

July 2023

Issue 11

1 i k e n e s s

m a g a z i n e



rhythm and melody

Low Entropy is headquartered in Kwikwetlem First Nation Territory of the Coast Salish people, and in the shared territory of the sə́lilwətaʔt təməxʷ, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Stz'uminus, Qayqayt and S'ólh Téméxw nations.

Volume 1, Issue 11

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About Low Entropy: Founded in 2015, the Low Entropy Foundation is home to free programs and events that focus on personal and community growth through empowerment, authenticity and meaningful interpersonal connections.

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Foreword

Life is not a story; life is not a song. Not one you'd want to listen to, anyway. Don't @ me.

I mean, who has the time to trudge through a decades-long tune (usually, if we're being honest with ourselves, plagued by a mind-numbing excess of vamping and repetition)? We've got things to do! Bills to pay! Actual lives to live!

No — we pick and choose the moments we archive in memory. Or something in us does. We process life into beats and chords and pauses, tense or refreshing. It's more convenient, this curated approach: we can more easily share these digestible, hand-plucked songs with others. We can dance from the first note to the last. We can cry, but not endlessly.

In this issue of *Likeness*, our creators make music from life. Of course there's more. There is always more. But their tantalizing snippets, those codas with no resolution . . .

. . . That's all part of it. That's why it's precious.

Thank you for being here.



Editor, Low Entropy

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The Enticing Flavour of Music

Tajpreet Grewal



Photo by Lasse Moller

The music starts, a familiar beat drops
Everytime I hear it, I get that funny feeling
I can taste the enticing melody
It taps my feet, It bobs my head

And though I long to dance, I start to over-assess
My heart begins to race, my brow drips with sweat
I taste a foul-smelling stench
Am I anxious? Seems as though it will always persist

The rhythm can move me, but I can't let go
I fear the judgment of those peering into my soul
So my feet stay rooted to the floor below
Spiraling into pity and sorrow

But then I close my eyes and take a breath
The rhythmic melody flows in, relieving stress
I feel the drum sync with my chest

Then it comes again, that funny feeling!
What will they think? What will they say?
I don't fit in here, my place is elsewhere,
Where my heart beats true, and my soul can dare,
To be its authentic self, without a care,
In a place where I'm accepted, where I can share.

Then I hear a whisper, just take in another gust of air
Now I feel it, vibrating from my hands to my feet
And suddenly, my worries deplete

TAJPREET GREWAL Taj has recently become a bit of a renaissance man of various industries. He has worked in the medical field for the past several years, but is now bringing those lessons into the social impact sector while simultaneously teaching meditation and breathwork. He is also striving to become a writer and is refining those skills here.

My body starts to move, as if on cue
You found the courage to dance, to be you!

Now I can't resist

Lost in the rhythm, in the song
The anxiety fades, it's gone
What stays is that enticing melody
And in that moment, I am free

So I let the music guide me
I don't have fear, I don't hide
I let my body feel the beat, it's a magical ride
To dance away my anxiety, until it subsides

Then the bass kicks in, gone is the anxiety
We all start dancing, then comes the singing
Who are these wild men and women that I see
They don't look as I knew, I now see them clearly

This primordial feeling is engulfing me
I can't help it, it's madness really
And I wouldn't have it any other way

That funny feeling, perplexes me no more,
Now I taste a different flavour,
One that allows me to reach my soul.

Nour Nazmi, a graduate of the University of Toronto, is a creative communications specialist and content writer with a profound passion for social impact and personal development. She leverages her expertise to drive meaningful change through content creation and writing.

The Transformative Power of Rhythmic Activities

Nour Nazmi

Photo by
Soundtrap

Did you know that listening to music can reduce anxiety and depression? Rhythmic activities such as dancing, drumming and singing have captivated humans for centuries. They uplift our spirits, create a mind-body connection and promote cognitive function and emotional balance.

In this article, we'll explore the transformative power of rhythm and how it can help you achieve personal growth and holistic flourishing. We'll delve into the science behind the benefits of rhythmic activities and provide practical tips for incorporating rhythm into your daily life.

The Science of Rhythm

Rhythm is a fundamental aspect of human experience. It is present in our heartbeats, breathing cycles, and speech. But what is it about rhythm that makes it so powerful?

At its core, rhythm is a pattern of sound or movement that repeats over time. This repetition creates a sense of predictability and order that our brains find

comforting and reassuring.

Studies have shown that our brains are wired to uniquely respond to rhythm.



Entrainment, the phenomenon of our brains synchronizing with a rhythm, is thought to be the result of neural oscillations, or rhythmic patterns of electrical activity in the brain. These oscillations help to coordinate different regions of the brain and facilitate communication between them.

Entrainment has been linked to many cognitive processes, including attention, memory and learning. When our brains are synchronized with a rhythm, we are better able to focus our attention and remember information. This is why many people find it easier to study or work with background music.

The Benefits of Rhythmic Activities

The power of rhythm extends beyond just listening to music or working with background beats. Engaging in rhythmic activities, such as dancing, drumming, or even walking, can have a profound impact on our cognitive abilities and overall well-being.

Cognitive Benefits

Rhythmic activities can improve a wide range of cognitive abilities, including attention, memory and creativity. For instance, athletes who engage in rhythmic activities like running or cycling are more focused during a cognitive task than those who do not engage in such activities.

Similarly, healthy adults who sing or play musical instruments like the drums experience improved memory performance. This happens when different regions of their brain synchronize during entrainment.

The synchronization of different brain regions during entrainment can also lead to more

creative thinking and problem-solving.

This is because rhythmic patterns of sound or movement create a sense of predictability and order, which can stimulate the brain's creative centers.

Engaging in rhythmic activities can help to break down mental barriers, promote divergent thinking, and enhance the ability to generate new ideas. So if you're still on the fence about enrolling in that piano class, you know one more reason to go for it.

Emotional Benefits

In addition to cognitive benefits, rhythmic activities can also have a positive impact on our emotional well-being. Engaging in rhythmic activities has been shown to reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol, leading to feelings of relaxation and calm. For instance, a study found that cortisol levels, often associated with stress, decreased in participants who drummed for 30 minutes or less.

Drumming circles are a great way to experience the emotional benefits of rhythmic activities. These circles can help you feel more connected to others and build community.

If you don't like drumming, you can try dance, another rhythmic activity. Dancing can improve mood and well-being in older adults. Researchers have found that older adults who participate in dance programs can

reduce depression and improve physical function.

Physical Benefits

Finally, rhythmic activities like running, cycling and dancing can also have many physical benefits, including improved cardiovascular health, increased endurance and improved coordination and motor skills.

Studies have shown that engaging in regular aerobic exercise, such as running or cycling, can improve heart health by reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. And if you want to increase blood flow to your heart, dancing can help with that.

Try It for Yourself

Now that you know about the transformative power of rhythmic activities, why not try it for yourself? Whether it's dancing, drumming or simply walking to the beat of your favourite song, there are endless ways to incorporate rhythm into your life. Not only will you reap the cognitive, emotional and physical benefits, you may also discover a new passion or community to connect with.

So the next time you feel the urge to tap your foot or dance to a beat, go ahead. Your brain and body will thank you. And if you're already a fan of rhythmic activities, share this article with others who may benefit from it. Let's spread the word about the transformative power of rhythm.

“I learned to not always trust

What our eyes perceive



There's more to the world
than what many believe.”

Photo by Joel Muniz

Not a Fool

Nour Nazmi

I studied linguistics
In school.
And most of my family members
Thought I was a fool.

I learned the science behind
the words we use.
I learned to always ask questions,
Or else we'd be among those who lose.

I learned to not always trust
What our eyes perceive.
There's more to the world
than what many believe.

I learned to never give up,
Not even when things look bleak.
I learned to listen to my intuition
To find the knowledge I seek.

I learned to give others
benefit of the doubt.
I learned to exceed my expectations,
Every time I went out and about.

I learned that learning
Can be entertaining and fun.
I learned that even when you learn,
Your learning is never done.

I learned that learning
comes in many forms.
I learned that it's okay
to occasionally break the norms.

I learned that knowledge alone
Is not enough to succeed.
But knowledge and action,
That's a whole other breed.

Going to school to many
May not sound cool.
But by learning to question everything,
you're not a fool.

The Legends of the Persian Gulf



Shayan Afkari

I created this picture with the help of AI and finalized it in Adobe Photoshop.

SHORYA GOYAL Shorya is a person who values the importance of both acquiring knowledge and wisdom. He believes that, while studying is important in order to gain knowledge, it is also essential to observe and learn from life experiences in order to gain wisdom. He takes this belief to heart, and strives to not only improve himself but also to hold and lift others up along the way.

Harmonia's Harmony: The Tale of Rhythm and Melody

Shorya Goyal

Once upon a time in the enchanted kingdom of Harmonia, there lived two magical beings named Rhythm and Melody. Rhythm, a lively and energetic spirit, was known for his vibrant drum beats and contagious foot-tapping rhythms. Melody, on the other hand, was a graceful and melodious enchantress whose voice could soothe the souls of all who heard it.

Rhythm and Melody were inseparable, like the sun and the moon, and their harmonious collaboration brought joy and happiness to the entire kingdom. They would often wander through the enchanted forests, singing and drumming together, creating melodies that would echo through the land,

touching the hearts of all who listened.

One day, as Rhythm and Melody ventured deeper into the forest, they stumbled upon an old, rusty box. Curiosity filled their hearts, and they decided to open it. To their astonishment, a powerful enchantment was released, casting a spell on both of them.

Rhythm and Melody were separated and transported to different corners of Harmonia.

Rhythm found himself in a desolate land where the music had vanished. The once vibrant and lively place was now dull and lifeless. Rhythm's heart ached as he desperately searched for Melody. With every beat of his drum, he hoped to find a clue that would lead **to his beloved companion.**

Meanwhile, Melody awakened in a melancholic city, where the people had forgotten the beauty of music. Her enchanting voice went unheard amidst the cacophony of noise and chaos. Determined to find Rhythm, she sang with all her might, hoping that the familiar sound would guide him back to her.

Days turned into weeks, and weeks turned into months as Rhythm and Melody tirelessly searched for each other. They faced countless obstacles and challenges, but their love for music and their unyielding spirit kept them going.

Photo
by Aron
Visuals



Finally, one magical night, when the moon shone the brightest, their paths crossed again. Rhythm's drum beats resonated through the air, catching Melody's attention. She followed the sound and found herself standing before Rhythm, tears of joy streaming down her face.

Their reunion was a moment of pure magic. Rhythm's drum beats synchronized perfectly with Melody's

enchanting voice, creating a symphony that enveloped the entire kingdom. The desolate land was rejuvenated, and the melancholic city transformed into a realm of joy and celebration.

From that day forward, Rhythm and Melody continued to enchant Harmonia with their harmonious songs. Their music brought people together, healed hearts, and inspired dreams. Their bond grew even stronger, and they became a symbol of unity, reminding everyone of the power of rhythm and melody. And so, in the kingdom of Harmonia, the enchanting tale of Rhythm and Melody lived on, echoing through the ages, reminding people that when rhythm and melody unite, magic happens, and harmony prevails.

Rhythm 'n' rhyme

Balreet Sidhu

Some natural rhythm
Of his walk
And the melody
Of her talk

Their Climb together
To sit up at the rock
Couldn't help falling in love
An answer to Cupid's knock.

BALREET SIDHU *I moved to Canada in 2018. It was in 10th grade while at Convent of Jesus & Mary in Shimla, India that my teacher, Ms. Kamini Singh, encouraged me to write for the school magazine. That never happened, but in hindsight, that verbal encouragement paid off today. We are all worthy and deserving.*

“her hesitance disappearing the second Ryan’s arms were around her once again.”

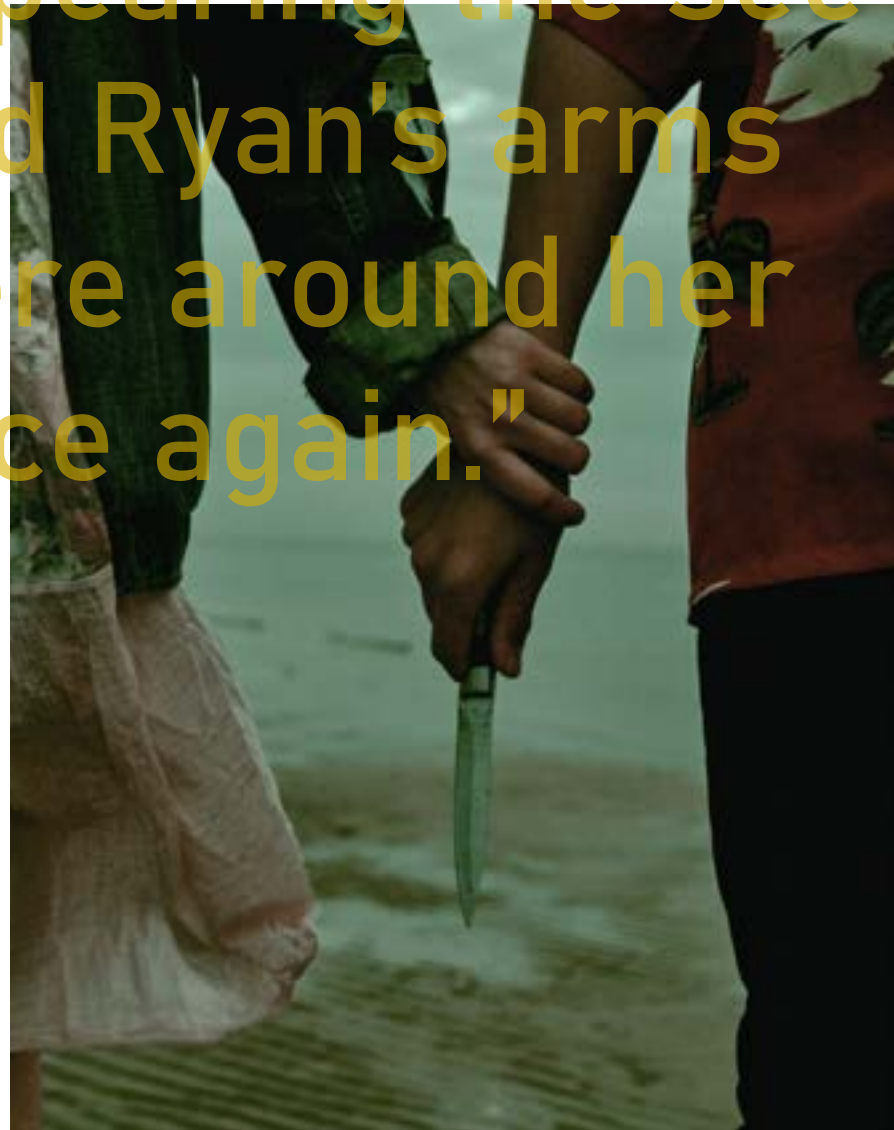


Photo by Danil Onischenk

GURLEEN KAUR BAJWA Both a prolific reader and writer, Gurleen likes living inside exciting stories. She’s working on making her own the most exciting of all.

dancing to your discordant symphonies

Gurleen Kaur Bajwa

twelve.

Tall. That was the first thing that Lisa noticed about Ryan when she glimpsed him across the crowded, chattering hallway of high schoolers. Ryan was tall. Even standing among his friends, all of whom seemed to have gone through rapid growth spurts, he was tall. She tried to estimate how much taller than her he was, not that it *really* mattered, but it kind of really did all of a sudden.

The second thing Lisa noticed about Ryan was that he was loud. Almost obnoxiously so. Interrupting every thirty minutes of every class with rude or crude jokes. Sometimes both. Sometimes funny enough that she hid a smile behind her hand as he was pulled to the front for a reprimand. He took them with a half-cocky grin. Sometimes she saw him standing outside in the hallway, hands behind his back like he’d been recruited into the force sometime during lunch. She would pass him by, hugging her books to her chest, determined to not make eye contact.

He has very nice hair, Lisa thought to herself.

thirteen.

“Is Mrs. West here?”

“Yeah, right on in.”

Lisa nodded, passing by Ryan as he sat on the floor outside the doors, watching the ceiling lights, looking bored.

She wondered what he’d done this time. He didn’t seem to regret it.

She passed by after school and Ryan was still sitting there, head hanging down.

fourteen.

“I love you.”

“I know.”

“Harrison Ford is so charismatic,” Mrs. Johnson whispered admiringly as they watched the *Star Wars*

movies out of order during a spare English block near the end of term.

Charismatic. Lisa turned the word over and over on her tongue, whispering its phantom into the air. She looked over to the far side of class where Ryan sat, as always, surrounded by a large group, not glancing at the projected movie even once, otherwise immersed. She saw his arm draped around the girl beside him and she giggled at something he said. His hand hung down, knuckles bloody. Lisa looked away, suddenly trying very hard to focus on the movie.

fifteen.

“You’re Lisa, right?”

Ryan had his arm around Rosie, girlfriend number three — and he was staring right up at Lisa on the bleachers, expectantly, waiting for her to respond. But it was hard to talk when he was looking at her like that, so she looked away quickly onto the field where the soccer team practiced.

Rosie beamed up at her, basically floating away with happiness.

“Yes,” Lisa managed. “You’re Ryan.”

He grinned, that half-crooked grin, lip split and slightly bloody and Lisa wished she could disappear.

sixteen.

Lisa wasn’t one to eavesdrop. Or she hadn’t been till now, she thought guiltily, trying to seem invested in her mathematics homework as Ryan talked to girlfriend number six a table over.

“Expelled! You’re getting expelled?”

She exclaimed, in what was nowhere near close to an indoor voice.

Lisa wasn’t like her. She respected social courtesies. She would have used an indoor voice.

Ryan shook his head, stretching himself out, the soccer ball resting under his arm.

“Suspended,” he corrected, as if this relieved him of all his crimes. “Suspended.”

He sounded a bit annoyed at her as well.

Good, Lisa thought, scribbling doodles under a particularly hard question —

he deserved better than someone who didn’t have an indoor voice.

seventeen.

Lisa wondered if the concept of group projects in high school had been devised solely to torture her very existence. Biology normally was very enjoyable. Mr. Will was young and inexperienced, and therefore naïve and easily manipulated into handing out good grades. She also sat three seats behind Ryan, which allowed her a nice view of his side profile when he turned to talk to anyone beside him. His parents must have been beautiful, she mused. He was part-European, she’d heard. Actually, maybe she hadn’t heard that. Maybe it was another one of her delusions. Like this one, where they were paired up for a biology lab.

“I’m not too good at this stuff, so the less you give me to do, the better your grade is,” he said, a bit cheekily as they sat on the lab stools.

Well, Lisa thought, at least he was honest.

Halfway through watching her cut open a frog’s innards, he spoke again.

“You’re pretty cute.”

Lisa accidentally stabbed an artery. Or a vein. She wasn’t sure.

“I thought that before too,” he continued. “When Rosie introduced us.”

The tremble in her hand was definitely not making the scapula any easier to control. But putting it down would have made it much more obvious, so she bravely continued.

“You remember that?” she said instead, swallowing down the nervousness.

It was easier when she was looking at the split frog instead of Ryan.

“Of course.” She didn’t need to look up to recognize his trademark grin in his voice, smooth and charming. “How do you forget a face like that?”

Her hand slipped, metal hitting the ugly green countertop. She swore internally.

“Careful,” he said, his tone much gentler. “You could cut yourself.”

Later that day as they sat on the floor in the hallway, Lisa working on the report while Ryan used the excuse of it to stick to her side, she looked up to find his gaze on her. He smiled and she saw the speckle of gold in his brown eyes. Then he leaned.

eighteen.

Ryan’s arm was over her shoulder as she patiently tried to explain the difference between an integral and differential. His eyebrows crunched together in confusion before he gave up, shrugging. Lisa let him copy her homework, and then they walked around the soccer field. She talked about getting to study robotics. He talked about playing soccer. He tried to teach her to shoot a ball into the net, which she failed at miserably.

“See,” he grinned, pulling her into him after she missed yet another time. “We all have our strengths.”

Ryan’s father beat him senseless a month and a half before graduation. Ryan didn’t return to school, and he didn’t graduate.

nineteen.

Lisa had never been a drinker. She’d never tried, with strict parents, and then just never gotten the inclination to. Ryan wasn’t the same. One would think having an alcoholic father would have deterred him, but it didn’t. Ryan drank. And heavily. She went out with university friends to celebrate the end of semester and Ryan came along. He went to the bathroom while all three girls gushed about how incredibly handsome he was and how lucky she was. When he came back, they asked him what he studied. He said he was working at an auto shop. The conversation was a bit quiet after that. Ryan didn’t reach out to hold her hand on the way back. At 3 a.m. she received a flurry of confusing messages, auto-corrected mistakes, and slurred words. Calls went

unanswered and, in the morning, a hungover Ryan apologized.

twenty.

“You could write your G.E.D., you know.”

Ryan didn’t reply, the wrench swiveling as he worked under her sink, tightening whatever it was in there that needed to be tightened.

“Ryan,” she said impatiently.

“I’ll think about it,” he said non-committedly as he came back out.

He had on a very nice leather jacket. It matched the bruises along the side of his face.

Lisa wanted to ask him.

She always did. But she didn’t.

twenty-one.

The night of Lisa’s twenty-first birthday party, Ryan showed up late. And drunk. And high on three different drugs.

He came in and wrapped his arms around her, tight and encapsulating. The mixture of everything in his body seemed to work into overdrive. During a discussion between her friends about philosophy, he informed them that they were pretentious. As her boss cut pieces out of the cake, he told her she needed to diet before her husband left her. Her mother received several select choice words for asking about how his father was and whether he was looking into career changes. His night ended in a shouting match with Lisa’s brother. Lisa remembered screaming as she pulled Ryan off Jordan’s motionless body, blood seeping into the floorboards. He turned, eyes wild and gone with intoxication, and for a moment his hand squeezed tightly around her own painfully. His arm was raised. The police came.

They arrested Ryan.

He apologized. He cried. He promised. Lisa relented.

twenty-two.

Lisa hadn't woken up with the intention to break up. She was out shopping for a gift card for a graduate school advisor when she received the phone call about bail.

She stood for a long time, desperately hoping she had misheard or misunderstood or some other sort of *mis* that would mean Ryan was not in a jail cell.

Twenty minutes later she was staring at him on the other side of the bars, unable to understand how her life, his life, everyone's life, had come to this.

She said it through the bars, and turned away, ignoring his pleas as they turned into shouting, rattling the metal. She paid the bail on her way out.

twenty-three.

"You've always been it for me."

"We've been together since high school."

"I love you so much."

Lisa opened the door, her hesitance disappearing the second Ryan's arms were around her once again. Comforting and familiar. She breathed him in, closing her eyes. They would make it work.

She would *make* it work.

twenty-four

Ryan's boss at the auto shop gave him the boat for the weekend the summer Lisa turned twenty-four. They went sailing, something which Lisa learned with a surprise Ryan was capable of. They swam in the waves, shouting for each other through the water, squeals of laughter when he grabbed her underneath, pulling her in tightly, holding their breath for as long as possible; trying not to surface back to reality. Ryan grinned a lot that day, with no alcohol and no father to distract him, and he promised her he had plans.

When it was good, it was really good.

twenty-five

"It's not dumb."

Ryan shrugged, the bottle a constant in his hands as he lay on the sofa.

"It is dumb. What's even the point of trying to make stupid kids learn how to talk properly 'cause they got hit upside the head or something."

"That's not what a speech therapist does."

"Why would you go to school to just end up getting society's rejects to babysit? Do you even make any *real* money? Like an actual doctor?"

"He hates himself." Janice said, soft over their weekend dinner. "How can someone who hates himself love anyone else?"

"I'll fix him, I can fix him."

"Oh, hon . . . it's not your job to fix him."

twenty-six

"So, this is the type of girl you are? To leave someone at their lowest?"

"Do you think anybody else could love you?"

"You were always like this. Selfish."

Don't let him in, the rational part of her mind whispered. Not again.

twenty-seven

Ryan was so incredibly beautiful. Lisa had always known that. When she'd watched him cross the hallway and now, as she watched him on the sofa, eyelashes fluttering softly over his eyes. She felt out of place, standing in his living room, the stench of cigarette smoke fresh in the air, an alcohol bottle on the table as a soccer game played on the television. His phone lit up with a notification from a gambling app.

She brushed his hair out of his eyes for a moment, letting herself live in the delusion a little bit longer.

NAVEED A. SIDDIQUI Before immigrating to Canada, Naveed Siddiqui ran his own family law firm back home in Karachi, Pakistan. A former third-generation lawyer, he has a passion for writing and presently runs his own business management firm, SNCO Business Consulting, in Mississauga, Ontario, and is also a director of a fast food franchise, Paradise Chicken, in Ontario.

FLASHES OF AWARENESS

Naveed A. Siddiqui

It reflected! She wears moon stone pearls, agate on her wrists emerald and rubies round majestic cervix, its unique fragrance Carnelian touching anklets, stars holding hands, and singing I found her feelings, unseen hope hiding, glitters in ta'wiz Questions of unstoppable waves, urging to unchain passion attempting to unfold everything, to free irresistible presence

And those pearls grip blinking eyes, the sublime tenderness of the beauty of lips, speaks for herself, without consequence And the more I seek, the more scattered I have become, and nothing on earth, the inside of me, or of you, detach semblance As well for me, nothing remains, except shadow at night dancing whispers of dark silence, distance, dreams, sea foam substance

**YOU
SAID**

...

**Naveed A.
Siddiqui**

YOU SAID, I am everywhere . . .
between spaces, within breaths,
you and I cling and swim along,
as if breeze holding leaves,
and wind among trees,
When reed dances under sea,
and waves touches shore bank,
when fragrance rise from palm lines,
your hand, I saw held with mine,
You asked to find traces in invisibility,
so here I stand, with my head high
and feet on moving ground,
I am not going anywhere,
as you said, you are everywhere . . .

