

September 2023

Issue 12

1 i k e n e s s

m a g a z i n e



u p o n c l o s e r i n s p e c t i o n

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 12

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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

I saw the moon, once. It looked so big and bright and . . . moon-y. Its craggy craters, the luminescent haze around it (an aura that was probably just my eyes struggling with my glasses) — there was no time to waste. I had to capture this, show it to someone, share in the joy, or whatever, I don't know . . . just take the picture before it runs away.

But then, glowing on the screen in the palm of my hand, it seemed so small. What was once majestic and mysterious was just tiny and there was all this other stuff around it. Like, the sky, for instance. A lot of night sky. Gorgeous in its own right, but how did I not notice all that inky blue?

When we examine, we zoom in, don't we. It's like blinders, but not just that, and a magnifying glass, but not just that. It feels sometimes like we grab this thing that we're fascinated with and build a replica in our brain, not as good as the real thing, but I can explore this one. I don't think I'll ever go to the moon, sadly.

In this issue, our writers bring words out of their journeys into high-resolution. They focus, and they tell the tales of what they witnessed. They take us there, insofar as our own replicas, twice removed, will allow.

Thank you for being here.

Simon Cheung

Editor, Low Entropy

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Threads.

Sue Turi

This poem is about the threads of memories and how a simple, poignant moment can carry you back in time to forgotten, sensory experiences imprinted into your subconscious- then return you to your point of origin. Memories may be forgotten but they are never erased.

In a moment before midday,
a dewdrop
on a spider's web
quivers then falls, swallowed by

a shadow below
that swells, growing westward to point
like a wizard's wand toward
a distant cloud shaped like
a cloud.

*How does the sun do it?
Climb with such stealth as if frozen in time
like a movie still in a bleached-out sky
until suddenly it's not-*

pale like a scar silvered from an old, settled wound.

Pale like a misty moon
on the night, butter was smeared on a child's bruise
of the darkest blue
through

the third eye of a needle so
narrow, even with 20/20 vision
and a steady hand to

SUE TURI I am an illustrator, writer and fine artist living in Quebec with an appreciation for nature, poetry, history and philosophy, though my interests are so varied that they cannot really be summarized in a nutshell. I enjoy writing poetry, short stories, painting, daydreaming and truth-seeking, amongst many other activities.

thread a pearl and remember
its oyster mother incubating her grain of sand
on a silt floor, filtering fathoms
beneath the bow of a boat

rocking its warped wood, fermented
by years in the vat of kelp, wind, and rope
twisting and knotting its grain since the age of iron

nailheads catching on a sleeve
caking on one cotton thread- their rust

from salt spray and dried Mackerel skins
to my bicycle rims, eaten away

by the crunching path
to the garden shed, and the

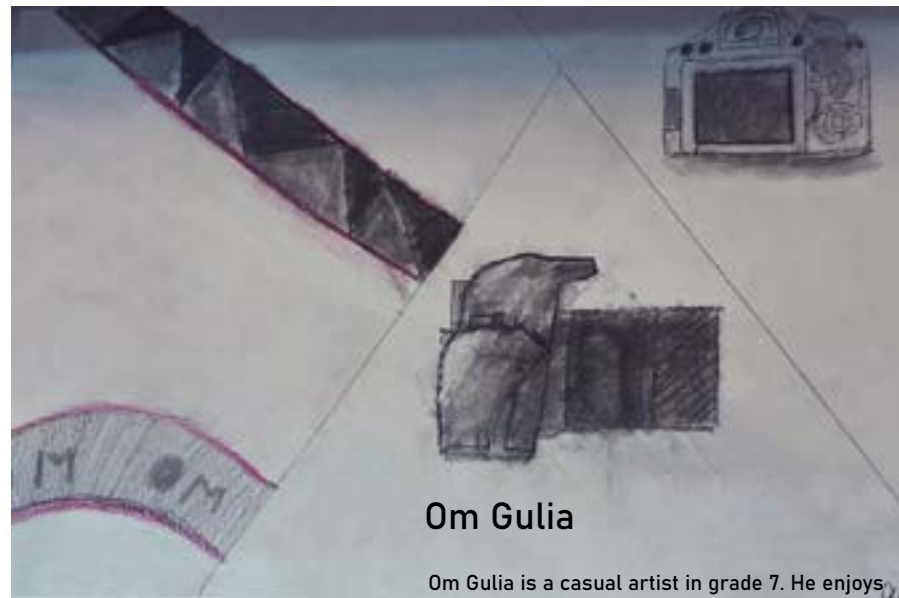
corner behind the pitchfork and spade
to where a web was spun with silk thread above

a thirsty shadow
that swallowed a falling dewdrop, quivering

late one morning
just before
midday.

Identity in an Object

Identity in an Object is dedicated to the vast amounts of memories and stories that build up as one ages. As time goes on and memories are made, you become like a camera filled with pictures and videos of your past, ready to share with those in the future.



Om Gulia

Om Gulia is a casual artist in grade 7. He enjoys colouring with the lesser-known blending techniques instead of traditional methods. Om likes to leave a strong meaning in each painting and loves to add a story in disguise.

Root- ing

Wendy Redondo
Insignares

You were there,
tender, subtle,
in my silent insides
rooted.
A touching desire
by the light know.

A single beat,
while temporary fragments
pierce my pupils,
like a silent and voracious
whisper of the night.

My soul shuddered,
I knew it.
In an instant,
my body was silenced
after a roar of nostalgia,
of bitterness.

On the horizon,
its infinite wings
subtly tear my soul.
The wind carries away,
the pieces of tarnished illusions.

I loved you
still not knowing,
without thinking,
that heartbreaking instant
would dissolve my illusions.

WENDY REDONDO INSIGNARES Colombia, 1987. Master of Education, Universidad del Norte. Director of the Revista Letras Vivas. Writer and poet in formation. Teacher and researcher, she has participated in scientific events at the national and international level.

“Without any recollection of my past, I was too small and I knew that I couldn’t be left alone, but I also sensed that Bee could protect me wherever we went.”



Photo by Jasmin Chew

DEEMA KATRINA KHALIL Deema Katrina is a blogger from Montreal, Canada. She comes from a science background, but her interests go beyond that. Some of the topics she passionately explores are self-awareness, personal development and financial literacy. She believes that every person has the capacity to succeed when given the right tools and resources.

Gentle Bees & Grounded Trees

Deema Katrina Khalil

I walked farther than I had in a while, but on this calm day, everything around me seemed magical — from the streets to the trees, birds and even the tiny daisies sprouting miraculously from the sidewalk. I walked until my legs ached and the hot summer air made me feel drowsy. Finally, I found a spot under a willow tree and laid down on my blanket. I watched as sporadic cotton pieces floated above on a blue canvas. And there was something bright and roughly circular that seemed to be emitting linear streaks. My mind grew foggy as I tried to make sense of what I was seeing — my best guess was a giant diamond. I put on my sunglasses, closed my eyes and drifted off into a deep sleep. Time seemed to slip away, and

I lost track of whether it had been minutes or hours.

During my sleep, I heard a buzzing sound hovering above me. I fluttered my arm towards the object where the sound was coming from and sprung up. I felt something terribly sticky land on my cheek, accompanied by a crackling sound that disturbed the



Photo by Harry Dona

soil. With weary eyes, I glanced over to see an angry bee glaring at me! Next to her were two jars that had spilled over, their handles shattered.

Bee was panicking. “My boss is going to kill me.”

“Your what?” I stood up. “Where am I?”

“We’re submitting honey to the Flora project in two hours. My batch is ruined, stupid human!”

I wiped my cheek and saw honey stuck to my fingers. “I’m so sorry . . . I didn’t mean to —”

“I’m trained to fly a minimum distance of five meters above the grass. I shouldn’t have gotten distracted by that sweet scent.”

“Shit. My perfume . . .” I mumbled.

“What did you say?”

“I . . . umm nothing. I didn’t say anything.”

I started collecting the broken pieces of the jars and saw Bee’s anger turn to sadness.

“Everyone makes mistakes. I’m sure they’ll understand,” I told Bee.

“Understand? I didn’t comply with GFP. When they know what happened it’s bye-bye for me!”

“GFP?”

“Good Flying Practices. It’s a regulatory requirement in the honey industry.”

“Hey! That reminds me of . . .” I tried to remember what I was reminded of but my memory was all too fogged up.

I grabbed my bottle of water. “Would you like some? You look very tired.”

“Please,” Bee said.

I poured water in the palm of my right hand and held Bee on my left thumb to reach for the water. Bee drank, then flew down and sat on the picnic blanket next to me. Bee’s face was pale and she could barely move her arms.

“Your arms are mushy, Bee! What happened?” I glanced down at her.

She sighed, “It’s the jars! Every damn day I’m transporting honey from the comb vendor to Yellow Cell.”

“Yellow Cell?”

“Yes, Yellow Cell is the biggest honey production site in Leafland. Everyone knows what Yellow Cell is!”

“Oh, sorry. I’m from Montreal.”

Bee looked at me as if I said something unimaginable. “Montreal? The fictional city from the story *Alice in Montreal*? You’re funny!”

“Funny? Story? Wait . . . You, a bee, can read?” I looked into Bee’s eyes and noticed myself growing smaller and smaller until I reached Bee’s size.

“Of course! How else would I have a job? I mean . . . have ‘had’ a job . . .”

“Ah yes, a job. Humans do that too . . . I think . . .”

I continued shrinking until Bee’s giant body was towering over me. I tried to recall anything from my memory, but all of it was gone. I could only remember my name and the word “human,” but I didn’t know where my name came from or what the word “human” meant.

“My pet,” Bee said, interrupting my thoughts. “It’s time to go home.”

Bee gently placed a bracelet around my arm and pulled on a string connected to a matching bracelet on her arm.

“Let’s go,” Bee said with a smile.

Drawn to the reassuring warmth in Bee’s eyes, I stepped beside her. Without any recollection of my past, I was too small and knew that I couldn’t be left alone, but I also sensed that Bee would protect me wherever we went.

When we arrived at Bee’s honeycomb, she untied my bracelet and lifted me into her arms.

“My little pet, let’s clean you up before bedtime,” Bee said as she gently placed me in a warm, foamy bath that smelled of sweet nectar. She scooped some water onto my body and began combing through my hair with a brush.

Bee treated me with kindness and patience, and
I felt safe in her arms.

“It’s okay to be small and scared,” she reassured me. “You don’t have to pretend here. You’re safe with me.” Bee’s voice became even softer and her eyes more tender.

“I’m safe with her,” I whispered to myself.

My conscious mind took over. I became aware of my naked body and how vulnerable I was. I would have been terrified in another world, but not in this one. And despite my memory loss, I could recognize the human in me. I could recognize my helplessness. And I could most vividly recognize the complete trust I had in Bee, which was something I hadn’t experienced in any of my pasts.

“Bath time is up,” Bee said, as she removed the drain stopper.

“Stand up, let’s get you clean,” she continued.

I stood under the shower with clear water running down my body. I lowered my gaze into the tub and saw my tears washing down with the water stream. Bee helped me out of the tub and wrapped me in the softest towel. She then tucked me into a cloud-shaped bed and wiped away my tears with her mushy hands.

As I laid there, Bee opened a drawer and pulled out a book. With closed eyes, I listened to her, ready for whatever came next, even though I couldn’t remember what that might be.

She began to read:

“In the distant land of Montreal, there grew a tall and lush willow tree that appeared no different from any other tree in the region. It was a peaceful sight, with its delicate leaves that swayed in the breeze and extended down to the earth, connecting with the roots beneath. But no one knew what laid beyond the tree’s thick curtain of leaves until a curious girl named Alice happened upon it.

Alice was exhausted when she stumbled upon the tree, but her curiosity was piqued by its unusual appearance. She laid down on a soft blanket beneath the tree’s branches and allowed its gentle leaves to drape onto her body. As she drifted off to sleep, she felt as though the tree was holding her in a warm and comforting embrace.



When Alice woke up, she found herself in a completely different place, embraced by a caregiver who had taken her in. She didn’t question how she got there or who this person was; she simply surrendered to the feeling of safety, unconditional love, and peace.

As time passed, Alice’s wounds began to heal, each touch from her new caretaker providing her with comfort and calmness.

And so, Alice had discovered the secret behind the willow tree’s dense foliage — a place of warmth and love that had the power to heal even the deepest of wounds.” *The End.*

At the sound of the book closing, I slowly opened my eyes and found myself back under the willow tree. I was surprised and confused as my memories came back to me, wondering if the previous events were just a dream. But then, I noticed something different. I felt a sense of peace, love and safety. It was as if the tree had given me a gift that would last forever. I neatly folded my blanket, walked away and smiled, knowing that I had found a treasure that could never be taken away.

Photo by
Carolina

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.

As . . .

IF

Naveed
A. Siddiqui

As if stillness, as if nothingness
filled my heart with sightless view
As if eyes searching in lost alley,
ascended high, beyond all clue
As if spell of endless inquisition,
among channels of heart, grew
As if it wasn't the freezing rain, nor
crystalline shaping storms'r new
As if all dark gates of cloud, and
clave music pave ways then blew,
As if frozen I was, 'n fragment liquid
melted within veins, showed view
As if warm affections, held my hand
those dazzling glints, flashed through
my eyes, as if felt only, but by a few . . .

In Defense of Karen

Sue Turi

About four years ago, arriving late to the distractions of YouTube, I noticed a name being used to describe obnoxious customers in stores. “Karens” were initially shown in incident videos as being middle-aged, poorly dressed white women (whose names were not Karen) sporting unfeminine hairdos. They were often filmed by their victims or bystanders, hollering at store managers or insulting employees about some perceived ill-treatment. Entitled Karens would pop up in video incidents from hotels, restaurants, parks — seemingly everywhere.

In recent years, the specific physical stereotype of a middle-aged white woman has morphed into a general category of “Karen behaviour” that includes people of all ethnicities, genders and occupations, extending to pets like the meowing *Karen cat*, or the whining *Karen dog*. Voted 635th on the list of chosen names for a girl in 2020, the name Karen can never hope to return to its level of popularity that it occupied in 1965, when it was the third most popular name at the time, according to a *New York Times* article.



Photo by
Callum
Skeleton

The history and unfortunate entrance of the Karen into the annals of pop culture can be traced back to a track from Dane Cook's comedy album in 2005 titled "The Friend Nobody Likes" — a friend Cook names *Karen*. A popular 2017 Reddit post by a husband ranting on about an unpleasant ex-wife named Karen kept the meme alive, even if he could've been considered a Karen himself for complaining about her. In an attempt to understand the Karen phenomenon, linguists like Miriam Eckert of Boulder, Colorado have pointed to the fact that the "K" and "n" in the name make it sound harsh, aligning with its unfortunate stereotype. But the same could be said of "Kaitlyn," and there are no *Kaitlyns* on par with *Karens*, to my knowledge. There are also no indignant "Kens" wagging fingers at store managers to balance the gender scales. Other experts have traced the stigma of the name back to

slavery and white female slave-owners

named "Miss Ann" — but then why don't we see Ann videos going viral?

Many people named Karen have had to laugh off or accept their name as an internet stereotype for rudeness and entitlement, and have tried to turn it around, like Karen Chang, an Asian business consultant in the Bay Area, San Francisco. After the Amy Cooper "Central Park Karen" video came out, showing an outraged woman calling the police on a Black

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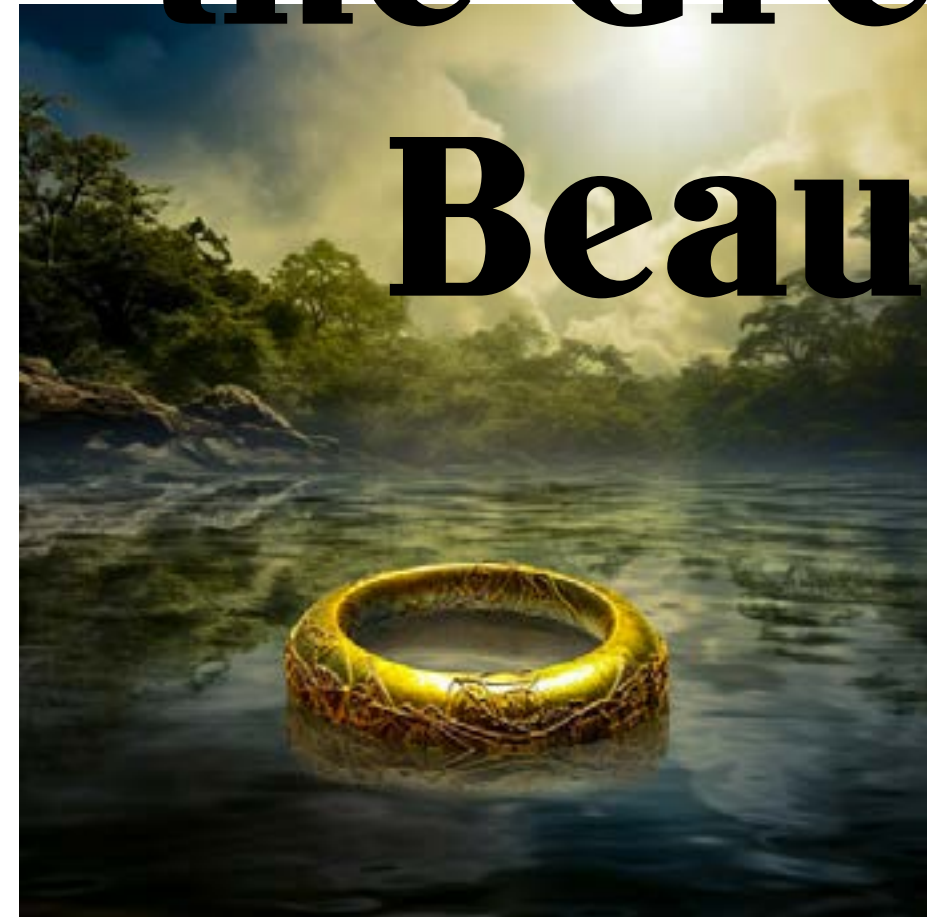
man after he asked her to put her dog on a leash, Chang said that she would sacrifice her name for the **visibility and awareness**

that the racially-charged incident generated, despite being the butt of jokes. But even with this altruistic viewpoint, Chang has still changed her name to "KC" — just to be safe. Karen Ortiz-Orband, a Dominican Boston-area nurse, has gone so far as to email a city counselor, criticizing him for choosing the acronym C.A.R.E.N for bills seeking to punish people for making calls to police based on race. Despite the risk of being labeled a typical Karen herself for speaking out, Orband argues that using a stereotypical derogatory name as a legislative acronym to fight against discrimination only serves to undermine its cause.

People who happen to be called Karen can only wait for the public to tire of the meme and move on. According to Dr. Queen, another linguistics expert, the phenomenon of the trouble-maker Karen will eventually die out like any pop culture moniker, and Dr. Queen gives it a lifespan of at least 10 more years — although a 30-year total lifespan feels like a long time in the virtual world. As for all the normal, conscientious and considerate Karens out there, we can only shrug our shoulders and continue to bravely outlive the Karen meme.

SUE TURI I am a writer, illustrator and painter living outside of Montreal. I have briefly felt the pain of the *Karens* — it being my official birth name that I have seldom used or responded to unless I hear it called over a government building intercom. My family has always called me by my middle name, Sue (for Susan), which is what I'm comfortable with, and because of that, I'm holding thumbs that a Sue meme will never be born.

Where is the Great Beauty

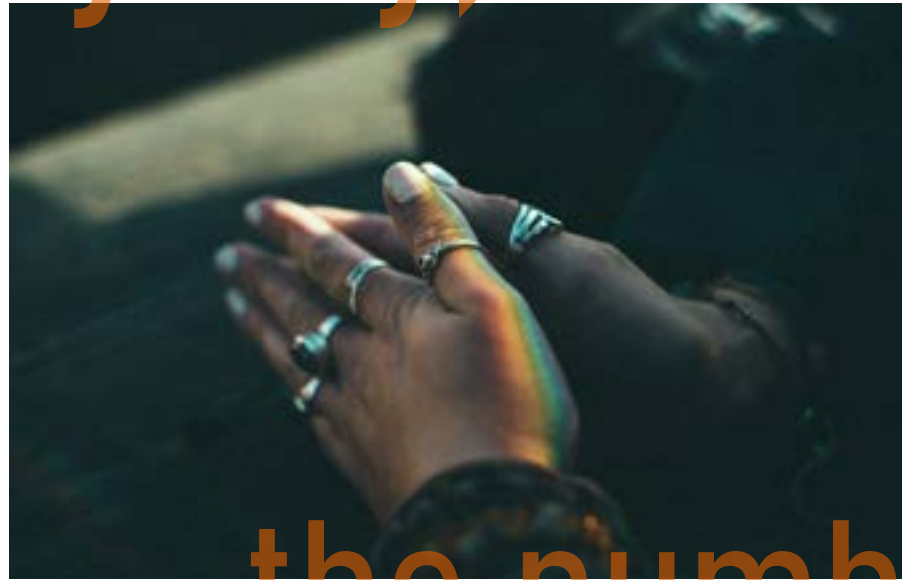


Where is the
Happiness?
Where is the
end of wealth?
Where is the
great beauty?
Inside the dark,
flowing forest?

Shayan Afkari

A 2D & 3D motion graphics designer with a theatrical background living in Vancouver, B.C.

“Seeing him
everyday,



the number
of times did
I silently
pray?”

**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.*

Upon closer inspection

Balreet Sidhu

I finished the meeting just as quickly as I had come. Things were uncertain and yet a positive feeling remained just the same. This feeling of deep happiness.

The following week it was the start of a new assignment. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I could share an instant connection with anyone.

Seeing him everyday,
the number of times did I silently pray?

He wanted things to do with the flow,
and my emotions, little did I show.

Just when he thought I was ready, I opted out.
He was shattered.

Weeks pass by, inside I die as I see him cry.
His love was not a lie, I am just a bit shy.

Then a magical moment happened.

We crossed paths, meant to be, love lasts.

**Left Photo
by Michael
Heuss**

My name is Cristina Crescenzo and I love to write. Low Entropy is a great organization that lets me do that with topics I am interested in while I am still trying to figure things out. More than anything, I just hope that my writing connects with someone and that I continue spreading positivity and awareness of mental health and the disabled community.

I Am The Problem

Cristina Crescenzo

There is a lyric in the hit song “Anti Hero” by Taylor Swift that goes, “It’s me, hi, I’m the problem, it’s me,” and whenever I hear that one line, I can’t help but feel confronted with a truth that I have long kept buried in my psyche. I know it may sound melodramatic, but I know that in my heart, it carries some weight. In the last few months, I have tried to crawl within myself and take a closer look, even if all I find is ugliness. In society, being vulnerable isn’t still 100% in style. Still, I have to hold myself accountable for the things I have done and said that I am not proud of, so no one, including myself, can hold it over my head like the sword of Damocles.

I know everyone in the world is good and bad, but I also think not everyone is the cause of their own misfortunes. In my case, I know that I am. I know this because when I escape into myself and look at every hardship I have faced, past and present, the one connecting factor is me: I have done something wrong. For a long time I thought I was the victim of my story, when the truth is, I am the villain. For instance, when I look back at all the friends I lost over time, I am the one who burned all those relation-

ships to the ground due to my insecurities and lies. Then I had the gall to be upset that I didn’t leave the house as much as everyone my age. I buried myself in a pit of self-deprecation, and now I fear it is too late to change people’s perceptions of me. Some may argue and say, “No, you’re so kind, happy and considerate!” but that is the biggest lie of them all.

I feel so fake it makes me sick, but I know I wasn’t always like this. I am sure that as a child I was genuine, because when you are young, you are so new and don’t know there is another way to be. You don’t know you can lie to yourself, so when you’re happy, sad, angry or mischievous, it’s all real; you have not yet required

a curtain over your soul.

The way I carry on with my family makes me the most ill, but I have not changed, and I honestly don’t think I can, because this is the reality I have known for so long; this is the role I have been performing, the broken girl. I came across an old diary entry from 2019 in one of the rare moments when the fog had lifted. I wrote, “I turned myself into the worst person I could be out of spite because I don’t like the cards that I have been dealt, and I don’t want to be-

“I have tried to take a closer look at myself, even if all I find is ugliness.”

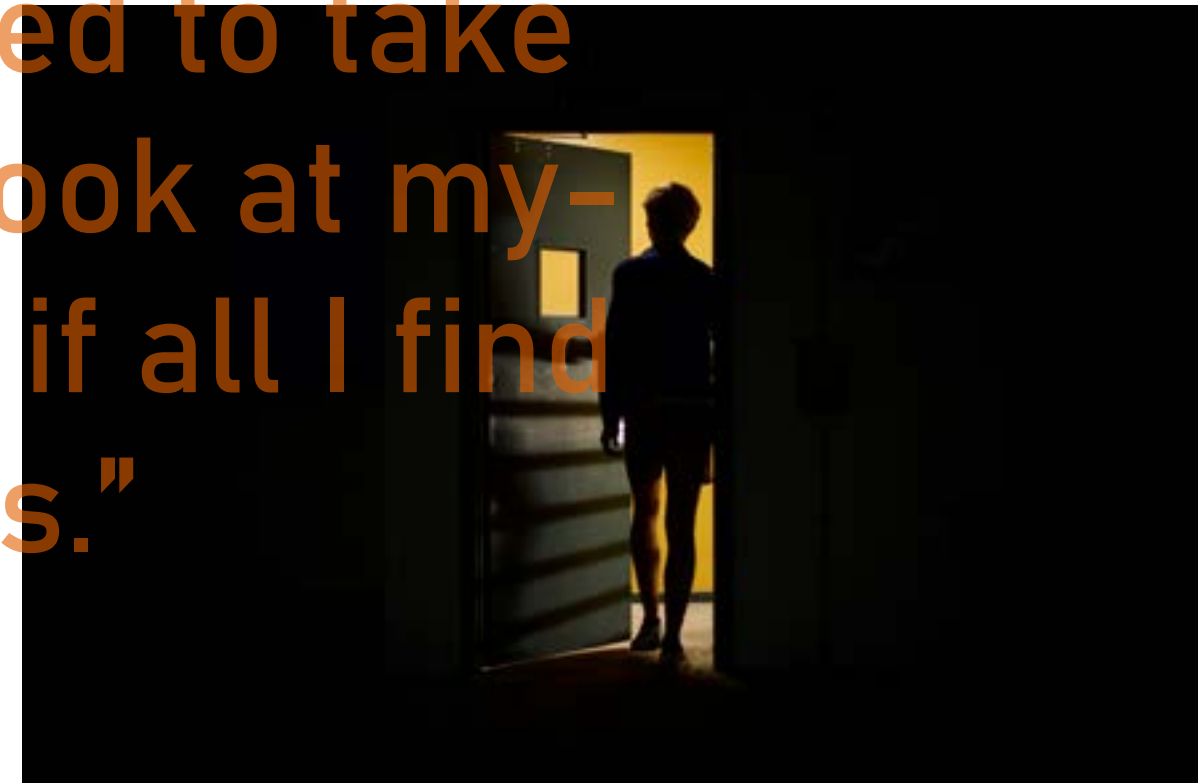


Photo
by Milo
Bauman

lieve it because that would make me a terrible person; it would be the most manipulative thing I have ever done.” The entry goes further, stating, “If it is a facade, I couldn’t tell you, because over time, I started to believe my own lies, and I can no longer tell the difference between my imagination and reality.” In the end, all I can say is that I am sorry I haven’t genuinely been the best person I can be because I haven’t wanted to. It’s selfish. I could turn the other cheek when something or someone rubs me the wrong way, but I act like I am the most hard done by. I am just being delusional. I could stop myself from lying when I feel insignificant, but I don’t because I am scared the truth will make you leave.

What I have been typing here is as real as it gets, and I am scared that when people who know me read this, they will think less of me, but what does it mat-

ter when I already think less of myself? I don’t want to hurt anymore, and I want everything that has weighed me down to dissipate. I cannot sit here and blame my mental health issues and other people for everything wrong in my life and all the parts of myself that I don’t like. I also can’t say I will change, because I have made that promise before, and it ended up being empty words. Therefore, when I make a mistake, act up or treat someone like the enemy, you won’t have to force me to admit I am the problem.

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.

T i k e n e s s

LANGUAGE OF EYES

• • •

Naveed A.
Siddiqui

From nowhere, life disguised in an old woman
appeared through invisible door, staircase of clouds,
those dark circles, and wrinkles beneath her eyes,
spoke well of centuries of worship, of abstracts
under a sun void of illumine, a moon without light
from endless journey, she came all the way so far

I could feel the struggle, a shiver inside of me,
becoming mountain of tidal waves, sinking my boat
chained words couldn't gather, and silence fell-off
my tongue, then thoughts crawled to surface of
my eyes and asked. Who do I Pray? How do I Pray?
Her eyes replied, "The infinite light merging, from your face,
through your pores, the closed eyes."

