

QUEER AS IN HERE



THE Q SUMMIT
POETRY ANTHOLOGY

LAKESHORE ARTS

ABOUT THE ANTHOLOGY

Q Summit is a program aimed at creating safe spaces and exploring advocacy through art for 2SLGBTQIA+ and allied youth. During Spring 2021, eight youth participated in the Q Summit Mentorship Intensive facilitated by artists Em Dial and Cass Myers.

Over the course of ten weeks, the participants sharpened their spoken word, poetry, and creative writing skills, while investigating themes of community, mental health, intersectional identity, and more.

This anthology showcases some of the incredible work developed by mentees during the course of this program. We hope you enjoy their work, and join us in imagining braver, safer, more abundant worlds for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

This project is
made possible by:



LAKESHORE ARTS

Q Summit is a project of Lakeshore Arts.
For more information about the
organization, visit lakeshorearts.ca
@LAKESHOREARTS

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Works by

JONATHAN

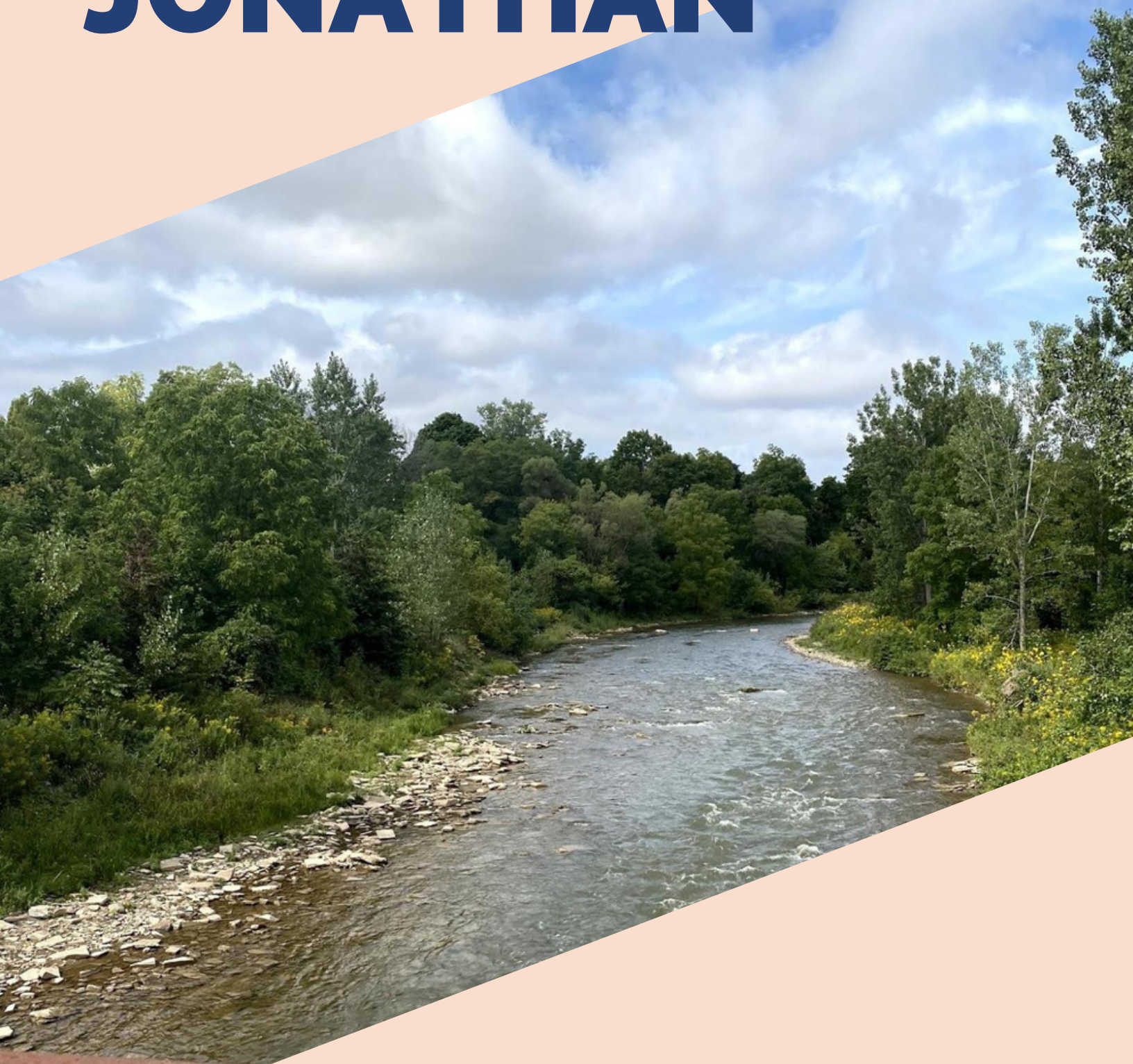
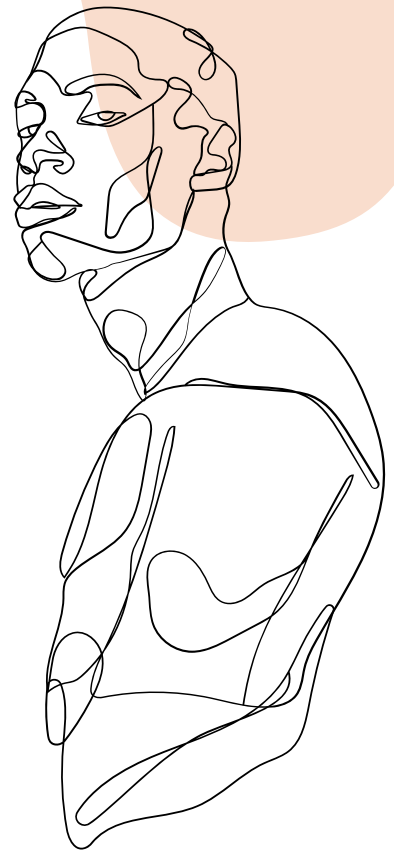


Image courtesy of Jonathan

A Black Experience

Jonathan

Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
It's the inside of the womb, there is love and safety from it all
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
It's the inside of a classroom
Bright coloured posters of what you can be all around
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
Not a broken home, still no mommy or daddy to call their own
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
University, big plaques and pictures of old faces ain't so bad, so big
high school looks small
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
Walls built so high that there is no emotion even when they try
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
Is there a god out there, someone who can heed their cry
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
Their passion is a force and the anger is a choice
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
Wrongfully convicted, put in a box
No opportunity, doesn't get to make that call
Walls, all he sees is walls
Walls, all she sees is walls
A hail storm, Death, there is peace after all



Ode to the Water Bearer

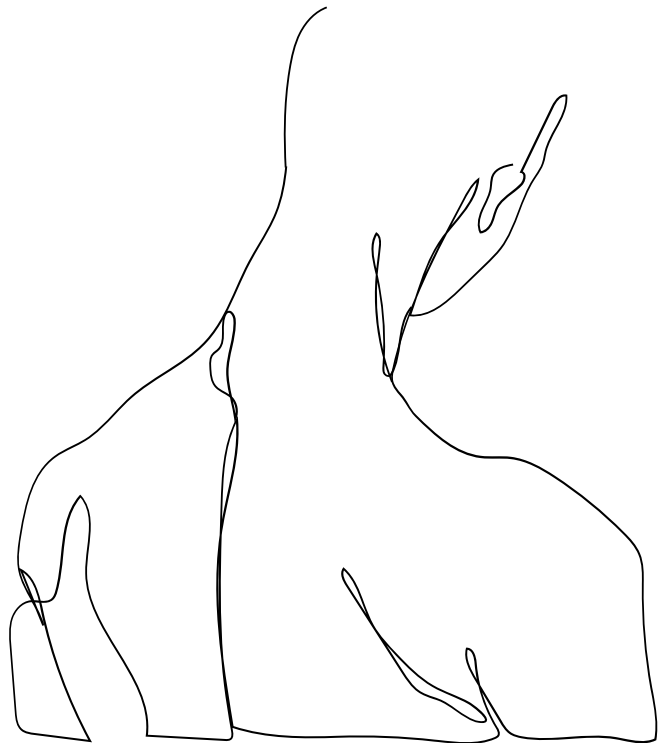
Jonathan

like the air you are hard to contain,
hard to catch,
hard to keep,
you vanish with a whisper and a blow,
The wanderer
acting as an axis
Revolving and running
Bearing it all
you are a breath of fresh air to those around which makes you easy to be around,
free spirit allowing you to be apart of anything and
headstrong attitude that makes any challenge a pebble in the street .
a great friend and companion,
Your ability to love as hard as you do is a force that few dare to know and understand
your response to uncertainty is no response at all
a formula that is absolute
You Create worlds that no one has ever heard of because
the one you live in just isn't enough
Stirring anger and disturbing your energy
Damned are those who bring chaos into your world, because
You.
Are.
Chaos.
and no one can understand this, but its all too late
when your tongue has given the last lash
Its all too late when your soul has been drenched in forbidden ink
But never too late to be yourself
Never too late to show someone that compassion is all it takes
You are the wind that fills their lungs
A feeling of fresh air
Air sign that bears the water
How do you do it

Resilient People

Jonathan

To be Fearless in the face of fear,
To be hopeful in the face of disappointment,
To be kind in the face of animosity,
To be strong in a losing battle,
To care when you are neglected,
To be free when you are captivated,
To be youthful in the old age,
To be flawed in flawlessness because you are perfectly made to live an imperfect life
To choose light instead of darkness,
To be the voice against social indifference,
To be triumphant and persevere in the face of difficulty,
To be colourful because why not!
To be humble and exaltation,
To have faith when there is doubt,
To love in the face of hate,
is what makes us, we, you, me ...
Resilient people.



JONATHAN

BIO

Jonathan is a Black-queer writer aspiring to be a social service worker who currently works with 2SLGBTQI+ communities through Rex Pride, a non-profit organization that is geared towards youth engagement and supports, that facilitates expression and individual development through art medias and workshops. He is passionate about the development of Black mental health supports as well as acting as an agent to provide safe spaces for queer youth. When he isn't writing, he's usually hanging out with friends or playing Sims.



Works by
MEA



Image courtesy of Mea

Superhero

Mea

Dear Superhero,

You saved me. You raised me. You hold me. You teach me.
I wish that I could tell you how much you mean to me.

You coloured my world with rainbows, it gets hard to see the grey,
I thank you for brightening my life, every single day.

I can't thank you enough for always being there,
It really teaches us how to love and how to care.

You know you are my role model, I've looked up to since the start,
I hope you know that you hold a special place in my heart.

Got the whole world against you, like strong tornado winds,
But somehow you just push through, always winning in the end.

The single mother I've always known stands high and mighty today,
The world beats her down, but she's got her best self on display.

I don't know how she does it, though I wish that I knew how,
The only word that comes to mind when seeing her is "wow."

Mom, I learned from you, care for you, love you with my entire heart.
I will not bear it, out on my own, each moment we're apart.

Raised three kids on your own, oh what a challenge to face.
I hope that I can make you proud when I finally leave home base.

Sincerely,

Your precious daughter,
Mea <3



What I See

Mea

You may not be perfect, but you're the perfect one for me.
Every time I look at you, it fills me up with glee.
I know you think you're worthless but I think you should see exactly what I see.

You show me what it's like to be tongue-tied:
I can never find the words to say,
But every time I look at you, it takes my breath away.

Your gorgeous brown eyes glisten when you stare into mine.
Like moonbeams, I'll watch them shine.
Like deep brown pools of the finest wine.
When I look at you, I reach cloud nine.

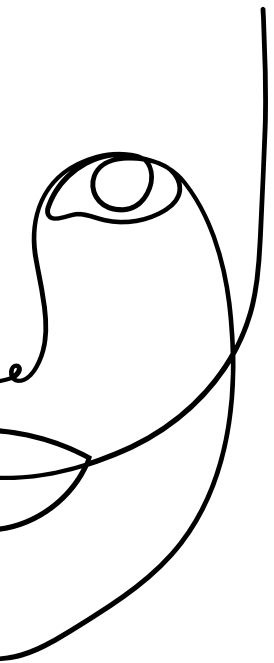
You're beautiful like the sunset, I just can't look away.
Ever since our eyes met, I've wanted to kiss you every day.
Your overbearing smile, radiant like the sun.
The magic of it draws me in, making me desire that taste of fun.

Your words compose a song that replays in my head.
I play it every night before I go to bed.
Soothing, sweet, gentle and soft,
To this lullaby, I turned and I tossed.
I listen to it while I'm counting sheep:
One sheep, five sheep; I've fallen asleep.

I dream about your curly hair entwined between my fingers.
Us laying in the grass staring up at cloud figures.
We lock eyes. Silence. We laugh and giggle as our smiles get bigger.

You're everything to me, from the beginning to the end,
Do you think that we'd be better off as friends?

This may be a little untimely to confess,
I think about you all the time, you must know that I'm obsessed.
We're already close, but not yet in that way,
Maybe we could try this out, just for a day.
Friends or lovers, I'll love you anyway,
So, we want to know, what do you say?



Covid Crisis: A Positive Outlook

Mea

We're living in a crisis, our world is under attack.
I just want to hug my friends, I want my world back.
We're all going crazy, inside all the time,
We just have to relax before we commit a crime.

Netflix has taken over, it's all I ever see,
I just have to accept that it's become a part of me.
One show after another, I'm trapped in my screen,
It swallows me whole, I'm now attached to this machine.

We are all struggling in our separate ways,
Waiting for things to normalize while we sit and pray.
But let's look at the positive, so we don't go astray,
We need to make the most of this every single day.

Technology for the win, it's taken a stand,
All that I can see is that it's glued to my hand.
But don't you worry, there are many upsides too,
Like putting us artists together so we can make our debut.

Because we can't travel, we acknowledge what is near,
Like all of the local shops and the businesses here.
Families are connecting using apps like Zoom,
It's amazing what we can do just from our bedrooms.

We've adopted all these hobbies just sitting at home,
Like baking, and painting, and writing new poems.
We cook with our families, spending quality time together.
We have fun within our homes while society gets better.

All this extra freetime lets us do what we put off before,
Our to-do lists are shrinking, how about we tackle one more?
The books we forgot to read and the workouts that we missed,
Now's the time to take charge, cross that next thing off your list.

We can all get through this with some positivity.
Just stay inside, be safe and soon we'll all be free.
The world has just restarted, new actions will take place,
Make the most of this so we can see each other face to face.





MEA



BIO

Mea Roberts is a Grade 10 student from Brampton, Canada. She is very passionate about all things art. When Mea isn't stressing about her schoolwork, she is steady socializing, singing, drawing, and creating. In the future, Mea hopes to become an elementary school teacher, where she can bring out the creativity in all of her students.

Works by

SANJIV



(emotion)

Sanjiv

My sexuality is not a personality the brutality of the wrongly translated bible caused beyond fatality..... I define myself and was born the way I am and that should be without penalty. It shouldn't be an argument and be fortunately left at settlement, live your life and I will live mine. It's only a matter of time when people stop judging others' lives.



(in love)

Sanjiv

You're the honey to my tea, the cherry at the top of my ice cream sweeter than sweet at 17
i've never meant anyone like you, your personality unmatched to the point of the cuteness
of a puppy excited to see you. Your kindness so unique unlike someone who would cheat
together we cannot be beat Im almost obsessed with the way you lure it is never a bore
.....when you left my heart was torn hope you have fun in new york i know I might sound
greedy but you make me feel needy it's cringey talking about my experience, when you
weren't there you never cared now that you left i'm living in your head rent free I missed
you but refused to respond I don't want to ever be a rebound you should have kept your
interest when you had the opportunity I didn't want to lead you on i just want to make it
clear you messed up your chance



(angered)

Sanjiv

I'm so annoyed you can't take a hint it's like getting the essential oil of mint never going away giving me headache, I can't obey everything you say please me by leaving me alone your access of me is blown. It's hard enough for me to say no I've always been shy but you try to take advantage of me i'm not even in right mind and you think thats a green light, It just doesn't feel right. Just give it break i'll never be that slice of cake you could just take when you're hungry have some self control....



SANJIV



BIO

Hi I'm Sanjiv I'm Guyanese and pansexual and have a passion for cooking especially cuz I've always been a huge foodie, so then I finally joined culinary arts and currently am in my first year. I love listening to music but never hearing my voice singing to it haha, you would usually hear a response from me like asking what's up, is struggling in math, playing video games or baking :D.

Works by

ALMASI



Channel Zero

Almasi

Do you sleep at night
Do the spirits come out with the moonlight
Do you feel the earth's heart
pulling you closer
And closer
 And closer
 And closer
 And closer

Falling into this space again
Itching all over my skin
Twitch in my eye
Jerk on my legs
Buzz in my ears
Losing all sense
The sky falling
My body floating
A familiar spark
My head is flaming
In a chokehold
My spirit's departing
Sinking towards the deep end.

one two three four
repeat.....

one two three four
repeat.....

breathe.....
breathe.....
breathe deep

let it flow....
let go.....

everything passes
everything goes.

Scattered

Almasi

Can't sleep

floating above my head

legs arms hands fingers toes face

panic

hyperaware

see feel touch smell taste

static

in the air

stranger

in the mirror

desperate

in despair

memories

disconnected

the past

is the present

the future

nonexistent

Vertigo

Almasi

my surroundings spin
the sounds of the city
suffocating my ears,
freezing my mind,
out of touch with reality,
walking dead among the rest.
the days cast a shadow
the nights illuminating.
she sets herself up high
brighter than city lights
a cold mirror
looking within
what does my heart say?

ALMASI

BIO

(they/them) I'm a Black, queer, nonbinary multidisciplinary artist and a first generation immigrant from the Agikuyu peoples of Central Kenya.

For generations, our art and stories have been passed down through oral storytelling, music, attire, visual crafts and performance. I'm fortunate to be continuing these traditions that my ancestors fought to keep alive, through my artistic and spiritual practices. I share my love of storytelling by composing, and writing music, painting, making zines, dancing, playwriting and theatre performance.



Works by
MISHA



Image courtesy of Misha



The Dark

Misha

I've always been scared of the dark
When night lights and lamps are my best friends
But the comfort of soft yellows and cool whites
Are only temporary

I've always been scared of the dark
When my closet isn't what holds my clothes
But instead is what holds monsters I can't imagine
Monsters I can't see

I've always been scared of the dark
When under my bed isn't where lost toys wind up
But instead is where lost ghosts may roam
Spiders and mice

I've always been scared of the dark
When I was younger
But now I've grown up
And the scariest things

Are the things you can see coming

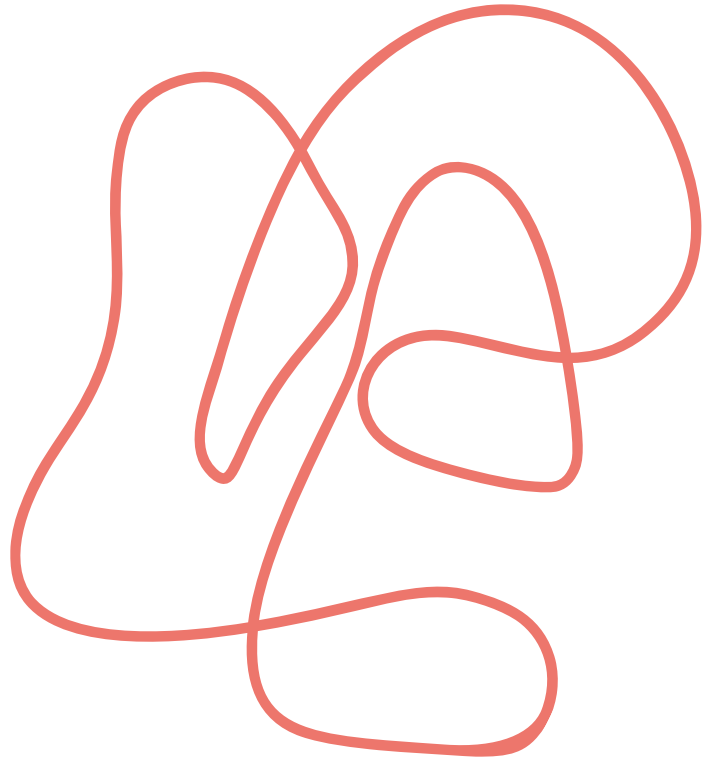


Lucid

Misha

I'm a shapeshifter, in my dreams
My body is my own but my mind rests alone
If my mind is a palace, I am not the ruler
If my soul is a child, then I cannot fool her

I'm a stagnant wave, in my nightmares
The potential to flow but no more than fallen snow
If my eyes are open they are forced to be shut
The ties that restrain me are forever uncut



Monochrome

Misha

A cool spring breeze
Gentle clouds flying overhead
Birds singing songs beside me
Standing outside my seventh-grade portable
Surrounded by people who've grown up together
They do not know me
I am a nameless stranger
A forgettable face
The sunlight creeps through shadows and warms the chills plaguing my arms
I hear laughter
Inside jokes that I'll never understand
Memories I'll never take part in
It's bittersweet
I can change my shape, fit into their boxes
But it won't change the fact that I wasn't here yesterday
This is supposed to be my youth
Lively, colourful, accompanied
Yet it feels monochrome and cold
The sun is no comfort

I feel lonely





BIO

Misha Maharajh is a sapphic Indo-Caribbean artist and student from Brampton, Ontario. As a Grade 12 student, Misha is very passionate about visual arts and is interested in animation and illustration. When she is not drawing, Misha likes to experiment with creative writing and music. Misha was formerly a participant in The Rose Theatre's Centre Stage Conservatory, where she submitted her visual artworks. In the future, Misha hopes to become a 2D animator.

MISHA

Works by
JOHN



Image courtesy of John

Pipe Dream Drifter

John

Here what i've got, the reasons why our relationship might work:

because of they way your face glistens in the sun, they way you are so focused on going to your destination while spacing out, listening to Carly Rae on those airpods, sailing on the sax riff/ because you're buying groceries on a mellow day, surely to prepare a meal out of this plain/ because of how you pave a road in my mind, so bright:[middle of the row apartment, decorated with the illusion of a college student moving out for the first time, kitchen being where I spend most my time, swirling the kettle water in a dance with dark sand like granules, beneath dripping bitter perfection, living an half an hour away from work, you where ever and me at a cafe, colours of the surrounding so vivid, punching my eyes with deep greens, pungent blues](is this a movie plot?)/my vision, so clear, [Arms length away in the rattling sardine can/ weekday mornings/golden hour afternoons/ single seat whilst you stand/ holding on the rail/muffled chatter around /one hard brake away from waking/ one green light away from disappearing] yet so delusional, because you come and go in different forms, always leaving, but coming back, a loopleft bus of blissful disassociation, because of the way I would never approach you ,because you live in a nation, my imagination.



Uncanny Resonance

John

I walk down ethereal planes/trying to piece together life/
attacked by my fears that strike lightning to my existence/
lightning that rains across my vision blurring everything/
lightning that struck on the 31st of January when the internal clock hit 18/
lightning that struck on the 7th of December/ Birthday of a friend,18/
lightning.../18.../nail biting fear/mind numbing fear/ reaching for a break that is always out of
reach/ Marie Kondo, does this bring me joy?/ Removing clutter is hard when you are clutter/
Felt like screaming in a valley where thousands could hear, but none could see/ a mime
trapped in an invisible box/ couldn't escape/ blocked me from the view of others/so much
clutter marie(where did these boxes come from? Sender marked as adult)/hovering in
pockets of air/Living in dreams of future nostalgia/why does it feel so real?/ why can the real
feel like this?/Distance/ Slow burn/ run Away with me/ Fever dream/Sour candy /rocket
league/ faint memories/vivid colours/daydreaming/wake up/wake up wake...up/echo
fades/vision desaturates/**i'm here**



Tentative Love

John

I sat in my mother's lap, feeling the lukewarm radiance of conditional parental love, hearing stories and tales, feeling an entourage of emotions. horror, wonder, fear, emotions good stories envoke; Hercules and his father, thor and his brother, the warrior that took medusa down;

Then one story came, one about a monster everyone harboured a grudge against; The monster looked like a little boy, harbouring bright coloured strands on his skin, soft curves and hope that glimmered like that of a shooting star, a glimmer that leaves when you grow up;

Harsh words thrown like catapulted rocks in a siege, and the boy layed there beneath the rubble, in tears, asking the town's people to stop; The tears seemed to anger the people more causing more words to be hurled; The boy disappeared and the townspeople cheered;

--

After Mama finished I started to tear up, she wondered why she told me not to worry, the boy isn't really, you are a good child;

-

What mama didn't realize was- that I was that boy, looking through the fairy tale mirror.



JOHN



BIO

John is a gay, Black, Latinx Canadian grade 12 student. He is working towards post-secondary studies in the English field. He is passionate about English and barista work.

Works by
MEGAN



Image courtesy of Megan

Another tomorrow

Megan

I love the way your calloused knuckles dent my bone marrow
Yesterday was when my everything lost its yesterday
Your frost bitten lips kisses burns, tension pulled through my heart strings
Your eyes give you life, but your hands held mine, in a grip of death.

'I love you' has no feeling, but the start of a headache.
I love the way your affection knocked the wind out of me, replaced with dioxide.
I got High off the fuel to reach my dreams
Lucid with ketamine.

I loved you yesterday
And I will love you forever
But I love you cuts my time.

-

- Pause -

I love how much you cost.
I love you chokes a bruise on my mouth.
I love you.

-

I hate you.

-



Starlight

Megan

Starlight

Hello the star of my eye, how are you? Ah tired again. May I ask Why do your sleep bruised eyes always show war torn trauma?

Your smile shows life

But your eyes always show death.

Your breathe is warm but your touch is cold

It has been the tomorrow since yesterday, why do you live in the past

Is the past easier to relive then to forget?

You tear stained cheeks always shimmer the waterfall of emotions that you never get past

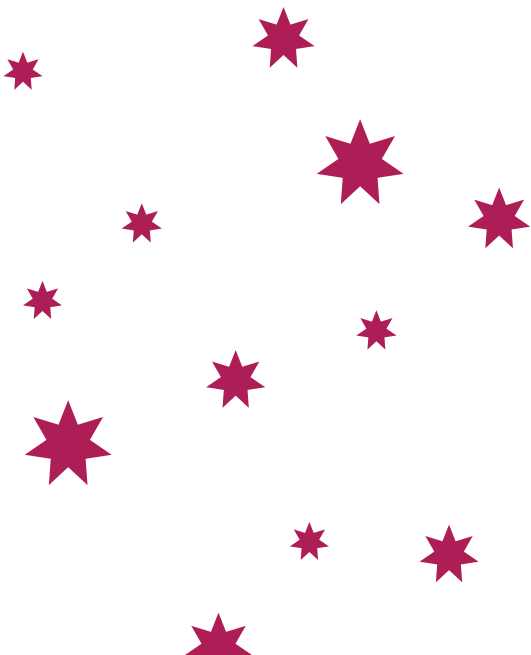
You always drown and never swim

Choreographed the abuse into a recital, I danced around the love that barb-wired around your neck, choked yourself and made you blind with the gas light.

Still. Is it really love you feel? Does love take your breath away and give you asthma ?

I got hives watching your skin crawl with cuts

Is love supposed to bring your insides out onto the outside?



MEGAN



BIO

Megan is an Aromantic, Demi girl visual artist from Toronto, Ontario. At age 16 grade 11, they are passionate about equality for all, LGBTQ+, POC, and a human rights activist. When Megan isn't being visually creative, they like to play games, go for walks, listen to music, and write stories. In the future, Megan wishes to be able to make a difference in the world, the be able to accomplish a change with humanity to bring people together rather than apart.

Works by
RACHEL



Image courtesy of Rachel

A Reunion of Loose Ends

Rachel

I love you the same way that errors love unsaved documents,
the same way that google loves your data,
the same way that USB keys love third tries,
and the same way that headphones love getting tangled in pockets.

I love you, because of the way we drew on each other's worksheets.
The way your writing curled like a monkey's tail
Leaping from one word to another,
Stringing me along with your sentences that captivate me.

I love you, because of the way you recognize new places despite never seeing it,
The warmth and excitement in your voice like a golden retriever in a car,
And you swear you've been here before
But I'll tell you that,
your laughter makes my throat bubble
And your voice sounds like the newest hit song
And especially that I love you.

I love you because of the way the golden hour glow reflects off your face
Our time together could be measured in bubble tea cups
Waiting for the train to arrive
Phone in hand, messages left on read.
A final "I'll see you again."

I love you, but you and i are two dictionaries
Speaking in love that sound similar to each other
Yet so different in so many ways
One wrong syllable and i've just called your mom a horse,
Or that i'm not interested in your words
But every word in our books is important
Like the writings on pyramid walls
Your name means cotton candy clouds as the sun falls
Taking my breath away every time.

I don't want to let go of your hand.
I don't want to be the x at the end of an ad.
I want to be the soft rain outside the window.
I want to sing songs of healing at 4AM
I want to be a part of your story.

I love you.
And I'll tell you it as many times as you want.



apparently i've died this morning

Rachel

there's a gap in my chest that's both full and hollow.
a flower blooms from my head and
it feels like im withering away
growth and decay, 2 steps forward and 2 steps back.

my back whispers to me lies
"this shape of mine is proof of your kindness"
bending to the visions of others,
what is it that you want to be?

a garden grows in my lungs,
overflowing with rotting beauty.
but the words i desperately wanted to hear,
crawled out of moulding mouths.

in my hands a worm crawls
weaving between the crevices
the rough calluses are evidence of regrets
yet this worm finds peace in them.

reflected in my eyes, i saw it,
fragments of time left in the skies
stepping on the shards of sunlight
its a painting of wonders

the sweet tears fell from the clouds
high above, they sing love songs
love is the shape of dreams
love is the flow of leaves

between the cracks of dawn,
let's rearrange the withered flowers
dancing along to the tune of sweet honey
And becoming one with the roots below.

a butterfly takes flight from my ears,
its wings whispering a love song.
the nectar flowing in my veins
overflows from the edge of my lips

apparently i've died this morning.
i sing an ode to the futures untold
a silent hymn, to the paths that unfold
i am reborn.



Blending Blemish

Rachel

Oh you glorious map of stars,
You valley of mountains that crumble at the smallest amount of pressure
Outline my imperfections and claim your rightful place on my face,
My sanctuary,
my oasis,
my identity.

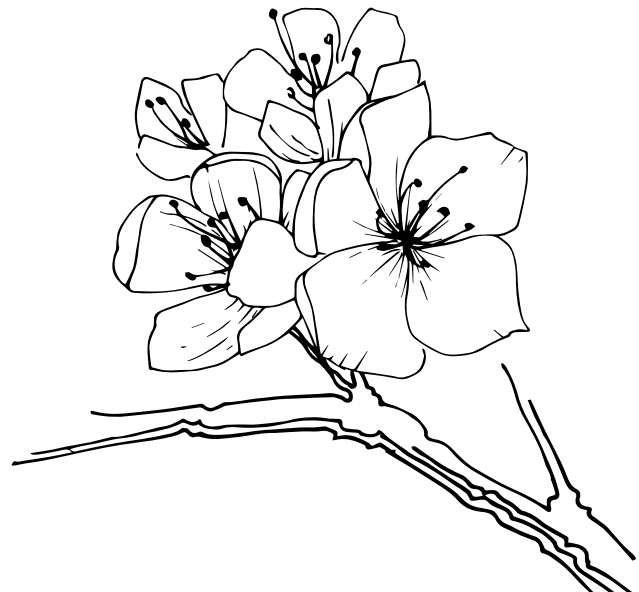
Your every shade of white and yellows are like the lovechild of milk and orange juice,
A duet between the yellow street lamps and white headlights,
Yes, you are proof of my growth.

My face is like a school's washroom,
Dig deep into me and carve a message
And let everyone know:
"I was here xoxo"

Like a moth to a flame
You kiss my skin on every surface possible
Leaving marks across the glass frame,
you left just as slowly as you came.

Without you, I am incomplete.
For what is a moon without its craters?
Every scar is merely a stroke on the canvas
A painting waiting to be danced upon
Blending and mixing with the colours of life
What's it like without an undo button?

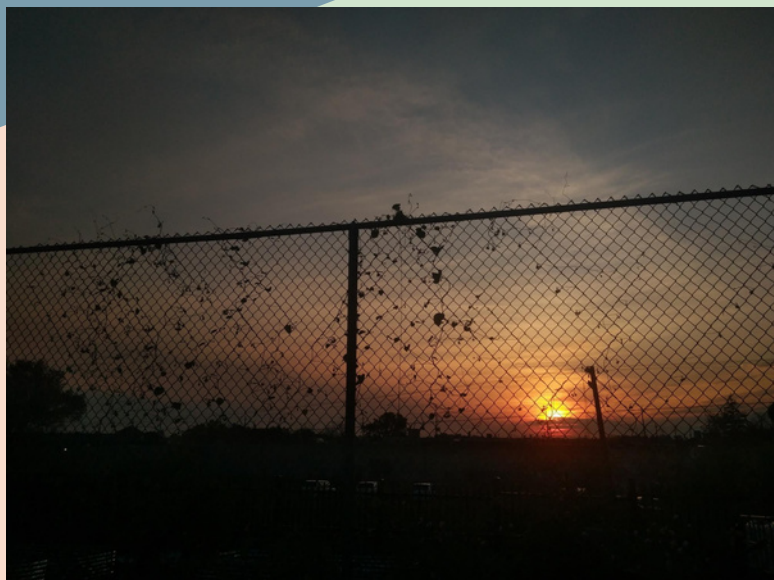
If the sky clears up tomorrow,
Let's fly to the moon and tell them that
We are loved and
We. Are. Beautiful.



RACHEL

BIO

Rachel is a gay, Asian Grade 12 student. She is passionate about photography and writing, as she continues to use them to express herself. When she isn't writing, she is usually taking bike rides around Toronto or playing rhythm games.



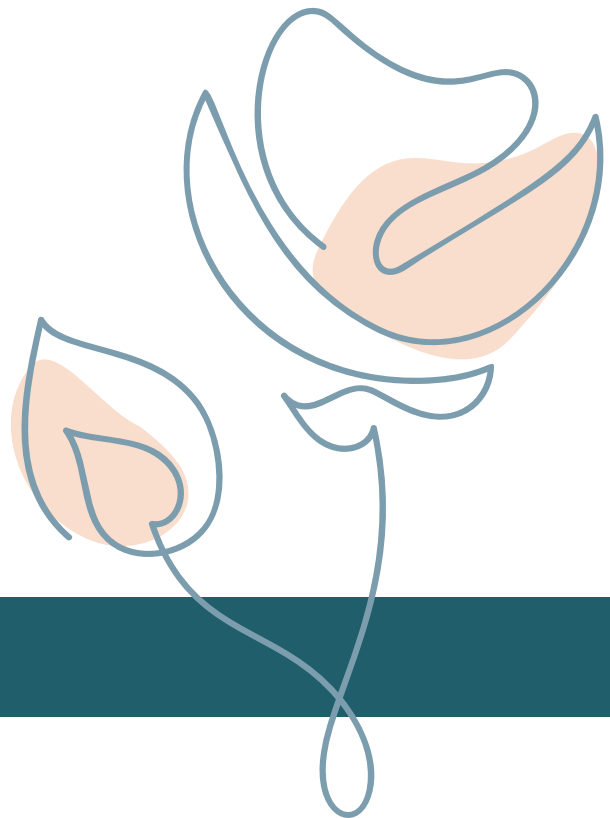
The background features a dark teal color. A large, bright yellow shape, resembling a stylized 'L' or a corner piece, is positioned on the left side, extending from the bottom left towards the center. A horizontal teal bar is located at the top of the page. The text is centered within the teal area on the right.

ADDITIONAL WORK BY CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS:

Ode to a Future Wife

Alex Masse

age falls upon her like starlight F#maj7
silvers her hair, Dbmaj7
creases her face just right Abmaj7
a body that changes yet becomes only more familiar Ebmaj7
i think about what Sappho said, Caug
how someone in another time will remember us D7
what shall be recalled? G
the firecrackers we were, fighting for fair treatment? G7
or perhaps this softer warmth? Gmaj7
my sisters ate flames before the white house Am7
for both extremes, B7
and all in between Db7
so cheers to lesbian love, Ebmaj7
may it never burn out Eb
may it never be snuffed E
may it light all darkness F
may it be seen in my lover's face, G
a guiding star G7
on even the darkest nights Gm7
in the meantime, Gmaj7
i light a candle in her name Amaj7
and hope our paths cross soon Dmaj7



Late to the Party

Jules Sherwood

I never understood why there were parts of me
That I hated
That I was supposed to like

And before I understood that you could get surgery
Without being sick
I wished for the worst

And I felt like the worst sort of person
Felt like I needed to say
“Sorry, I’m so sorry”

To my grandmother,
To my mother,
To so many I don’t know

“I don’t really want this,”
It’s just –
I don’t know
I don’t know why I hide in my clothes,

Why I hate how I look
Why I envy other bodies,
Why I sometimes want to puke

I don’t know how I made it through years like that
But at least now I know
Why my dresses fell flat

Why I couldn’t relate to so many of my peers,
Why a binder made me want to break down in tears

Why shapeshifting seemed so appealing a gift,
And gender felt like a class I had missed,



Like everyone else had this map in their heads,
A key piece of the puzzle,
A book they had read

And there I was searching
Wishing, wanting,
Sorting through piles of pink and blue
Trying to find something I fit into

But the world doesn't revolve around pink and blue
And I realized that I don't have to choose,
I can be what I am and it's true
I don't fit

My invitation was counterfeit,
And my path is not straight,
But even though I'm late to this party
I'm so glad I came



To Write The Erotic in Pandemic

Nadia Mahdi

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to write my body as pathogen,
Olive skin stretched over a body,
Fat, fleshy, thrumming, & alive.


To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to write my body as disease, as fault,
Swift wind swaying,
Humming into lungs marked for death.

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to watch as their tongues race to blame,
While their hollow words haunt,
Seething they chide "of course, she got it"

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to have disease married to a body like mine.
Throat burning marred in salt-soaked tears,
Mind making purchase in the calculus of living.

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to capture the feeling of juxtaposition,
Of finding breath when there is less,
And knowing that there is more.

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to feel your skin crawling in concern,
Feet dragging against linoleum,
Cold eyes meet mine as I shudder.



To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to sink under the seams of their lies,
Arms bite my thighs and lips purse for air,
I gasp as I search for a hospital chair.

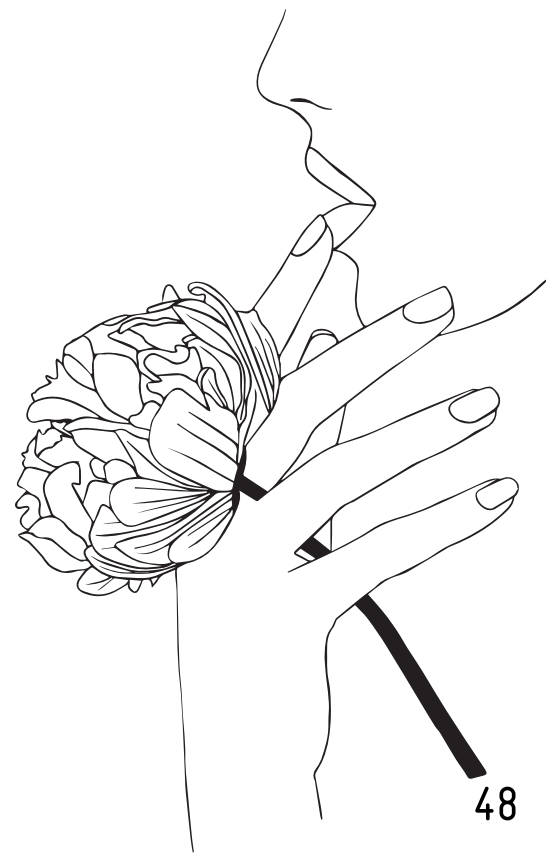
To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to do away with time & have it forced upon you,
Every movement a transaction you can't afford,
Air paid for by stolen access, land, & life.

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to demand we share with one another,
Lips tingle tracing possibility in collectivity,
Juicy is the fruit of tasting justice with a ground ample in seed.

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to see your struggle as connected,
Finding pulses and hearing patterns,
In beating hearts & bodies like mine.

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to write my body as tethered,
Rooted to a moment,
Shrouded in pain, dispersed with care.

To write the erotic in pandemic,
Is to grow when the energies of the world dare you not to.



Ice Cream Sandwiches

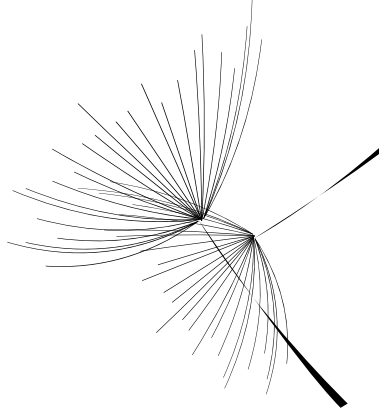

Lizzie Song

She was beautiful.
Like a breath of fresh air,

with her big blue eyes and wavy blond hair-
she was everywhere.

When you walk down the street
on every corner you meet,
bright lights of white girls,
big blue eyes and blond curls.
You see 10 of her.
She sees one of you.
They say you're unique.
They envy your skin.
They say, "you're so smart because you're Asian."
At first, it's all nice,
they're all compliments, right?
You laugh off the jokes about eating dogs with rice.
It's cool being ethnic,
and it's okay- you act white.
Besides, every boy loves an Asian girl. Right?

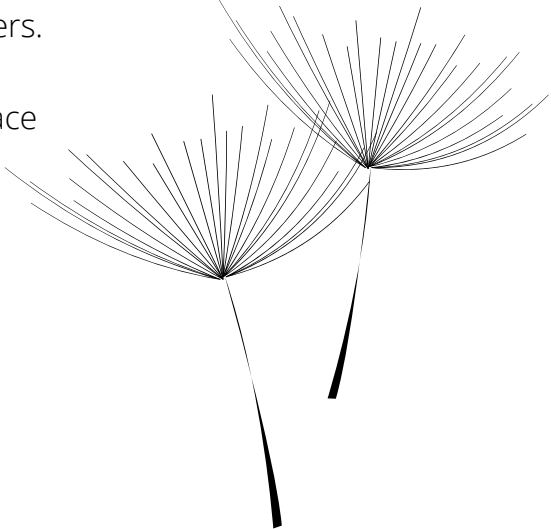
You laugh at their jokes. You dismiss all the names.
You make them all laugh to cover your pain.
Soon you'll grow up ignoring all your shame,
until the game you play that's laid in your brain
is forever incapable of being changed.



Look, they won't understand. You're different from the others.
In fact, you only look like your sister and your brother.
And in the future, you'll realize that the problems of your race
can be identified knowing there is still yellow-face.
And in this sensation of a mixed culture nation

where the only representation is violent discrimination-
You see her. Standing there;

big blue eyes, wavy blond hair.
You wish you were her.
Or you wish that she cared.



Now, listen to me,
and you won't believe it's true,
but there is nothing more beautiful than being you.
You are more than the drawings.
You are more than the scars.
You are more than the people trying to change who you are.
You are more than the names.
You are more than the jokes.
You will find a new life from the hearts that they broke.
For every time they use 'because' instead of 'and'.
For every time they yelled "Go back to your home land."
For every time they said innocently/ignorantly:
"Hey China Doll"
"Hey Asian Girl"
"Hey Chink"
"Hey Stupid Asian Bitch"-

No.

Raise your head up. Look them in the eye.
You will not apologize for your skin or your size.
In fact, one day you'll realize
how much stronger you got
from the fights you fought,
pent up memories you forgot;
The thoughts you thought ought stop you.

But the people who taught you not to-
They are there.

And they truly care.
You are beautiful.
Like a breath of fresh air.
With your dark brown eyes and your frizzy black hair.
Keep tapping along.
You will prove them all wrong.
No one can stop you from singing your song.



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