

BARI:

know your place

OR

HOW I

RELUCTANTLY

MADE SOME ART

ABOUT THE

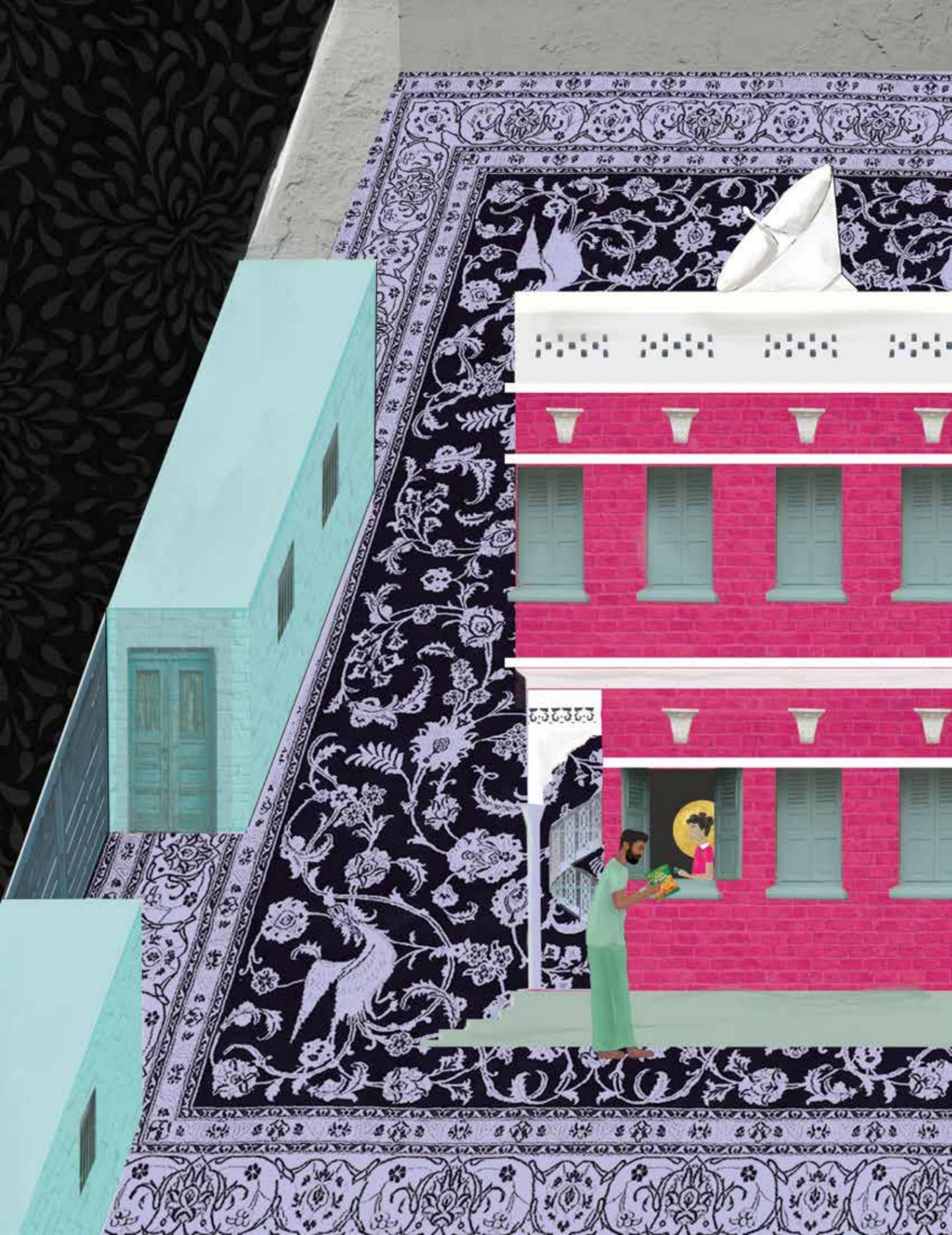
BAD OL' DAYS



Overview

Inspired by the high-horizon, miniature style paintings cultivated in Southeast Asia between 15th - 18th centuries, this exhibition of illustrations and writing by Symin Adiva explores the hierarchies of family, class, race, gender, belief, sexuality, and power through grounded contemporary scenes in the life of a young immigrant as they grow to understand their "place."

The illustrations in "Bari," which means home in Bangla, employ centuries old storytelling devices once used to regale the court with tales of the most powerful among them. But here, the pages explicitly lay out the kind of stories that has always been encouraged to stay private, realities to be glossed over at best. For many immigrant artists, their work is a tribute extolling their cultural and familial roots. This instead explores what is to be untethered to the standard ties of family and community as well as the cultural attitudes that led to this break.



potato crackers

OR the infinitely less unpleasant of
the only two, vivid memories I have of
my childhood in Bangladesh

The tale I can freely tell
of power, of potato chips
Story that's
easy,
removed,
aggrandizing
and betrays nothing
(barring class issues)
Tale
of a time when I could
buzz a buzzer
to summon a house employee
to venture to other side
beyond the gates
to retrieve chips of my choosing
Usually "Potato Crackers"
Or "Ring Chips"
Which are how they sound
Chip you wear as a ring
And eat!
Sweet, sweet satisfaction at & around
my little, little fingers
Seamless is less thrilling



জারক, fuzzy ল্যাবর্য

OR my non food related memories of Bangladesh are for sure not good

Let's solve a mystery!

Mystery of why was I so afraid to cry
Maybe it was the time I was locked up
in the closet under the stairs.

No, no

I forgot about that till my sister told me.

Further back.

6, 5, maybe 4

Could be that Christ at hands of the Romans moment
that I spent on the other end of the switch.

Because I dared to walk into the living room crying.

I'm drawing a mental venn diagram.

I've got my red conspiracy yarn, corkboard and thinking cap.

Let's connect those bloody dots...

We'll get to the bottom of this

I know it.



what are you?

OR unwelcome ambiguity in
the American South

Woops, sorry
Didn't mean to confuse you
With an ethnicity you can't pin down
and worse yet
a name so far askew
Woopsie doopsie it's tied your tongue
your eyebrow in beaded sweat
What racial epithet to hurl
so hard to tell
what a quandary I've forth, set
Woops magoops
actions, words even less familiar
clothes don't help
god it's all ambiguous
and ya know I never did make things
clearer
I've worked your brain too hard
just pile me under "other"
and relax
Sorry again



greater than

OR my parents' best attempts at
indoctrinating their racism

Child, listen
We're better than them
All of us are greater
All of them are lesser
How do we know?
It's just so
It's been told
And now we're telling you
Good to have someone to feel
greater than
Without being better than
Good for us
Don't question it
Just remember to keep telling everyone
Maybe not everyone
might not be a good look
Whisper it in your immediate circle
and to the wind
Always to the wind



2face 1 furious

OR the fakest kutta I ever knew

Abba
The greatest actor of his generation
Everyone
Watch him preen
Watch him joke
Watch him pander to the stars and higher ups
Is he that good or does no one care to see?
The cracks in the act
The face behind the face
The oh so limited range
Catch his next show if you can right behind this door
Usually an audience of one
One he has no need to please
Just one being of much, much lower stature
A crew member if you will
Hear him now
Hear him again
Hear him growl
No character to break
But boy can he break a spirit.
As the best thespians secretly do.



independent thinking

OR Santa, Jesus, my father and
other men I've never believed in

When I was little
A clown told me a truth,
his,
that he was important
that his word was key
He told me repeatedly
I did not believe
I knew him to be an idiot
a liar
frankly, a tool
A clown told them a truth
a lie but a truth
universally accepted
they believed
they thought he was funny
and liked him so
and liked the universe so
and it did not occur them
to question
Now
I'm filled with pride
that I never took anyone
at face value
but what to do
what to do
about those pesky
authority issues



ਏਧੁਏ ਓਨ ਠਿਏ ਪ੍ਰਿਏ

OR differences in priority among family

There it be
My my my
The most important thing
Apple of our respective eye

Flight for I
Freedom awaiting, upward ho

Adoration for father time
Only just from everyone we know

Status quo for mother security
Let us accept as she

Blonds for brother shine
For they sparkled so to he
And wouldn't you know
quite a lot of our lot agree



the great indoors

OR permanent groundings that lead to totally healthy coping mechanisms

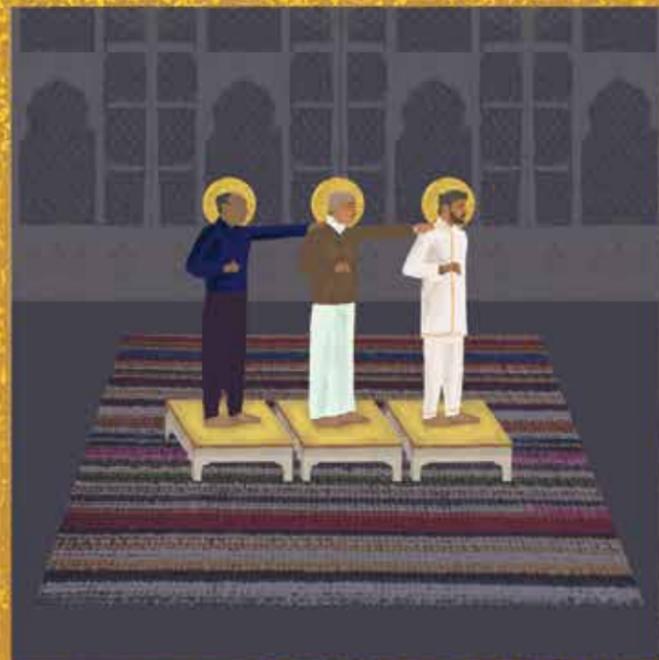
The show, it's on
Hear that witty banter
One day I will banter wittily
See the way they lean on each others' shoulder
One day there will be a shoulder, and boy will I lean
Look at them go, go, go
One day I can go as I please
Till then
There's TV, Sugar



तोलुनइ

OR let me beat you over the head with a metaphor plus side note Thomas Jefferson loved him some Greek architecture

When I stepped onto the "grounds" of University of Virginia I was struck by the amount of columns. Ionic. Corinthian. Popped-Collar columns. Proud of their column-ness. The columns I'd seen before were simpler, Doric? No, more basic. When I moved to NYC, the columns almost didn't even resemble columns. These columns curved and swooped. If you didn't look down, you could almost mistake them for something other than a column. They didn't want to be associated with the stodgier columns. But columns they were none the less. Always in the way. Obstructing views and holding up ceilings.



इतना many option

OR refusing to convince my sister into agreeing to an arranged marriage and then watching it all unfold anyway

Hey apu, it's almost your wedding!
The fine, fruitful day our parents' guilt and manipulation has reaped
And also you get to pick some napkins!
The day when you spend what you can't spare so people can ooh ahh stare
And pick the table arrangement!
The day your stinky singledom no longer stinks up our parents' good name
And you pick the invitations!
Gosh they already have one weird, daughter, me, spare them the indignity of two please!
Quick, pick your cake
You like cake!
A lot. Too much. According to you know whos.
That's why you don't get to pick the groom.
They have made home in their box
And you will too.



the forbidden dance

OR a short list of races my parents did
not want me to associate with

Black

"Mexican"

The End.

Quick, no one tell them about

Afro-Latinos

Lest minds implode

Definitely not the one I lost

something or other to

I believe it was a lotus...



new people, new places, new things

OR all the spaces I don't belong but I'm here anyway

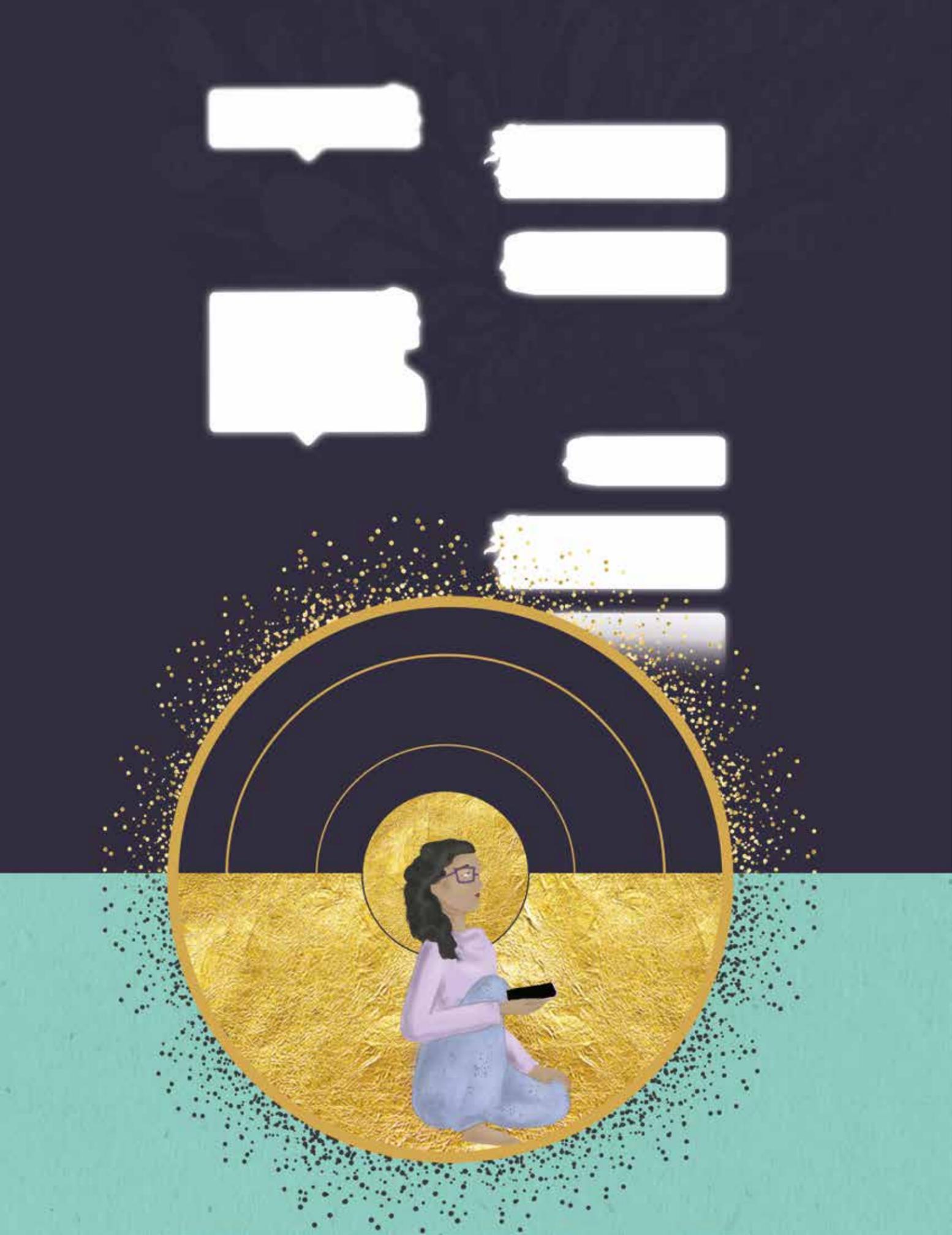
Everything I couldn't do,
I now can
Technically can
Have done
And sometimes do do
But what of the things I have not?
Of the places I've not gone
Of the roles I've not worn
Do I go in there?
I was told no
But now there's no one telling me so
Not directly
Just politely
Boy is it dark there
And what's with all the fog
Why does it still look kinda scary
Well, there's always tomorrow



i dreamt of power

OR quest for autonomy to get gone and stay gone

I dreamt of power
Big leaps, heroic hurdles
Like moving freely and laughing as loud as I please
But I kept quiet
Lest I wake any sleeping giants
They slept on a bed of coins
I dreamt of taking it by force
Fearlessly, bloodily
Muffling enemies and crippling legs as they had me
But I just stood perfectly still
They'd tire eventually
From holding the purse strings and my strings
I dreamt of big plans
To gain strength to run to the furthest reaches
I'd gain the upper hand
And thwart a tricky and vengeful god
I dreamt of power
bounty of gold, ships in my command
Till I had it
Then nothing else felt important
Worth doing, left conquering
I dream of power
Of losing it
Of swash buckling under the pressure
Of misfortune taking the very thing
All my dreams were all but made of



forget

OR saying goodbye to family

Forget

Please our darling child, forget

You are our most precious child

Please forget

Come back to the fold

Why do you keep ignoring us?

Did you remember to forget?

Do as we do

and darling we only know to do

one thing

Reflect?

No!

Introspect?

Does God?

No!

Why are you like this?

Didn't we teach you to forget?

We forgot!

And for that we are sorry.

But for everything else,

do forget.



इतरेण्ठे in vulnerability

OR sometimes treacly cliches are true and you only need an autoimmune disease that takes away your emotional stability to learn that

I told you I cried
To my surprise
I didn't die
I cried in front of you
Still I go on living
I cried on the subway
It's weird but I was thrown a parade
I cried in view of the whole parade
I've honestly never been happier
I cried to each 7 billion of my fellow criers
I swear I could bench press a whole mountain
Drink down the sea
And do more reps



टोल्वेर, वारल्वेर, हॉट, हॉट, हॉट

OR look, I'm basically a
fully realized butterfly now

I'm done
I did it
I've navigated
Cultivated
I've grown
Propped up
Held up
Glowed up
On my own
Each year better
Than before
Oh there's more?
Curses!



**SYMIN
ADIVE**

कालि

