AWAAZ
south asian journal of arts spring 2008
Shruti Parekh
*Untitled*
Charcoal on paper
Dear reader,

Welcome to the spring 2008 issue of Awaaz! For those who have been with us from the beginning, you will notice changes. This year’s staff has pushed farther, been more critical and even more creative than before. In short, we’re mixing things up! It is my opinion that the changes you will see in color, feeling and selection reflect the changes we see in both our team and the South Asian community here at Brown.

When I began this journal three years ago I could hardly imagine where it would be today. I eagerly wrote to you: “Awaaz hopes to create a space for the Brown community to intellectually discuss South Asia and the modern South Asian experience through art, photography, poetry and prose. Particularly in the absence of a South Asian department here at Brown, there is a striking need for both a literary and artistic outlet within our community.” Our discussions have been wonderful and the work has spoken for itself. However, there is more to be done.

Over the trajectory of my experience on staff, I have watched submissions grow both in number and in vulnerability. As the community becomes more confident in this forum, so too does its voice. It is my hope that Awaaz continues to challenge our community to be more open and more willing to discover the diversity of experiences among us. Let us not only celebrate the voices you will read and see, but actively seek those that felt they would not be heard.

It is in this spirit that I invite you to flip through these pages and enjoy the collection of poetry, prose, photography and art that you have inspired. This issue has been a labor of love and on behalf of everyone involved, and I would like to thank the student groups, faculty and staff that have made this publication possible. More than anything, I would like to thank the Awaaz staff and the Brown community for everything they have meant for me and for this journal.

Sincerely & with love,

Jhale Ali ’08
Founder
Awaaz, South Asian Journal of Arts
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Godhuli Bhattacharya  
Priyan Chandraratna  
Priyanka Ghosh  
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Nisha Mirani  
Shruti Parekh  
Sumbul Siddiqui  
Kam Sripada  
Ila Tyagi

special thanks to

Dean Katherine Bergeron, Dean Maitrayee Bhattacharyya, Dean Kisa Takesue, SASA, Marissa Quinn, Rahul Banerjee

*All submissions were selected through an anonymous voting process and do not necessarily reflect the views of Awaaz, South Asian Journal of Arts’ staff.
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as I looked around, I realized they didn’t even bother to put doors on Margaret’s house
the oppressive sunlight poured in through bare doorways and naked window panes, it was a sticky day in mid-August and even though I knew that the monsoons were still weeks away, I couldn’t help but wonder what Margaret would do when the torrential downpours began without doors and windows, she would be swallowed up as helpless victim to the elements.
Akshay Rathod
*The Ferris Wheel Stroll*
Digital Photograph
Ojus Doshi
*Gray to Green*
Digital Photograph
[ for “Returning” see printed journal ]
At 3 pm on Sunday afternoons
I sit in Madam Scrinch’s bare studio,
playing “Auld Lang Syne” on the piano.

My wrists hurt from trying
too hard to “float” my hands through the air,
but I know my fingering is perfect
because I play the same song every week
as Madam Scrinch supervises in the background.

My back hurts since I strain
to keep the straight posture of the Queen’s guard.
They are about to change shift.
I long to watch while the sun is up, but not
as Madam Scrinch supervises in the background.

My scalp hurts—my pigtails are too tight.
James from down the block used to yank them before
his father left for the Royal Air Force.
He doesn’t smile anymore, but I mustn’t think of that
as Madam Scrinch supervises in the background.

Finishing the piece, I mumble my thanks and
rush outdoors.
She pulls a chair towards the window,
watching a lone plane fly across the sunset,
counting the days till New Year’s.

At 3 pm on Sunday afternoons
by Shara Azad

A W A A Z S P R I N G 2 0 0 8
Meara Sharma
1st class
Digital Photograph
Upon landing in Jamaica, the heat hits the unwary traveler with unexpected strength. Though this vacationer was anticipating a tropical climate, the sheer intensity of Jamaican heat in August is no more than an unwelcome nuisance. Nothing has prepared the overworked American for this—not the advertisements and signs promising enjoyment and ease, not the cool atmosphere of the plane, not the men and women scattered throughout the airport in stereotypical local garb, dancing and singing the virtues of relaxation and rum. The atmosphere outside is staggering, almost suffocating. Large Jamaican men press in from all sides, offering taxi rides, scenic hotel rooms, ganja. This amateur is thankful when he reaches his five-star hotel that he will never encounter heat like this again. But there are some who feel this heat and know they’ve come home.

For the lover of Jamaica, whether a resident, a seasoned visitor, or even an accepting traveler, the arrival at the airport is a vastly different experience. The plane ride, the wait in immigration, and the noise of arguing Jamaicans are merely distractions that delay the first step outside of the air-conditioned airport and into the Jamaican atmosphere. While the heat is still suffocating, these travelers embrace it like a soft and familiar blanket of warmth, albeit an intense form of warmth. This warmth does not enclose and constrain but rather envelops this traveler. The breeze is gentle on the skin and does not have the crisp edge that many breezes carry. Walking out into the hot Jamaican air is like diving into a swimming pool—the warmth fully surrounds anything it comes into contact with and offers a feeling of buoyancy. The sun beating down from the pristine sky projects energy straight into the human body and everything feels safe and unified.
To the lover of Jamaica, the heat of the country says: “Welcome home . . . wata gwaan?”

The heat resides in the bones of true Jamaican residents. While a Jamaican resident is anyone who lives or has lived there at any point in time, a true Jamaican resident is anyone who considers themselves in any manner to be a Jamaican. These people live with the heat of Jamaica forever. It is in their every action and gesture, in their attitudes and personality, in the restlessness that they feel living anywhere else. If they leave they try to replace it forever—only to realize that doing so is by definition impossible because the heat of Jamaica is utterly unique.

Jamaican heat is inextricably associated with the flavor of the country and it does not have one concrete translation. It embodies both the typical ideas associated with heat — passion, spice, or intensity — while also evoking ideas traditionally believed to be the opposite of heat like leisure, relaxation, and acceptance. Each one of these ideas captures one definition of the heat of Jamaica and yet all of them together do not completely define it, because the full scope of Jamaica’s heat cannot be realized with words. The heat of Jamaica extends far beyond the physical temperature of the tropical island. Though this temperature radiates from the land, the sky, and every broken-down house and five-star hotel, the heat of Jamaica means much more.

Jamaica’s heat is the extra kick in its jerk sauce, nearly paralyzing to those overeager eaters not used to the taste. Savoring the searing burn that the sauce trails straight down to the stomach is accepting Jamaican heat at its purest. It is living in that moment, any moment, heedless of the consequences.

Jamaica’s heat is the intensity and energy in the Jamaicans’ dancing and the passion that they feel for their music. Jumping into the crowd and dancing until every muscle aches, dancing past that point, dancing until every fiber of being is in tune with the music. Comprehension in Jamaica is allowing the body to melt into the beat of “the Willy Bounce” while the butt literally bounces up and down and then seamlessly flowing into the cool rhythm of Bob Marley’s “Three Little Birds.”

Jamaica’s heat is the optimism that defines the island and the calm approach to any problem assumed by its residents. To let go of stress and worry, wholly accept the well-known mantra “no problem, mon,” and feel both the body and the mind loosening is to understand the Jamaican mindset. When to-do lists and schedules drop out of the day, when sitting out in the sun and watching the sky for hours without needing to make a mark on the world makes sense—that is when Jamaica has entered body and soul. It is that point when the word “productive” no longer dominates the conversation.

Yet most importantly, Jamaica’s heat is reflected most accurately in the fierce and everlasting love its residents have for the island, and in embracing this love, and in loving too.
and so we walk.
two Shadows caught
in that Space
between the Ocean
and the Rising Sun.
My forearms always stick to the plastic, flowered tablecloth as I sit, waiting for the poison.

At last, it arrives, a white liquid, almost opaque, but too watery in consistency, carried in on a silver platter, which nearly fools me into thinking it’s a treat.

Powdered milk is not a treat.

My aunt sits by, under strict orders from my mother to watch as I force the concoction down my throat. The first sip tastes like bile, and I can almost feel the processed granules on my tongue. I grimace. How vile.

The phone rings. My eyes follow my aunt as she leaves the room. I slowly rise and creep over to the potted plant in the corner.

Milk for two.
Meara Sharma
flower-wallah
Digital Photograph
Kam Sripada
Field Trip #2, Ellora Cave 16
Digital Photograph
In my little green book, I used to make lists of people I cared about, of people I needed, of people I wanted. She was always on top of my lists. Although she came as an outsider to our household, she definitely became a part of the family I had created in my mind, the family that comprised my mother, my father, and her. I called her Amma.

Ever since I can remember, she was always there. As I woke up to face the new day, she would be on her way, walking from her sister’s house in Mettuguda to my house in the protected campus of the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, a walk that to this day I wouldn’t want to undertake. Amma would quickly fill up a bucket full of hot water before it ran out for the day, and pour mugs of it on me as I rubbed my body with Pears soap. She helped me get dressed, and tied around my hair a perfect bow of ribbons my father got for me from London. While cajoling me to drink my glass of milk, she packed my tiffin for school. When I was attending play-school in Secunderabad, we sauntered together to SitaFalmandi from where she caught us an auto-rickshaw to take me to my school. She waited for me on the steps outside the classroom, while I cried for her inside. I once told the teacher I needed to go to the bathroom just so I could go outside and be with Amma. When I was finally moved to the nearby Tiny Tots and then to St. Ann’s, she stopped coming with me, for Venkataya could easily drop me there in his rickshaw along with the other campus children. And when I started school at Vidyaranya, I was grown-up enough to take the school bus.

Yet, I always looked forward to seeing Amma on my return from school. Before I started Vidyaranya, I often returned from school before lunch-time and she would always keep curd rice ready for me. I would sit next to her on the spotted floor in the dining room as she deftly used her fingers to make curd-rice balls to put in my mouth. As she fed me, she told me stories about her life. She told me about the little boy she worked with before...
me, and in realizing my jealousy, she always convinced me that I was a far better child. She told me about her nephews, and often brought the youngest one, Blaise, with her on Saturdays to be my playmate. She told me about her childhood, about growing up in the 1940s, about hiding under the bed during the time of India’s independence. I remember looking into her cloudy eyes hidden by the big round gold-framed spectacles she wore. I remember watching the sagging chocolate-colored skin around her vocal chords move as she spoke. I remember playing with the folds of her skin, and with the many religious pendants she wore on the thick gold-plated chain around her neck. But I wish I remembered her stories.

When I started having nightmares, she gave me her silver crucifix to keep under my pillow, promising it would protect me. When my mother had an operation and my father had to be in the hospital with her, Amma stayed with me overnight, trying her best to make me sleep. When my parents went to Monda market on Sundays and didn’t return when they were supposed to, she reassured me repeatedly that they were on the way until I finally saw the grey Fiat arrive from the meshed window. When I wanted her to come with me to Delhi on our annual family trip, she came. Amma was always there. The sight of her oval, bespectacled face, her tight hair bun dappled with white wispy hair, and her sari-clad body; the touch of her rough aged hands, and her wrinkly skin; and the sound of her mellifluous voice repeating ‘sri devi, shaker devi, bonu devi . . . ’ were all I needed. When my friends used to come to my house and make fun of her caring manner, singing ‘Harriet the hen, hatches an egg,’ I stopped talking to them. When my parents discussed whether it was time for them to let her go, I got angry at them.

Then one day she told us she had to leave. Her nephew, Felix, and his wife were going to have a baby and they needed her to take care of their child. She chose her family. Amma told me that I was now a big girl, that I was eight years old and could take care of myself, and that she would come often to visit. She came almost every month, but we never did have the conversations we had had before. I was always busy playing with my friends, watching Captain Planet, or pretending to be the bright Vidyaranya student. She occupied herself cooking all my favorite things. She would make sambar, arbi, and mutton-gutton: always detectable, always perfect. She continued to come every year just before Christmas, bringing with her the bags of sweets and savories that they made at her house: spicy murukku and banana chips. She also continued to come every year on my birthday, bringing more sheets for my bed, more nightdresses for me to wear, and more framed photographs of me for my parents to display. I loved her, and even though I never knew what to say to her, or how to thank her, I know she knew.

And then when I was eleven, we told her that we were going to leave Hyderabad for Brunei. We told her we would come back in a few years, but she told us that we would not come back. I vowed to write letters to her, and she told me she knew someone at church who could read and write English and would translate them and reply to them for her. I kept my word, and so did she. I used to write to her with stories about my school, about life in my new world, ending always with ‘looking forward to your reply.’ Every month, I awaited the tattered thin blue aerogram, even though I knew that I would read the same words on tearing it open, words that told me that I should study hard and keep my parents happy, that she was always praying for me. I sometimes wondered if my letters were ever read and translated to her, for nothing I said was ever directly acknowledged.
I understood though that the letters were only a way for us to tell each other that we were still alive and well, that we still cared. The details didn’t matter.

Every year on my birthday, my parents would call her, letting her wish me another successful year, and letting me express my tacit affection. They would then talk to her, ask her how she was, as I listened anxiously over the speaker phone. She told them that she still had high blood pressure, and that she was continuing to take her medications regularly. She told them she was getting weaker. We all felt depressed after these conversations, realizing that the only thing we could do from so far was to send her money. The one time I managed to visit Hyderabad, our old home town, I went to her house and sat next to her on her bed holding her hand for an hour, shocked at how frail her body had become, how shrunken her face had become, and how white her hair bun had become. She could hardly move. Yet, as I sat there speechless, she fussed over me as she always did, giggling and telling me that I had become a woman. She knew why, for she then told me repeatedly that as she could no longer walk to church, she could not send me any more letters, that she was going to ‘go up’ soon, and that she had told Blaise to send me an email from his IT job if something happened to her. I didn’t know how to respond, I didn’t know how to accept it, for she still was on my list of people I needed for life. She told me I should call her regularly, and I did. She told me I should just pray for her, and I did.

Then on July 2nd, a day before my usual birthday phone call to her, it happened. I had come back from school, and my mother told me that I should have a nap first, that I should not waste my afternoon away on the computer. Yet, I went to the computer, and there it was. When my parents showed it to me later in the day, I pretended I had not seen it. I was ready to act calm and composed in response, so that they could not know how much she still affected me. My parents called her family, asking how it had happened. She had been in hospital, it was sudden. My Amma was gone, just like she had said, and I had to accept it. I slept with her crucifix under my pillow that night, and I still keep it at my bedside. It convinces me that Amma is always there.
Darshan Patel
Monabhen nu lagan
(Monabhen’s Wedding)
35 mm Photograph
“Like a restless wind inside a letter box”

*What are the sparkly things in this basket by your door?*

Oh.

- muddy jeans and sweaty t-shirts
- mismatched socks and glass Coke bottles
- goalposts and the Beatles
- sticky Popsicles and the Old Testament
- watermelon and clenched fists
- chipped nailpolish and your bedroom-eyes
- Apple-seed earrings and Yellow Ambassadors
- the “i” in iPod and cobbled streets
- Marlon Brando and fingerprints
- Kolkata and a friend
- aeroplane wings and HelloKitty
- naked mannequins and slamming doors
- Lost In Translation and chasing snails
- scattered beads and stained hands
- Mary Jane and dessert wine
- sleepless nights and cracked mirrors
- dusty roads and OneMoreTime
- Mum and Dad and Dad and Mum.

You know...

*Uh. No.*

Starburst-flavoured, psychadelic flecks of happiness. I guess.

*Oh. But, there aren't very many in here...*

No. There aren't very many at all.
Not needing to know why but
If,
    from which springs coloured
lines,
al different
    old women

how much is there of past motion in their eyes
unmappable,

surely

a different language
inside of everyone exists

    a drawing back of the ocean from the shore
    or silent unity of sand against sea below.

even in harmony there is

If

in our difference of movement
when there is one line left
will this old woman say draw back?
Aviva Grossman
*Figure Study #11; female*
Brown ink, black ink, black charcoal, white conte
Neil Trivandrum stands in the doorway of his room, looking at his mother across the hall from him in the living room. Her face has shattered. Crying faces don’t dissolve into tears, he reflects, so much as fall apart. They look like they are made of bricks that have spontaneously crumbled. His father has retreated to the opposite end of the living room and turned on the television. He rests his massive paunch on his thighs and follows the movements on the screen through his small piggy eyes. It is late afternoon. Neil wheels his bicycle the short distance across the hall to his mother.

“Come, let’s go downstairs, Mumma.” She pays no attention, looking across the living room at his father and crying.

“Come, come.” Neil tries to put his arm around her waist and coax her towards the door.

“You go. I want to talk to Papa.”

While he is waiting for the elevator Ella Fitzgerald sings in his head, *I try to shower you with love and kisses, but all I ever get from you is naggin’ and braggin’, my poor heart is saggin’*. Her song reflects his parents’ relationship a little. When he gets downstairs he thinks, only five months, only five more months till I go away to university, thank God.

Neil cycles from the Pizza Hut at one end of the pink brick walkway to the concrete wall at the other, and back. The walkway traverses the entire length of the beach. A Burger King stands more or less in the middle, with jasmine bushes behind it. Neil passes the Burger King twelve times, smelling the sweet scent of jasmine each way. It’s Thursday. Families are out on the sand, celebrating the weekend against the deepening purple of the sky. Burqa-clad women sit on the sand, surrounded by their stoic husbands and their screaming children. The screaming children are half-naked, laughing and dancing around on the sand. A few brave women are wading into the water. Their black burqas absorb water like sponges and are dragging behind them on the waves. The men are too stoic to try the water. They sit still, looking towards the sea, their rounded backs looking like granaries draped in white dishdashes.

Neil never knows what transpires between his parents while he is doing his rounds, up and down, up
and down. On his way back towards the Pizza Hut on his twelfth round, he sees that his mother has come downstairs. She is waiting for him, a black comma on the sand, sitting on the concrete ledge separating the walkway from the beach. He draws closer and closer and closer and the comma gets bigger. He props his bicycle up behind her and sits next to her, wordless. The stars form a pentagon in the now black sky.

That night at two in the morning, all is quiet in the house. Neil has shut his bedroom door and is painting sashes for his prom silently. The gold paint seeps through the gauzy purple fabric as he paints, so he can make out the letters Prom King and Prom Princess traced across the surface of the newspapers he carefully places beneath. His mother creeps into his room. She is hunched over her folded arms. Lately, she has been keeping odd hours. She is usually asleep by nine. Tonight she looks as though she hasn't gone to bed yet. She stands watching him sadly. He looks at her and is not sure what to do, so he goes on painting.

“You’re painting the sashes?” Neil nods. She continues watching him sadly.

“I haven’t done my housework today.”
His mother prides herself on the excellence of her housekeeping.

“I’ve been so worried about you going to college. How you’ll manage over there?” She pauses. Then, as though she is aware that what she is about to say is blasphemous, says, “That’s why I was thinking . . . this money we’ve saved for your college . . . we can use it instead to buy a nice apartment for you . . . and you can live near us.”

Neil wonders, nonplussed, why she is suddenly reneging on her decade-long dream that he attend university. Angrily, he casts around for proof of his competence.

“Look at all the extracurricular activities I do, Mumma. I’m Head Boy of my school, I applied to all those universities, and you think I won’t be able to cope?”

His mother looks pained.

“Please don’t misunderstand me, Neil, please don’t misunderstand me.”
She struggles to express herself.

“Tell me I don’t need to worry, and I’ll go and do my work right now. Right now I’ll do.”

“You don’t need to worry so much, Mumma. You know the words of the song, In this life we all have trouble, if you worry you make it double?”

Her eyes widen a little, as though this is the most surprising thing she has ever heard.

“That’s so true . . .”

Neil pauses. “Yes,” he says, and returns to his sashes. He is irritated by the way she is taking his stupid reference so seriously. He wishes she would stop behaving strangely.

The prom is sweaty and smoky; Neil emerges from the dance floor gasping for a breath of fresh air. It is cooler in the hall outside the dance floor. He wanders past the Sixth Formers posing for photographs. A posse of Pakistani students puffing away on cigars. The Head Girl looks nice tonight, he thinks in passing, seeing her swing from the hotel lobby into the hall, her bare feet reddened where her impossibly high stilettos were chafing against them. Earlier in the evening she had drawn him aside, waved her hand from the top of her head down to her waist and said, “Neil, do you see the reference to Alexander Pope?” They were reading The Rape of the Lock in English class. He had looked her over, her claret-colored gown, her long hair down, some sort of brooch pinned to her chest.

“I don’t know,” he said.

“On her white breast, a sparkling dragonfly she wore, which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore,” she said triumphantly, pointing to the crystal dragonfly pinned to her chest.
“Ah,” he had said.  
She is coming up to him now, looking a little puzzled. “Neil, your mother just called me. You should call her. I think she’s getting worried.”

He had given his mother her number at the start of the year. Shit. Neil looks at his watch; it is late. He hadn’t been able to hear his phone ring in the cacophony of the dance hall. He fishes it out of his pocket and makes his way to the men’s room, brushing past gaggles of girls giggling as they emerge from a mirrored vestibule on the side surrounded by their adoring dates. The bathroom floor is littered with cigar ashes, crumpled pieces of paper and pools of orange juice. He shuts the door to a cubicle behind him and telephones his mother. She is worried. When he was younger she was one of the few mothers in their apartment complex who let him play downstairs with his friends well past midnight without breaking a sweat. He decides it would be best if he went home. He starts gathering his things, just as his classmates are beginning to climb onto the tables to continue dancing.

At home he runs his white plastic comb through his hair; it is pleasurably disgusting to see the teeth come away grey. He and his mother sit on the sofas in the living room, near the television, both leaning their heads back against the rexine head rests.

“See, my hair is crusted over with cigar smoke,” he says, brandishing the dirty comb in her direction. She nods mutely, looking like she is finding it difficult to comprehend what he is saying. Neil notices, but is too tired to make anything of her unusual quietness. To fill the space he talks and talks about the prom, how he had gone around lighting the candles on the table centerpieces, how he had thrown rose petals on the dance floor, how he and his friends had danced. He tells her how it had dawned on him that that was one of the last times that he and his classmates would all be together as one big group. They and he were coming to the parting of the ways – His mother stands up, and says she is going to sleep. Neil does the same, too tired to wash his hair that night. Slumped on his stomach, he wakes up briefly to realize that his mother is on the floor beside his bed. She is holding onto his arm gently as he sleeps, and blowing on her coffee. Her hand is warm. She drinks her coffee all the time: when she’s happy, when she’s unhappy, in the mornings, in the evenings, while she’s reading, while she’s eating dinner. She’s made many playful attempts to waft the smell of the coffee under Neil’s nose as well, trying to pass her love of the drink on to him. Neil does not want her to realize he is awake. The left side of his face is mashed against the mattress; he stops looking around his room wildly with his right eye and goes right back to sleep.

That Sunday, a weekday, he wakes up unusually early. It is still dark outside. He becomes aware of a shadow standing over his bed. His mother. “Neil . . . you’re awake?” she says tremulously. He catches a cankerous whiff of her breath. “I’ve been awake since two o’clock, and thinking, and I think it would be better if we both killed ourselves.”

“It was a false dream,” she insists, her face crum-
bling in misery. “It was a false dream. How you’ll stay warm over there? That’s why I brought this duct tape. I made you think you could go to university. That’s why I think it would be better if we both ended our lives.”

“Mumma, I don’t want to die now. I want to die an old man, safe and warm in my bed, Mumma.”

“But how you can go on living when your dream has died? It was a false dream.”

She is trying feebly to tear a strip of duct tape off. Neil is reminded of one of the last scenes in a movie he and his mother saw together. Having poisoned his wife, Sir Ben Kingsley puts a clear plastic bag over his head and winds a roll of duct tape around his neck tightly, round and round. His lungs fight for air a little, his breath coming out in quick bursts and misting the plastic like a windowpane. When they had emerged from the movie Neil had said “God, Ma, that was so depressing,” but she had loved it.

The duct tape is strong and she cannot tear it. She looks at her son in sorrow. She wants to kill them both, and now she can’t even do that. She slips the roll over her wrist again like a bangle. Slowly her hands creep to either side of Neil’s neck, and he panics.

He grasps her wrists and puts them away from him. He grabs the duct tape. He wants to be rid of it at once. He slides his window open and throws the roll out. When he turns to look at his mother, she seems disappointed in him.

“You threw it?” she whimpers. “Why you threw it?”

He needs to get out of his room. He steers her into the hallway.

“Put your hands on the shoe rack, Mumma,” he says. “Put your hands on the shoe rack!” She put her hands on the shoe rack, as does he. He looks down at her wrists, and notices that a patch of goose bumps has erupted near them. He follows the trail of goose bumps move rapidly up her arm and looks into her eyes. He sees only the right one, which widens a little in surprise. She sees him looking at her.

“I’m thinking about . . . killing you,” she says in awe.

Neil has to get out. He has to go to school. Once he is inside the taxi they hire to drive him there, he looks up to his bedroom window and sees her waving from it, as she usually does. The only difference is her face. Her face looks like a stone. Only as the taxi pulls away from the building does he realize that his father is at work. He has left his mother. He half-thinks of turning back, but the taxi is already bearing him away, and it is much easier to keep on going.

It is strange riding the elevator up to the apartment that afternoon. It is strange not knowing whether his mother will be dead or alive when he opens the door. The first thing he sees when he enters is his mother emerging from the kitchen. She stands on the threshold, hunched over her crossed arms, and looks at him uncertainly. His father is back from work and mentions that they have been to the hospital to get medicine. Neil knows his father is old hat at handling aberrations in his mother’s moods. He goes into his room and sees that she has laid his lunch out on his desk, as usual. He puts his bag down. He attempts to convince himself that that is that, that everything will be all right. His mother has followed him slowly, taking small, shuffling steps from the kitchen threshold, across the hallway, into his room. He twists around in his chair to look at her. Her arms are still crossed; she un hooks one slowly and makes an effort to gesture towards his tray.

“Eat your food,” she says tremulously, trying to arrange her face into an expression of encouragement. Neil’s heart sinks. She recrosses her arms slowly and shuffles out.
Pygmalion wasn’t the only one who created the Ideal—
I create her out of those hopes, those dreams, those desires that I leave unfulfilled.

She is the one I see in my mind that you want—
I know I cannot be her. I know my pride will not let me be her. But she emerges out of the stone that was once solid and uncracked.

I wish I was her.
Shruti Parekh
Dancer
Charcoal, pastel, gouache
Kam Sripada
*Untitled (Uncle David’s Three Weeks)*
Digital Photograph
“Rondure of the world at last accomplish’d”

by Kam Sripada

I

The champa bloom move and grow with joy
Let this first child be a chief
Let the second child be a secretary
Let the third be a cow boy
Let the fourth be a horse rider
Let the fifth be a shepherd
Let the next one be a protector of the parents
Let the last child learn and teach
Let him grow, let him grow

Banjara song

II

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life,
we commend to the Almighty our brother;
and we commit his body to the ground;
earth to earth; ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
The Lord bless him and keep him,
the Lord make his face to shine upon him
and be gracious unto him and give him peace.
Amen.

Catholic funeral verse

III

dust from ash wednesday
and dust from the thar
on the winds of our dreams
the dust sails far
Jhale Ali ’08 says with all the SAsian love she can muster and a final shout out to the class of ’OOOOOOO-8!, goodbye and hello to a wealth of p-Awaaz-a-bility.

Shara Azad has been accepted to Brown’s class of 2012 and has a library book that has been overdue since 1994.

Godhuli Bhattacharya ’09 will deliver the explosion.

Priyan Chandraratna ’08 has his “fate in the air and his feet on the ground, just waiting for life to begin.”

Ojus Doshi ’08 is just joking. He doesn’t want your couch.

Sujata Gidumal ’10 loves chocolate, dancing, and warm weather.

Aviva Grossman ’10 is bathing in the wood grain.

Maysa Jarudi ’08 thinks the hummus at Meeting Street Café really isn’t so bad.

Neha Kumar ’08 wants to become a genetic counselor.

Shruti Parekh ’10 sings when she is alone in the elevator.

Darshan Patel ’09 enjoys daar, baath, shak.

Reshma Ramachandran ’09 misses her mom’s South Indian food.

Akshay Rathod ’10 drinks mango lassis on lazy Sunday afternoons.

Meara Sharma ’10 thinks it would be so meta to move to Darjeeling.

Kam Sripada ’09 enjoys those paper-thin white plastic chai cups.

Ila Tyagi ’09 enjoys being gifted book vouchers, because a book is a present you can open again and again.

Karina Varma ’08 wanted to be Penelope Pitstop when she was a kid. Clearly nothing has changed.
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