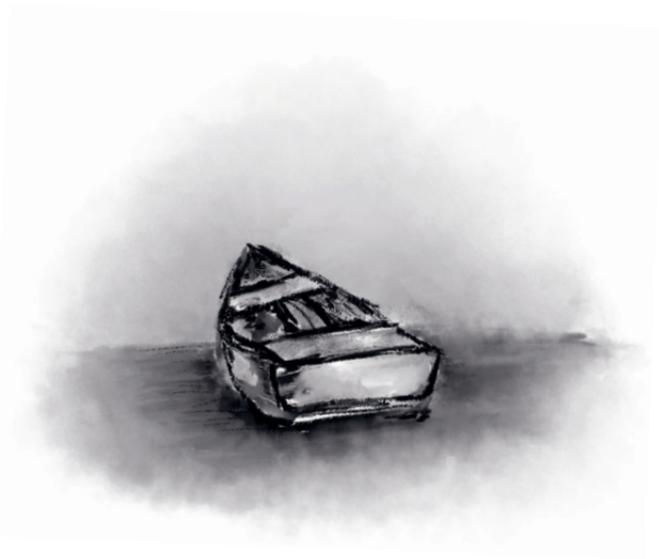
As we continue to depend on another's downfall to boost our false pride, we are, in fact, turning our ego into an insecure predator, whose worth is defined by the defeat of others. It may temporarily uplift our self-esteem and give us a false sense of superiority, but in the long run, it will only make us insecure in our true element.

For our self-esteem to be taller, it needs to stand on its own two feet, rather than leaning on the crutches of someone's wreckage.

Happiness and melancholy, both are adept at moving someone to tears.

While happiness requires a remarkable moment to pull the strings, melancholy can do the job just by presenting itself in beautifully wrapped words.





Traveling helps me discover myself like no other means of exploration. The only requirement is that I must never forget to take myself along.

## *Equation of Life*

Companionship and comforts are two of the most essential variables in the equation of our modern life.

How one experiences life greatly depends on who one chooses to share it with. With the right partner, one can revel even in the bankruptcy of comforts, whereas with the wrong partner, one can be morose even amidst affluence.

Yet, we focus all our energies on chasing the wrong variable of the equation.



If we are scared of ending up alone, then we have completely failed ourselves.

We have not built ourselves to be the kind of person we can be friends with.

*Broken a Little*

We are all broken a little  
Torn a little  
Damaged a little

From the wants of our vices  
From the urges of our greed  
From the longings of our dreams  
From the cravings of our needs

We are all scarred a little

The same shears of wants  
That rip the delicate weaves  
We now use them as needles  
To sew our torn sheets  
And then,  
We rest upon these very sheets

cont.

We rest upon,  
Their shreds and their patches  
Our wounds and our scratches  
Hoping the weight of our burden  
Will caress and balm these gashes

Yet again,  
We are all broken a little more  
Torn a little more

From the wants of our vices  
From the urges of our greed  
From the longings of our dreams  
From the cravings of our needs

We are all  
Damaged a little more.

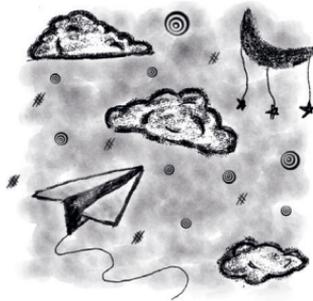
*My life and I*

My life and I,  
We have fought and sulked  
We have thought and mulled  
We rebelled and succumbed  
We bore each other's brunt  
We have seen each other's worse  
We have braved each other's curse  
But we have finally grown together  
My life and I,  
We have finally chosen each other

## *Where am I Headed*

I think about my life in the future, not because I have the audacity to believe that it will turn out exactly how I expect it to be. But, rather because I do not want to go somewhere unintended, or wake up from my slumber wondering how I got there.

The heart is greedy. It wants everything without any limits and boundaries. To what extent it is successful in attaining them depends on the limits and boundaries of our mind.



## *Accepting vs. Resigning*

There's a clear difference between accepting a situation and resigning to it.

Accepting means admitting the fact that something has already occurred, whether we like it or not. It is akin to acknowledging the reality of the 'as-is' rather than hiding behind any denial. Only after accepting, can the process of dealing with the situation begin. One can then consciously choose which door of possibilities to open, the one that prompts to remain in the status quo or the one that is marked with an exit.

On the other hand, resigning to a situation is to helplessly continue being in the status quo without offering oneself a chance to explore any other possibilities.

Accepting is to give power to oneself, while resigning is to give power to the circumstances.

## *Misty Eyes*

The mist appearing in our eyes tells us something profound about ourselves. These drops of water should not be scoffed at as a sign of weakness or fragility. They should be honoured to remind us that under the varied exteriors, we are all humans, that we are not just living, but we are alive.

Alive enough to feel an emotion so deep that all the other senses have no choice but to be standstill, just so that they can listen to the silent exchange between the heart and the eyes, where neither speak, but both listen.

If we don't know even our own self, then what is it that we really know? What is the point of knowing anything else?



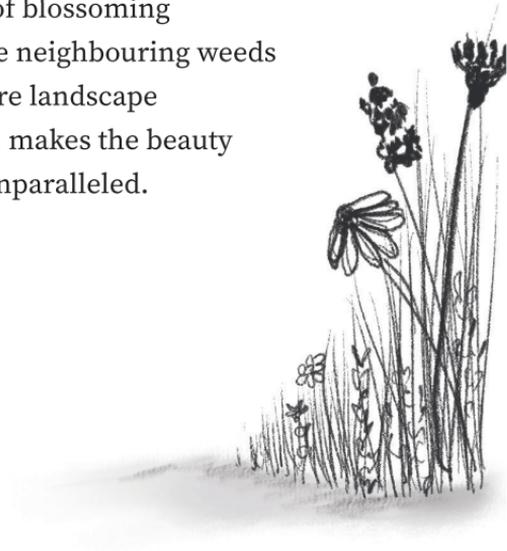
## *An Infection called Passion*

Passion is a force that transports people into a surreal world. A world, where they are so utterly engrossed and consumed in being in their true elements, that for once, it does not matter to them what others think. This state is where our hearts speak freely. This state is where our creativity thrives.

When we find our spark fading, flame extinguishing, and inhibition surfacing, that's our cue that our passion is dwindling. In these moments, it is a worthwhile endeavour to be in the proximity of those who exude it all around them. Just by being close to it, passion can spill into our empty spaces and re-ignite itself.

It has that kind of effect.

The selfless act of blossoming together with the neighbouring weeds to make the entire landscape vibrant with life, makes the beauty of wildflowers unparalleled.



## *New Paths, New Decisions*

Today, we are who we are, and have what we have, because of the sum of choices that we made in the past. Some were forced upon us by our circumstances, some were rooted in the depth of our beliefs, and some rested on the shoulders of our priorities. But regardless of how they were thrown at us, it was we who caught them.

But that was then. And this is now. If today we are not happy with where our decisions have brought us, it is time to make some new choices and choose some new paths. But this time, what if, instead of spreading our arms to catch whatever comes our way, we let the wisdom of our soul and the honesty of our heart decide what to pick. What would it be like, if for a change, we let the heart indulge in its dreams wholeheartedly and choose without fear.

Maybe that's when our choices will feel like home.

## *The Distance*

There are times when someone feels so close to the heart that the mere closeness of thoughts is enough to move the physical distance into a null.

But then, there are times when the thoughts and words bring such a disconnect of hearts, that even close proximity feels like a distance that can never be bridged.



We are the bodyguards and guardian angels of our inner energy. It is our duty to not only protect it from self-imprisonment, but to give it a stage to express itself fully without inhibition.

To truly cherish  
one's own company,  
one must first learn to  
brave one's own thoughts,  
talk to one's inner voice,  
enjoy one's own silence.



## *Of All the Times*

Of all the times when your presence mattered  
This was the time it mattered the most  
To help me pick up my fallen pieces  
To help me smooth my broken edges

Of all the times I wanted to hear you  
This time I yearned for your words the most  
To sing to my ears in a soothing sound  
To whisper to my spirit that you are around

Of all the times that I needed your strength  
This was the time I needed it the most  
To help me heal my wailing heart  
To help the little angel lovingly depart

Of all the times that I eagerly wanted you  
This was the time I wanted you the most  
My fingers searching for yours to clutch  
Maybe never again will I want you so much

## *Our One and Only*

To consider one person as ‘the one and only’ is to put an immense burden on shoulders unprepared to bear it. They are bound to get crushed under its weight. It’s best to neither give that crown to someone, nor accept it from another.

It is we, who must be our ‘one and only’. Because when the rest of them depart, our one and only still remains with us. This is a responsibility not to be delegated at any cost.

## *Intellect of Brain and Might of Mind*

However traumatic, our physical pain becomes a fleeting memory as soon as the body stops feeling it physically. Afterwards, however hard we may try to stretch our imagination, our brain will not allow our body to feel the pain with the same intensity.

Our mind, on the other hand, without much effort, can bring a past emotional pain back to life at the spur of the moment. It can not only make us feel that pain many times over, but each time, with an intensity far worse than before.

That's the difference between our brain and our mind. If left to our biology and to the intelligence of our brain, it will do its job of protecting our body the way it is designed by nature.

cont.

However, if left to our mind, it will continue to hurt itself in exchange for the satisfaction of being 'right' and for the pleasure of feeling like a victim.

Imagine how traumatic it would be if we allowed our brain to make us relive the unbearable pain of child-birth, or a traumatic accident, over and over again?

If we would never give that permission to our brains, then why give it to our mind and allow the residue of our pain to linger?



The same action will manifest different results, depending on whether it was performed from a place of  
fear and resistance,  
or from a place of  
mindfulness and acceptance.

## *Some Dreams Must Become Reality*

We all may not find the courage to live life on our own terms all the time. Often, we are faced with circumstances that prevent us from living the life of our dreams. Some of these hurdles may appear to be so enormous, that we believe them to be invincible. We believe that the cards we are dealt with are the only ones we are ever going to get.

But every once in a while, a few feeble thoughts of a more fulfilled life brave their way through these iron-clad restricting beliefs. These are the times when we must orchestrate a mutiny to transfer the reign of power from our beliefs to our dreams. These are the times when instead of casually dismissing their existence as baseless fantasies, we must salute their bravado, hold their hands and guide them to their dreams.

Some dreams must become reality, no matter what. Especially this one.



Sometimes, a single sigh released from the deepest depths of the heart can make us experience an emotion in its most purest and unadulterated form. No words are then necessary.

## *Forgotten Facts, Remembered Memories*

I may not remember all the facts, figures, and stories about most of my travel escapades. And that's not really important. What is important, however, is that when those moments were experienced, they smelt like lavender, sounded like a violin, felt like wet waves, tasted like fresh air, and looked like dew drops. What is important is that these moments engraved their poetry on the pages of my memory.

These experiences, small and big, play their part in subtle, yet definite, ways to carve our individualities. It is the cumulation of all these small moments over a period of our lifetime, that creates the uniqueness shining within each one of us.

If I was moved, even for a few moments, my trip was worth it.

*From Me to You*

In the middle of the noises  
When chaos seems to run around  
I send snippets from nearby life  
Sometimes in words, sometimes in sounds

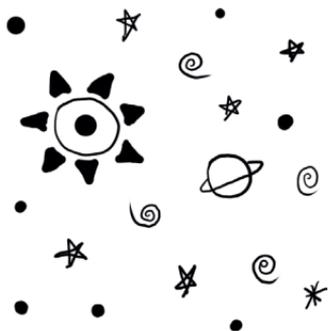
To tell you,  
That you were thought of  
When I read those words  
And your thoughts filled my mind  
When that song was heard

And I send the snippets  
To also remind you,  
That this can not be it  
And this can not be all  
That there's more to life  
Outside your walls

cont.

Something worth pausing for  
Something to feel alive  
To reconnect with another you  
Hidden in plain sight

So do take a pause  
For a moment or two  
For these snippets of randomness  
From me to you.



My new mantra of life  
“If not here, where?  
If not now, when?”

And I am taking it seriously.



The sounds of silence, melancholy and joy,  
all come from the same instrument...life.  
And life is unbiased.

We all get our fair share.



## *Locked Potential*

Finally, the truth dawned upon me like a bolt of lightning. I discovered that my real source of regret was not that I quit my career long before witnessing the success that I was destined to achieve. But my regret was that there was an immense potential left within me that still remained untapped.

The potential that I kept expanding even after saying adieu to my career. The potential that continued to blossom as I began opening myself up to life's invaluable experiences, that spread far beyond the boundaries of a cubicle.

And just like that, my focus shifted from the narrow confines of a corporate career to finding other befitting avenues for unlocking this untapped potential.

And when I opened myself up to the endless possibilities, I found my art quietly waiting for me in the corner.



Sometimes, exploring without a purpose  
is the whole purpose.

## *The Game of Evolution*

As a species, we have proven our prowess at winning the game of evolution against all other species. We left the mightiest of the mighty behind, based on the sheer strength of the three-pound organ resting between our ears. Quietly residing in the darkness of the skull, the mighty brain works tirelessly without any expectations. But also residing within us is another formless entity camouflaged in a complex mesh of thoughts. This entity, our mind, too works tirelessly, but in constant battle with its own self, creating sagas of epic proportions, and always expecting an applause. The same triumphant us are now reduced to being helpless spectators sucked into our internal drama. If we are to live life the way we are meant to, which is outside our minds, we need to now show our prowess in the internal realm of our thoughts and emotions.

It is time for the next stage of evolution.

## *Doing the Right Thing*

How do I get the conviction to tell my kids to do the right thing, when after so many years, for me, doing the right thing often falls in the narrow spectrum between 'challenging' to 'extremely challenging'. And there have been more occasions than I would want to admit, when I succumbed to taking the easy way out.

Perhaps this is one of the biggest fallacies of being a parent.

## *Love is Blind*

They say love is blind...

Then why do we see marks, on each other's soul  
Why do we measure the depth, of every tiny hole  
Why see regret and ugliness, in every sigh  
Why does laughter dress in grief, in front of our eyes  
Why don't we embrace the darkness, of each other's past  
Why not let hurt and grief, disappear slowly at long last

Yet they say love is blind...

Why not close our eyes, to burdens of unsought dues  
Why not choose for once, real greys over illusive hues  
Why does the invisible pain of love  
Look clearer, than its healing touch  
Why make the unfamiliar and unknown fear  
So important and matter so much

cont.

Yet they say love is blind....

Then why be blinded by the lustre & brightness

And not feel its warmth

Why watch with caution, every move made

But miss in that, the grace of a swan

Why long for glimpses of things, paper wrapped

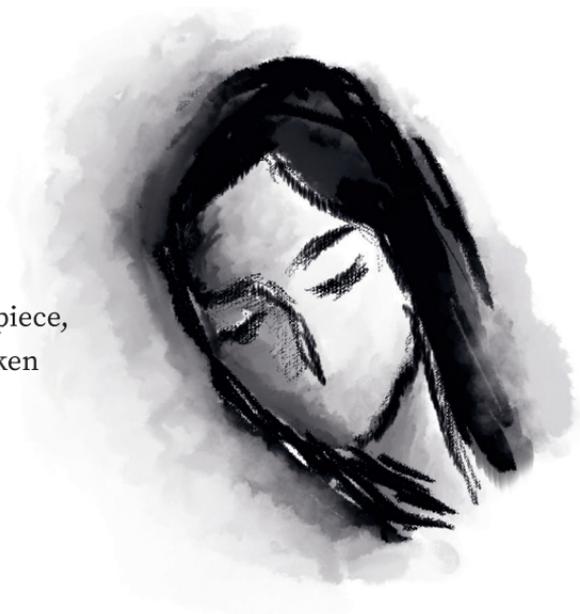
And let the unadorned love, fade away untapped

Why the touch of lips is not enough to seize the heart

Why being together is harder than growing apart

Yet they say love is blind....

The more  
we accept  
each fallen piece,  
the less broken  
we are.



## *Mother's Pride*

As a mother, I have come to realize that what gives me an immense sense of pride is when people tell me how my kids have demonstrated qualities of friendship, warmth, and creativity. I have realized that the happiness I derive from knowing this is much greater than the one derived from hearing about their academic achievements.

Being a typical 'Indian' mother who takes pride in the laurels of academic excellence, this is indeed a great revelation for me.

My kids are the same, it's me who has gained a better perspective.

## *Intention vs. Action*

When it comes to the matters of the heart, having the right intention and backing it up with action are both deeply and strongly intertwined with each other. One displayed without the other can be perceived as an act of half-heartedness.

When an action is done merely because of expectations and not because of a genuine intention, it feels like music without soul. On the other hand, if there is a genuine intention, but it is not backed by action, it feels like a night without stars. For companionship to grow stronger and hearts to grow fonder, both intention and action need to reside under the same roof.

Without them together, an emotion is left incomplete and unexpressed.

If my pain doesn't move you,  
we are not meant to be.



There's always a reason.  
We may be too naive, lazy, or frightened to see it.  
But it's always there.



## *First Self, then Others*

Replenishing our own reservoir first, before filling other's, according to me, is certainly not an act of selfishness. In fact, it is just the opposite.

We must first be happy within, before we can spread it outside; first be in love with ourselves, to be able to give it away; be our own friend first, before offering our friendship to others.

We need to feel complete just on our own, just by ourselves, to offer companionship to others. Else, we will end up being a needy soul clinging onto others, expecting them to complete us.

And that is a fantasy doomed to shatter, for how can one empty soul complete another.

The one who understands your  
mind, body, and heart...

That's the one.





I am okay if someone understands  
and then chooses to reject my thoughts.  
It's being misunderstood  
that I am most uncomfortable with.

## *Me and My Differences*

I own the errors of my life  
For they too are pieces of my puzzle  
Some bury me underneath their burden  
Some come on top to let go and unburden

Some keep me wide awake at night  
But I still own them, coz they are mine to fight

This tiny space that I call myself  
It needs to be cherished and not rejected  
Surrounded by tiny spaces of others  
This space of mine needs to be protected  
From those, trying to make identical everything  
Merging my feathers, in the shadow of their wings

cont.

I need strength to protect my differences  
For being so very different and unique  
And save my oddities from the guilt  
And sew them together into a beautiful quilt

I need strength to honour each patch right  
And I need strength to hold each stitch tight

I need strength to realize  
That no two quilts are alike  
That these dark shades and these craters  
Belong to me, and are only mine  
And till the time death do us part  
My darkness alone, can be my sunshine.

## *The Web of Our Beliefs*

We keep our chosen beliefs very close to our hearts. Out of the many available options, these handful were either handed over to us by others, or were chosen by our own intellect, to make the journey of our life smoother.

However, instead of using them as helpful guidelines, we start treating them as our sacrosanct lifelines. We forget that these beliefs were created, not by the unbiased acumen of a supernatural force, but by the biased intellect of ordinary people like us, that too in an era that was drastically different from our current.

Yet, we keep them constantly in front of our eyes as a screen to view life, and in the process lose sight of living freely. We cling onto them with our dear lives, even when these so called saviours turn out to be our most formidable foes.

cont.

To keep our status quo in order, we convince ourselves with a tone of finality: 'this is how things have always been done', 'this is righteous', 'this is moral', or 'what will others think of me'. We must be watchful of the beliefs that make us use these narratives . They are the ones which close doors to our chance of living life with freedom.

These are the beliefs that have over-extended their stay in our minds. It's time we serve them notice and make room for new ones.



Strategy is about asking the right questions... be it in work or in life. At work, we are taught, but in life, we need to learn. And learn it fast.

## *Negativity in Stride*

One of the most valuable lessons that I taught myself is to not take negative opinions personally.

It doesn't matter how involved I may have been in my work, but the moment I present it to another person, I must cut the emotional umbilical cord. I must remind myself that just like this one piece of work is only a small part of my unlimited expression, similarly, rejection is also just one of the many possible reactions and outcomes. Whether good or bad, a reaction is only directed toward my work and has nothing to do with me personally.

After all, no one task or event can ever completely define who I am as a whole.

Our heart will love someone,  
not because it has to,  
but because it chooses to.

It is stubborn that way.



## *An Ideal Society*

Achieving an ideal society is a far fetched dream. After all, what is an ideal society? Everyone has their own definition, based on their personal priorities, beliefs, and values. So yes, to that extent an ideal society is far-fetched.

But what is not so far fetched, is harvesting one's own utopia in one's own backyard. We may want to embellish our individual gardens by different flora, but for them to become the Garden of Eden, they must be sown with gratitude and watered with compassion.

Without gratitude and compassion, the idea of an ideal society is futile. If we can't love who we are and appreciate what we have, how can we love and appreciate rest of the society? How can that society ever be ideal?



Love and happiness are infinite. The only finite is our time on this planet.

The whole struggle is about squeezing the infinite into the finite.

Enough of making up to others.  
It's high time we start making up to ourselves.



## *You and Me*

When the head clears  
When the chaos subsides  
When the clutter quietens  
And your mind untwines

I want you to think of us

You and me

Huddled in our togetherness  
Nestling in the warmth of belonging  
In our world of words and silence  
In our world of love and longing

Even when you are busy and occupied  
Are stressed and need to do lots  
Find just a tiny little moment for me  
And fill that with me in your thoughts

cont.

And do take me along with you  
When chaos and stress is rife  
Because I want to be alongside you  
Even in that part of your life

Think of us,  
You and me

When you are tired and exhausted  
And yearn for quietness and serenity  
Take my silence along to your world  
And rest there with me for eternity

And do take me along in your thoughts  
For we can not always be together  
Give me a tiny corner in your mind  
And let me reside in there forever

## *Andalusia, Spain, 2016*

The best part about my solo trip to Andalusia is wandering aimlessly without a purpose. The basic has become so exquisite that it has redefined my sense of sight.

The narrow winding streets, adorned by beautiful vines, lamps, and flowers, are all weaved together in a rustic composition. They demand that I walk the distance in an unhurried and aimless manner, choosing any path that beckons.

Listening to soulful Hindi songs amidst strangers feels like a perfect harmony between the familiar and the unfamiliar, and between the known and the unknown. So much so that I am often finding myself singing out loud.

cont.

As I see the Spanish town of Segovia from the elevated tower of Alcazar, I am drawn to this lone winding road going aimlessly amidst the yellows and browns of the dirt, grass, and weeds. It's dishevelled meandering to lazily reach the town has an unwavering and enigmatic pull.

Brown, with splashes of green, never looked so stunning, breathtaking, and enticing. That such an exquisite combination of hues comes so naturally to nature, never ceases to amaze me.

I am sighing so much.

“Please return”, I plead to the passing time,  
but it keeps moving.  
Then, it smiles back and says,  
“It’s you who needs to slow down.”

## *The Unique Me*

I own my uniqueness in this world  
I have now decided to claim my space  
Separate from the others beside me  
Who too are eager to outline their place

This space however tiny, is mine  
This space is where my star shines

I own the patches of my darkness  
That others see as blemishes and cracks  
But these patches give my life its depth  
These boulders help in etching my tracks

Unattainable just with the pureness of the soul  
These are the patches that make my journey whole

## *Vulnerability*

To share one's vulnerability requires tremendous courage. But it also demands trust and empathy from the one it is revealed to.

To let it's guard down flagrantly, vulnerability requires a safe haven seeded with courage and watered with trust. In the absence of this secure cocoon, sharing vulnerability can feel like an open wound from an awkward fall that subjects the bearer, to embarrassment, pain, regret, and ridicule, all at the same time.

Why does exposing our vulnerabilities seem so frightening that we guard them with utmost passion? It's not that we are the only proud owners of them. Every individual carries their own share of the mental morass that places us all in the same basket.

cont.

Why is it then, that we treat our vulnerabilities weaker than another's? Why do we treat them as so delicate that a gentle blow of air can make them collapse? And even if that happens, why do we have to follow their suit and crumble next to them?

If our vulnerabilities are indeed so fragile, aren't we then fools to build our entire identity on such a weak foundation?

We are all living in our own realities, which are sometimes so far fetched that they become someone else's fiction.

## *Relationship vs. Marriage*

Relationship between couples is so much more important than the marriage between them. The former comes from the heart, while the latter comes from the social norms and a legal stamp. Often, people spend their lifetime trying to protect their marriage rather than their relationship. Maybe because the former makes them feel entitled, while the latter requires a lot more work.

## *The Tenants of our Mind*

The demons that reside in our minds exist only because we have given them permission to live there. We know that they are parasites feeding on our happiness, yet we extend them a long-term lease to stay. There must be a hefty rent that we are getting from them. An exchange so lucrative that we become their addicts.

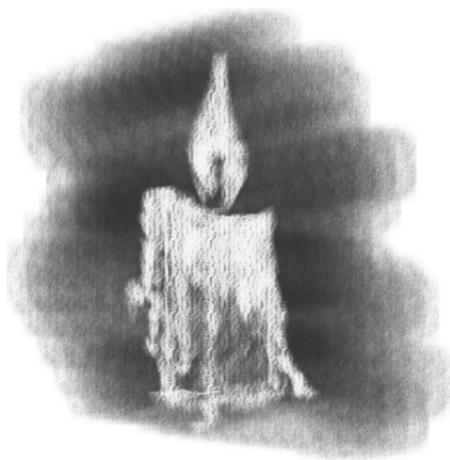
Make no mistake, however ugly these demons are, however ferociously they are sucking energy from us, we are no angels either. We too are feeding on them. What could be so important that we tolerate the pain of their existence in our lives? Is it the sweetness of self-pity? The righteousness of a victim mentality? The might of holding power over others?

May be the day we understand what it is that we devour from them, will be the day we can finally ask them to leave.

All my senses are not enough to absorb the beauty that  
this world has to offer.



Darkness is beautiful too.  
It's just that we see its beauty  
only when the light falls on it.



## *The Right Thing*

Sometimes we do the right thing not because doing it makes us feel right, but because not doing it makes us feel more wrong.

Sometimes we do the right thing not out of love but out of being compelled to do so.

Sometimes we do the right thing accidentally without having any real intention of doing it.

Whatever the reason may be, doing the right thing counts - every single time.

## *The Silent Few*

If my opinion tilts towards those who do not hold the blessings of the majority, does that make me inconsiderate towards the significant masses?

Don't they already have enough numbers in their favour?

Shouldn't the voices of the unheard be amplified?

## *Early and Late*

Be with me  
Early and Late

Early, so I can tell you my dreams  
Late, so I see you last before I see one  
Early, to stop me from falling down  
Late, to catch me as I take the brunt

Early, to start our journey hand in hand  
Late, to be next to me as we untie our shoes  
Early, so we wear our wrinkles together  
Late, so you can let me go before you

## *Monotony is Passé*

2016 has truly been a year of unlearning, re-learning, and new learnings. It was scary, exciting, satisfying, anxiety-ridden, riveting, and liberating.

May all my subsequent years be like that.

There were many valid reasons  
why you could not  
I was hoping you would find one  
So that you could.



## *Feminism*

For me, feminism starts with having the maturity and wisdom to find one's own definition of true happiness, irrespective of what is socially acceptable. Feminism is about claiming one's right to all the available choices and to then have the mental freedom and courage to choose the one that aligns with personal happiness.

So on the one hand, it may mean going fearlessly after your career despite the judgemental scorns of the 'ideal motherhood club', and on the other hand, it may mean choosing the path of motherhood despite the contemptuous glances of the 'ideal feminist gang'.

Feminism is to go after our truly cherished dreams without falling prey to any ideologies of feminism, sexism, racism, classism, or any other -isms. It is standing up for oneself against the bullies of society, be it a man or another woman.



I must stand for myself first,  
before expecting others to stand next to me.  
I need to make my own limbs stronger  
before reaching out for crutches.

## *The Ownership Game*

No one really belongs to anyone. They choose to give their company and presence to you. It is their prerogative should they want to offer it, and your privilege, should you wish to accept it.

Love can never be a game of ownership.



My thoughts were so loud  
that I was afraid  
everyone could hear them.  
So I told them to whisper.  
But now, even I can't hear them.

## *The Travellers of the World*

In a foreign land, when I travel alone, I use every opportunity to interact with the locals as well as other fellow travellers. The more I connect with people, the clearer the simplicity of what we are seeking in the travels of our life becomes.

At the end of the day, all we want is to leave our footprints in unknown territories, quench our thirst with unique experiences, find wonder in the mundane, relish in the food and music of the world, and fill our life with cherished memories. Sometimes we do that by travelling to another land, and sometimes we do that by welcoming outsiders into our space.

In that sense, we are all travellers, those entering a new land, and also those whose lands have been entered.



These beautiful butterflies can be really bothersome,  
especially when they flutter in the heart.

## *Moving On*

I am holding on to thoughts  
Of the time we spent together  
These memories that I hide  
Will remain with me forever

I know I should move on  
But I can't make up my mind  
'Cause moving on means  
Leaving you behind.

## *What to Choose*

Sometimes the choices are between least of the bad options rather than the best of the good options.

It is often easier to make a decision in the first scenario. Maybe because we know what we don't want much better than what we really want.

## *The Reach of Compassion*

Someone once denounced me, “How can you talk about the plight of Syria or a refugee camp while sitting in your comfortable home?” I was taken aback by this retort.

In my opinion, one doesn't really have to go anywhere to feel the pain and suffering of others. As human beings, we must have enough compassion within ourselves to feel the shiver of a homeless person even from our heated apartment, to feel the aches of an empty stomach even after having a hearty meal, to feel the pain of a mother who buried her child even after we put our child to sleep on a comfortable bed, and to feel the tragic scars of war, sitting right in our comfortable living rooms.

cont.

Because, if we fail to do even that, how can we ever hope to make any kind of difference in our own small, yet significant way.

As a species, we are slowly losing empathy toward others and becoming too engrossed in our own little myopic version of life.

Our humanness is gathering dust underneath our mundane chaos. And maybe all that is required is a strong blow of compassion to remove that dust, right in the comforts of our living rooms.

*Mom, I want to go Home*

Plea of a refugee child (abridged)

Home...My sweet home... My lost home

Where I played with stones and papers,  
Where friends ran with me from dusk to dawn,  
My home of mud and broken bricks,  
My home of holes and tattered walls

I laughed at everything then,  
Even at the grumbling noises that my stomach made,  
The vacuum in my stomach never bothered me,  
My childhood was enough to make it all evade

Then one day you told me, we had to go across the sea,  
To find a place not covered with a shawl of fire,  
Where the earth is green and the sky still blue,  
Where I can play without dodging smoke and fire

cont.

I towed my little thoughts filled with big doubts,  
Will I have friends there who will play with me?  
On the strange tarred streets between the tents,  
My new home where I am strangely called a refugee

I see Mom, the blue sky that you promised,  
And I see all the colours that I never saw before,  
I see here that the earth is like a fairyland,  
But I still dream of my old life across the shore

Can I ever go back to my country?  
Can I ever see my friends again?  
Can I ever play with the games of innocence?  
Can I ever touch my home again?

My lost home...My favourite home

Where I played with stones and papers,  
Where friends ran with me from dusk to dawn,  
My home of mud and broken bricks,  
My home of holes and tattered walls

## *Inner Work*

How one copes during the times of hardship depends on how much work one has done internally.

Hardships often force people to look within for answers. The brighter we have lit our inner world, the easier it will be to search for these answers.

## *Illusion of the Future*

The image of the future, as seen from the present, is nothing more than a set of wishful thinking or fearful assumptions. It, therefore, looks different to different people. Since the future lives only in our imagination, it's really up to us how we want to imagine it.

Our primitive survival instinct desperately wants to paint a picture of thorns to warn us and to protect us from stepping on them. But there is another meek entity within us that is equally desperate to paint roses above these thorns.

As for me, I want to give a stronger voice to this weaker orator. I desperately want to smell the roses.



If I want a better future for myself or my family, I am considered as a progressive and an optimistic individual. But if I want the same for society, I am called an idealist. Hmm.

## *New Beginnings*

When is it time to really go separate ways or to really move on?

For some, the realization comes only when they reach their ultimate level of anger, frustration, and bitterness. For some, the awareness comes much before the situation becomes toxic. The former doesn't make the reason for separation more justified, nor does the latter make it more trivial.

Our battles are our own, our journeys are our own, and therefore our reasons are our own. There is no one scale to mark some reasons as more reasonable than the others.

But whenever it is time, we must move on.

## *The Old Connection*

However old, independent, and successful we may have become, it always feels good and reassuring to reconnect with our younger selves, reminisce about who we once were, what motivated us, what felt important to us, and what made us happy. Going down that memory lane once in a while is not only sentimental and enriching but also rejuvenating.

The easiest way to do so is to connect with an old friend, who has the audacity, right, and love, to pull us down to the ground from the height of our stature and reunite us with our roots.

No matter the colours of my emotions,  
I show up every time to witness them.  
Oh yes, I have seen my rainbow many times over.



## *We the Puppets*

In the stage of humanity  
We play our parts and fill our voids  
We face some truths, but many we avoid

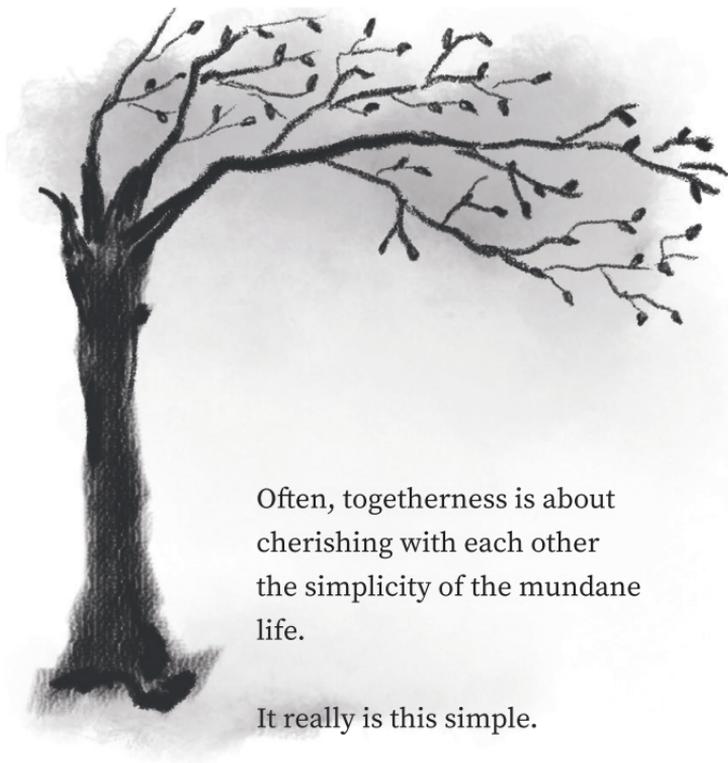
Sometimes angel, sometimes devil  
Wearing guises of our pride  
Colourful as they all might be  
These veils on our faces often misguide

We tell ourselves, that we're mere puppets  
And we keep doing, whatever we may please  
Shielding our evil, we love so dearly  
We pretend that a force is directing all our deeds

cont.

So we jerk around the lives of others  
To make them all, dance to our whims  
But then, we suffer a similar pain  
Slowly burning down, throughout our limbs

And then it dawns upon us, with clarity  
That there's no evil outside, with wings  
It is just us, the human puppets  
We are the ones, pulling each other's strings.



Often, togetherness is about cherishing with each other the simplicity of the mundane life.

It really is this simple.

## *The Storytellers*

While anger and pain towards the cause of our hurt may be justified, the allegations supporting these causes are usually not.

Allegations are often our interpretation of the facts. We become such excellent storytellers that we not only start to fiercely believe in our own stories but are often successful in conning others into believing in them too. We use all our might to gather an audience who not only sympathize and empathize with our saga but even applaud at our masterpiece.

However much it may feel like a soothing balm on our pain, it comes nowhere close to real healing.



Some mistake their insecurities and emotional dependence for love. Little do they know that it's exactly what love is not.

## *To Be or Not To Be*

If I try to be perfect, then it's really not me anymore. I never was and never will be perfect, because the mere definition of it keeps evading. Perfection can be as real as a mirage.

All I really want is to be whoever it is that I choose to be, but to be it with passion.

## *Happiness hurts*

What pleases hurts, what aches soothes  
Is it the world that is changing  
Or is it you and your presence  
That is causing happiness to hurt

The sound of your silence  
The touch of your distance  
Makes me wander deep in my thoughts  
People around me are just the same  
But it is you and your presence  
That is causing happiness to hurt

The scar of your glance  
Is deep yet comforting  
I sometimes hide from its sight  
So I can not see it piercing  
Is the world that is changing  
Or is it you and your presence  
That is causing happiness to hurt?



There are two kinds of regrets. One for something that we have done and one for something that we haven't. It may not be a bad idea to avoid the former and to do the latter at any cost.

## *Steps in the Journey*

The journey called love requires the travel companions to take their steps in harmony. How we walk together determines whether this journey feels like a walk in the park or a boot camp.

If a foot is left hanging up in the air for too long, we will stumble and fall. If the foot is kept back at the same place it was lifted from, we will continue marching without moving an inch.

It is, therefore, essential to pause every now and then to check whether we are walking towards the same destination, and more importantly, whether we are still walking together.

It is only after I truly learnt  
what it came to teach me,  
did the pain  
finally depart.



## *Nourishing our Core*

Just like we feed our bodies on a daily basis, so must we nourish our inner core regularly. The one residing inside our body, our inner self, needs to be given conscious love and attention. It is definitely not a 'once in a while' or a 'someday/ one day' kind of task.

We must bring it out in the open, soak it in the warmth of the sunlight, bathe it in the cool water of a flowing stream, dry it up in the fresh breeze, drape it in the vibrant colours of flowers, take it on adventures in the wild, immerse it in the effervescent spirit of city life, help it unwind under the shade of a tree, let it be moved by poetry and music, and let it be soothed by the silence.

We need not wait for any special occasion in our lives to make it happen; it's the simple things that our inner self craves. It simply needs to be shown the world and be shown to the world.



Whenever we feel something deep inside our hearts, it is at that moment that we have truly lived. Rest of the time we are just passing life by.

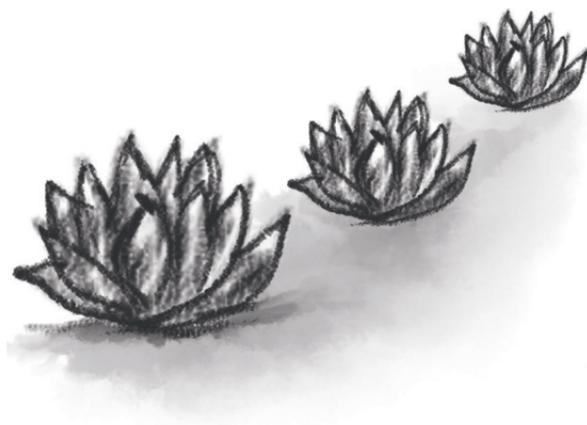
## *Introspection*

The most essential ingredient of introspection is brutal honesty with oneself. However hurtful, nasty, irritating or painful it may be, I never dismiss or suppress my brutally honest inner voice. I always listen to it.

I may not always act upon it, but I always listen to it.

And that's why I can say with complete honesty that no one else knows me better than myself, for I don't lie to myself.

To feel the hurt is easy.  
It is after we are done feeling the hurt,  
that the most difficult task of healing begins.



## *Unpretentious beauty*

Once upon a time, there was a me  
Wandering about in stupor  
Inside the walls of my fidgety mind  
My form lazying on the lap of my sofa  
My eyes raring to escape its confines  
After moments of restless wandering  
They finally rested their gaze on a flower  
There it was...

Unpretentious of its beauty  
Unaware of its bewitching hues  
Daydreaming in its own world  
Oblivious to the glancing views

For the flower knew,  
That all that was required from it  
Was to just simply be  
A life brimming with wild intensity

cont.

And even though  
Being true to self was painfully tough  
Just being a flower was simply enough

And so with efforts of a child's play  
The flower pulled beings of all kinds  
Butterflies, birds, bees, dew drops  
Even roaming pair of my restless eyes

And when I turned the flower with my glance  
I found my eyes smiling back at me  
And just like that on that spring morning  
I found a piece of my broken me

## *The Train Ride*

Which side we sit in a train changes the whole perspective of the outside scenery.

If we sit facing the direction of the travel, we are presented with a longer view of the future, and if we sit facing the opposite side of the journey, we get a longer view of the past.

But in both cases, we only get a split second the view of the present. Just like how we sit on the fence of our life.



Sometimes  
meaningful  
destruction  
is better than  
senseless creation.

## *Our Empty Spaces*

We entered this world complete. The holes that we carry within us are our own creation. It doesn't matter whether the knife was our own or someone else's. But it was we who gave the permission.

Sure, some of these holes might have been carved when we were defenceless. But today we are not. Today, there is no reason why we should continue to blindly gaze into their nothingness. There is no reason to helplessly watch the past dig the abyss deeper.

If these voids are still alive within us, it's because we are the ones breathing life into their emptiness. It's because we are the ones lending our voice to make these echoes reverberate.

It's we who need to close the emptiness and silence the echoes; No one else can do it for us.

Am I being an idealist, or are you being someone who has learned to accept compromising with happiness as a way of life?



## *Seeking an Outside Spark*

I am being drawn to the search for an outside spark in my quest to seek internal inspiration. I know very well that it will cause anxiety and distraction. I know very well that there are other peaceful paths leading to my destination. Yet I continue.

The storms of the future are distant but clearly visible to my eyes. Yet I keep going. Perhaps this is a part of life that I am forcing myself to experience. Perhaps this is how I will get my wisdom on the other side of the storm.

Who said learning was easy.



We can force someone to do something for us.  
We cannot force them feel something for us.

## *The Avalanche*

Let's snowball our efforts and create an avalanche.

But before we begin, we must first decide what we want to ride on top of the avalanche and what are we prepared to bury underneath it. Because there will be casualties.

Everything comes at a price.

## *Playground or Battlefield*

Wars should be fought on playgrounds rather than on battlefields. It's much safer, better for the economy, and much more entertaining.

It is also more ethical for the companies sponsoring them.



If the intensity is not felt, very soon things will fizzle out into the inconsequential. Be it work or love.

## *#metoo*

I don't think there's any woman who has not faced some kind of unwanted sexual gesture, advancement, or action in public places or within the secure walls of our homes. Often the sheer number of such occurrences makes a woman ignore many of them as a way of life. You see, we have programmed our minds to prioritize what we should let go and what we should take seriously. Otherwise, we will simply go mad.

What does that say about the times we are living in?

What does it say about us women?

What does it say about the generation we are raising?

## *Having it All*

To all those people who keep telling me that I can't have my cake and eat it too, here are my two cents.

First of all, they got the saying all wrong. The original saying goes like this... 'to eat your cake and have it too'.

Second of all, why the heck would I bake a cake in the first place, if I can't eat it?

Don't stay where you are not wanted,  
be it home or heart.



## *The Voids*

There are always spaces of voids in the continuum of our life.

Sometimes these voids don't represent emptiness that needs to be filled up. They are simply present as an invitation to go inwards on a wild exploration into our nothingness.

But sometimes, emptiness of some voids is a reminder of the absence of something or someone. These are the ones we fill with our memories of the past or the hopes of the future, just to stay afloat in their vacuum. These are the ones which remind us of a loss.

We take flights all the time. But the question is, how often we take them to meet someone and how often we take them to leave someone behind.



## *The Old Trunk*

Once upon a time  
There was a me

Wandering about in stupor  
In the basement of my home  
Mindlessly occupied in bringing order  
To the labyrinth of mundane chores

With hand full of dust  
Mind full of thoughts  
I played my favourite game of hop scotch  
The hop scotch of my mind

And as I bent to pick up my thought  
My hand met with an old wrinkled trunk  
They knew each other from a distant past  
As they reunited, their distance shrunk

cont.

There it was, the old wrinkled trunk...  
Holding colourful rags & knotted yarn  
Shiny stones & faded bronze  
Broken glasses from when I fell  
Torn photos of when I rebelled  
All of these and many such crowns  
Raised my being from birth until now

But the trunk knew,  
Infinite time will come and go  
Shadowed past will often show  
Bruises and healing are part of the game  
We hide the scars and cover the shame  
But to truly adorn, the returning hurt  
We must first embrace, its lingering dust

And when I opened the lid some more  
I saw an old thought smiling back at me  
And just like that on that dusty day  
I found a piece of my broken me



Whenever I have challenged myself to explore the limits of my fears and insecurities, a new me has always emerged out of my very own shadow.

## *Safe Exit*

Parting ways hurts. How deep the hurt is depends on how deep the involvement is.

Sometimes to protect oneself from this fall, one gets involved only at a level that offers a safe exit. While this safeguards the heart from a deeper hurt, it also deprives it of a possibility to feel a deeper connection.

It's not an easy choice as both ways it's the heart that is at the losing end.

Don't always ask yourself, "why".  
Sometimes ask "why not".



## *Immensity*

Whenever I want to free myself of the troubling pettiness of my ego, I surround myself with something of such immensity, that it can show my ego how inconsequential it truly is.

And every single time that greatness is the quiet grandeur of nature.

## *The Realities of our Lives*

If given an honest chance to reveal themselves in their unembellished forms, our realities have the power to bring immense clarity to our little world, even at their own cost, even if it means that we may choose another reality over them. In that regard, they are truly selfless.

After all, they are our realities; they live and die for us.

## *Anatomy of a Thought*

Troubled by a thought? Pull it out in the open.

Inside the mind, it remains mysterious and feeds on negativity. If we do not shield its truth with our biases, we can finally understand it's anatomy.

So pull it out of your head. Lay it flat on the floor and completely expose it so that it can be seen from all the sides and all the angles.

That's when it loses its power.

## *The rat race to happiness - An essay*

The first step towards chasing real happiness causes real misery. The majority of us grew up believing and cherishing the pre-defined parameters of happiness. We believe that the more parameters we can fulfil, the more happiness we can achieve. And thus begins our journey to chase what we are wired to believe. And while we are at it, we don't seem to realize when this personal journey of life becomes a full-fledged rat race.

It's amazing, this rat race.

This is a race where the finishing line is also racing away from us. Irrespective of whether we are the 'hare' or the 'tortoise' in this race, we can never really touch the finish line that keeps teasing and taunting us with 'catch me if you can'.

cont.

It's not a surprise that happiness seems like a mirage.

But then, somewhere along the race, some people notice this paradox. They begin to question the dynamics of this race and the authenticity of the moving goalpost. And something unthinkable happens. Against all the practical wisdom acquired over the years, they do the unthinkable... they Pause.

It's amazing, this Pause.

Somehow this pause is more demanding and challenging than the actual running. But these warriors brave the pause. They begin to realize that if the goal post keeps running faster than them, they will never be able to achieve it. They figure out that their chase for the 'pre-defined' notions of success will not make them happy. They again do the unthinkable.

cont.

They begin to redefine their own meaning of happiness.  
And thus begins a new journey.

It's amazing, this new journey.

It forces us to carve our own track and field event inside the Olympics of humanity. It makes us look inside for answers, rather than glancing at our neighbours. And as we attempt to accomplish this already arduous task, we, at the same time, have to find the courage to not get lured back to the old race. The old race, by the way, looks like a cakewalk compared to this inner contemplation.

We become like recovering addicts searching for a detox plan hidden under the pool of our vices. Nothing can be more brutally demanding of our undeterred determination than this.

cont.

And then, upon finding some answers that are true to us and our wellness and fulfilment, begins yet another journey.

It's amazing, this new journey.

It is like no other. The goalpost is now steadfast and awaits for us with open arms. This is a journey where traversing becomes like a series of self-choreographed moves, where rhythm becomes more important than the technique.

This is a journey where the steps define the direction.  
This is a journey where the feet pave the path.

And that's how it should be.

## *The Step child*

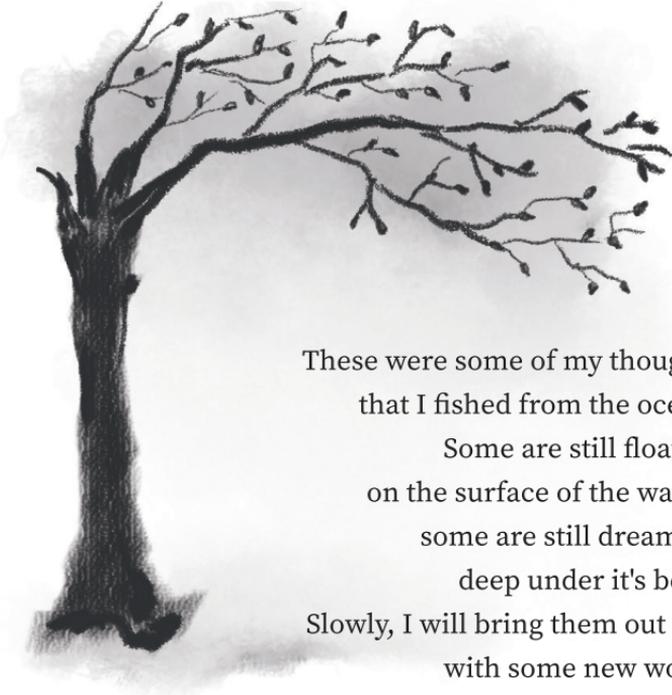
Alone in the corner, the step-child waits  
Hoping against hope, for the darkness to fade  
But life goes on, with its busy grinding churn  
The Stepchild sits alone, quietly waiting for its turn

Wrapped in your life, trapped in its maze  
You give yourself in, to a never-ending chase  
You do everything, that the world expects of you  
Your family, your friends, and sometimes strangers too

And then you are left with nothing  
Nothing more to give  
So far away have you gone  
That there's nothing left to feel  
For that child who is abandoned  
Who's always left behind  
The one who always waits  
For a tiny grain of your time

cont.

You ignore, you mistreat  
You stopped caring long ago  
You forgot to remember  
The existence of that tiny soul  
So busy, so tired, you have no moments  
Not even a few  
For that lonesome little soul  
The step-child that is you



These were some of my thoughts  
that I fished from the ocean.

Some are still floating  
on the surface of the waves,  
some are still dreaming  
deep under it's belly.

Slowly, I will bring them out too,  
with some new words  
on some new pages

Until then, I thank you for spending time with my  
thoughts. And with me.

With all my gratitude, I thank you for reading the pages that came before this. You may have disagreed with some of my thoughts resolutely, and with some, perhaps found an equally strong sense of cerebral déjà vu. Some lines may have created ripples in your heart, while some verses may have given your thoughts a silent company.

If any of that happened, my thoughts indeed spoke to yours, and they thank you for being heard.

If you enjoyed reading my book, I would be grateful if you could find time to leave your honest review on the website from where you purchased the book. It would mean a lot to me.

I wish you a joyful and fulfilled life.

Yours truly,  
Asmita

