

Madiha Khan

Colonial State of Mind

My mother thinks I should calm down and forget the drones and the dead black boys and the dead brown children and the laughing white men and she tells me to squint and cover the sides of my eyes cover the middle of my retinas fog over my eyeballs paint over my glasses so I don't see all the shit blowing up around me. What's the use of focusing on shit you can't make quiver when you have a four year old with adhd and a 10 year old that is so soft and sweet he absorbs pain like liquor in a swimming pool and a husband whose love is sometimes like sweet honey mixed with rose petals and it flows and flows even though he doesn't talk to the sharp messy daughter but sometimes he's darkened Siberia. My father's depression covers him and paints his movements when he waves his hands in the air over the steering wheel when he thinks no one sees when he snaps and blows his coldness through the basement and we all shiver and I haven't been home for almost four months and now that I'm here the coldness makes me want to weep and the warmth of home honey makes me want to sob and I can't decide which one is stronger medicine.

Mos def told me that math is easy but numbers aren't people because they don't have limits and numbers are the opposite of people so therefore people must have limits and sometimes I see those limits so clearly and it's sad because the farther someone is from reaching their limit the less aware they are of the existence of their limits and this equals greater happiness because when you see your limits and you see how impossible it is for humans to move beyond it you just feel down and blue all the time.

Back in the whitest university in Ontario there were days when I would sleep without moving for decades of hours and in those moments wrapped in the galaxy of my blankets I would contemplate the pain of separation from family and now I'm wrapped in a galaxy of blankets in my family home and I'm trying hard to find out which one is more painful.

It's painful to be self aware painful to know limits it's painful to know about drones it's painful to know that they're all stuck in a mental prison that the tv and the magazines the dead empty laughter built. It's painful to be full of rage all the time it's painful to have anger erode away your intestines it's painful to go to a bar and spend 30 bucks to laugh emptily with more empty people and come back wrap yourself in a galaxy of blankets and think of sagan riding through the cosmos in the ship that was his mind. You try to console your soul you try to hold away your awareness and burn it away and cut it out you want to pull away the cancer that the awareness is metastasizing inside of you but:

You can't cut out cancer of the soul so you take a handful of pink pills and dissolve in your blanket galaxy.

I'm a terrorist and i want to tell you my story:

At 5 am when I was 5 years old they came to take my mother's head away and I awoke from my dream in Windsor Ontario and I ran to the library to look up the definition of terrorism but the pages of the dictionary were all brown and the words in the dictionary were all black and my hands were wet with tears because I was hurting inside for my unborn brothers because when they grow up they too will be terrorists.

After the dictionary episode I tried very hard to fog up my glasses. I cracked the lenses and wore masking tape sticking to my eyelashes and it was fine and it was good because it's easy to push away the cancer when the grass is green in your specific condo backyard plot and there are piles of lays chips and the only coke you know is the innocent kind and the bad kind is so bad you exhale with scandal and giggle at the filthy dark druggie doggies in the wintered streets.

The point being is this: I know I am a terrorist because I am full of terror and overtime I try to explain this terror to other people they all look at me with terror underneath an uncomfortable smile and I smile too much but my teeth grind behind my closed lips and I'm sorry I'm sorry I say a thousand sorries for bringing the terror onto them and quickly they shake their heads the white ones have the quickest most efficient shakes and then it's off. They throw the terror off and move on but I'm still a brown pillar of terror stuck to the salt leaking out from the soul under my soles of feet.

The truth is this: I am happy to be back in Windsor sometimes even though it is painful because family pain is more bearable than aloneness and lostness pain in the whitest university in ontario.

Didn't someone once ask what happened to there mind? The immigrant sat in a booth in McDonald's. She was trying to reconcile her future with her present projection and her past expectations and it was very confusing because and it was very hard to reconcile the airy drifty thoughts and ideas with the cement that she needed to cement a career so she could pay back her parents and pay back the school and pay back the government and she saw the wheel of rotating soggy brains all intent on trying to keep their little condo backyard plot green and she didn't want to join them she wanted to stay in her warm muggy McDonald's booth and push more chemicals and hormones in her mouth and she wanted to keep her brain safe from the wheel. She'd kept it safe for so long...LIE...the tv ate my brain and the white movies ate away my brain and the laughter of my white roommate when I asked her why batman was always white ate away my brain but the flesh was still there it was eaten and full of holes but it was still mostly all there and the wheel was rolling towards me and it wanted to consume my conscious and it was too late now it was time to tune in and move in and head down and eyes closed and there goes my mind.

They made me hate my people they made my parents cringe at the word Toronto like it was a curse word worse than motherfucker well motherfuuuuuuuuuuuckers I'm done with them now I'm awake and I realize that my people are beautiful and they always were. Like salt in the earth we were always there and they tried to root us out and cover the salt with poison but motherfuuuuuuuuuuuuuckers don't know we have genetic immunity a rootfull substantiality an honest lack of awareless depravity. Awareness is in our

blood in our veins and sometimes it takes months sometimes it takes decades sometimes it takes centuries to awaken it but when it burns our blood sings and we awaken and one day all our blood will wake up and rage together and then maybe it will be enough.

I took a creative writing class in second year and we would sit in a circle and it was surrounded by pale weak hands fumbling with rough words and plastic feelings and boring ideas and repetitive thoughts and shit that was just as empty as the empty souls that moulded them and I know I'm a fucking narcissist I know I'm no fucking better than anybody I know I think I'm special but I know I'm not the first brown girl to feel this way but the rage sometimes makes my glasses fog over and I feel like I am my own fucked up galaxy and in that galaxy I am a queen and the queen is angry and all these other fuckers are too empty to understand why.

Terrorist terrorist go back to your country go back to collect the blood you paid with go back and bomb your own kind terrorist terrorist don't forget your rags and grenades and medical degrees and head rags but leave your cool henna and your tinkly sparkly hip dancey thing leave your cool exotic clothes and your dope ass bindis and let the white girls rock that shit because they make it work their skin makes it pop and terrorist please just fuck off.

The sunshine shines down on soldiers too but does it absorb into their skin the same way or does it just sit there and rot because it's impossible to penetrate through the million layers of targeted malicious consciously unconscious hypocrisy?

I'm sorry im sorry im sorry im sorry i don't think there are enough sorries to make up for a lifetime of being an angry brown bitch.

But even at the worst we are still here Gaza is still there and they will run out of breath but their children will take their place and when they run out of breath their children's children will multiply and they will still be there and my breath it small and it can't make a wall quiver or a spine dimple or a awaken a blind man's wrinkles but my voice is still here and their voices are still over there and there is blood is burning and their

children will be born with boiling blood in their veins and maybe all their breaths will join to make the salt from the earth rise and turn over and start a new generation of momentum.

Allah allah allah i don't think there are enough pages left in the world to make white people feel comfortable because now when I speak your name before taking a patho midterm they think rags and blown up bodies and I think sunshine that sings and speaks through your blood and salam to my right and salam to my left and salam to my sisters in the east and salam to brothers in the west and may Allah pour down blessings on us like the Delhi monsoon in july.

The freedom in my breath is tainted and the fact of the fucking matter is this: back in my native land I am a stranger and here in my hereness land I am a deceiver and if god is not a deceiver than why did create me?

I can't maintain long periods of sadness for very long. Sometimes I have to laugh it off but don't you fucking dare think I'm laughing with my oppressors...I am smiling to stop myself from ripping out their faces. I don't care I don't care I don't care a few more months of repetition and a few more weeks in a green haze and maybe i can keep myself all inside and thank god it's so hard for a fucked up brown girl to get large quantities of oxy in Canada because if i had enough oxy then I would just remain in a heavily sedated bluntly aggravated state of denial.

Fuck fuck fuck this is the I don't give a shit phase this is the I'm fresh dope desi as hell and I'm not going to stop trying to unscrew my head and I'll play by their rules in the jungle but i'll spit in their faces with a smile and I'll twirl my bangles and blow hindi reefer smoke in their faces and bow down to the khan bitches.

Greatest comedy in the world: decolonizing my insides and failing because insides are inherently effected by the environment that the outside is incubated in so fuck the soul and body being separate. How can I decolonize my soul without first decolonizing my body? Explain that to me and maybe I'll sleep for a few hours this afternoon

In 6 more days it will be 2015 and this is what I will do when I return for a second dosage of the whitest university in all of ontario: I will stop apologizing for the blood leaking out of my mouth for all the times I bite down on my tongue so hard I almost choke to keep myself from letting the distaste spew out the corners of my mouth because damn existing there is like living in a perpetual state of argument with an invisible bodiless pale existence and sometimes I think I'll never win.

Fuckthatoneday'i'llmakethemsee and even if it's just one sad lonely desi soul that I make see it'll be one more aware body in the collective garbage-soul of the whitest university in all of ontario and NO I am not sorry anymore.

A message to all the sad desis out there: try cipralex. Really. I know most of you lived with chronically depressed nanis or abus and they just swallowed back their lack of serotonin and went on with it but you don't have to let the sadness erode your insides like them just because a chemical imbalance in your brain makes you see everything in ashy blues and greys.

A message to all the happy desis out there: I aspire to your state of mind and at the same time I don't think it's possible for me to go backwards anymore so I really hope that state exists in the future unless it's a circle in which case it doesn't really matter does it?

Black Americans are literally the strongest people. What those monsters did to them was like an excruciating, concentrated form of colonization: it was calculated colonial alienation and I am forever in awe at the capacity for forgiveness and survival in my brothers and sisters from Africa.

I like to wear dark lipstick with no other makeup and with all my hair pulled back so you can focus on the singular ugliness of my face and in that floodlight focus it is very easy to see the hairs on my upper lips and pudginess on the right side of my face and the dozen different shades of toned down melanin and it makes

me glad when a guy makes a face at me from the tim horton's line because it makes it so easy to identify the soulless from the soulful .

I'M A MOTHERFUCKIN WORD FIEND AND IM A SUCKER FOR GOOD LINGUAL ABILITY AND THE BEAT OF THE DHARMAS AND THE SHANTIS LEADS ME TO CALL UP THE MASTERS OF PAKISTAN LAYING DOWN INSIDE ME THE HIGH HIGH HIGH SMILE OF MOHAMMED ALI JINNAH INSPIRES ME AND I DANCE TO THE BEAT OF THE PARTITION OVER HIS DAZZLING COFFIN AND I AM HYPNOTIZED AND THEY ARE HYPNOTIZED AND THEY GO ON ON ON ON ON AND I CAN'T STOP BECAUSE INDIA CLAPS AND SCREAMS FOR ME TO GO ON ON ON ON ON ON ON AND I AM A PAKI BUT THEY STILL THROW ROSES AT ME AND I DON'T NOTICE THEY'RE COVERED IN BLOOD BECAUSE THE BLOOD CONTAINS WEED AND I DON'T MEAN TO DRAG THIS ON ON ON ON AND BUT COME ON THAT'S TOOOOOOO WEAK YOU HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT TO DESTROY ME.

I seriously attempted once to lose my virginity and allah must have been especially bored that day because it wasn't an absolute disaster. I went usmaan's apartment where he lived with four other desi boys but first we stopped to buy shrooms and haram pepperoni taquitos from 7/11 and I was so scared sitting on the couch that I couldn't roll a joint and one of his tired desi boyz had to do it. Then he played some fifa shit on a biiiiiig tv and we got stoned while they played kendrick lamar on the big speakers taped to the side of the tv and I knew he was waiting for me to do something but I smoked too much and I could't stop my leg from shaking and I could see his bedroom from the corner of my eyes and he could see that I could see and I could see that he was also fidgeting and I smiled really big suddenly because I saw how easy it would be to stand up and fuck him in the bedroom that I saw from the corner of my eyes but i waited until all the kendrick songs ran out and I made him walk me home and that was the end to that attempt (but I'm sure in an alternate universe I did fuck him and that's okay too because I'm still fine either way).

I have never been in love but that's a lie because you can be in love with the smell of trees at 5am on a cloudy windsor morning and you can be in love with the way your best friend says hi when she picks up on your

third ring and you can be in love with the way your four year old brother's hair shines when he doesn't know you're looking at him and you can be in love with the strength of your desi parents who travelled halfway across a planet to a land that makes them feel broken sometimes in the exotic foods aisle of the supermarket but they smile and feed you daal chawaal and all that love is fills you up but they never tell you that. They make you think you're an empty vessel unless you have specific lunar blue moon love and who's to say that that love better because I feel fine about it now that I realize this misunderstanding.

Setting is this: there is a storm playing coyly outside of the red room in which there is a slow party grinding onwards and the walls are slippery with semen and crushed jolly ranchers and the pre-med girls have shown by now so the desi boyz are hopped up and the korean rapper in the corner is eyeing everybody with the whitest eyes and the dopest hands ever. In the middle of the concrete basement floor there is a very slow fresh progression of drunk heavily medicated dancing happening and in behind the congealed crowd the cranky med students are trying to brag about how much they'll sell off three pages from their future prescription pads for and it's tempting to go and drop perc with them and it's tempting to sit in a vortex of self loathing and let the body dissolve in a soft air mist of confusion in a throbbing red basement underneath a laundromat run by a majestic sikh man and his daughters in the west side of yonge street in Toronto but the perc is covered in the same semen and sugar that's oozing out of the red walls so I slap the perc away from the gora boy's hand and fall back into the ripped couch and wish i had my blankets so I could sleep away into my galaxy.

But the gora boy is still staring at me and he has blonde hair and blue eyes and somehow I end up thinking of hitler and I'm perfectly aware of the fucked up synapses in my brain but I can't help what comes into my head and now that I'm thinking about it I have to leave I have to get away from the gora boy. I sometimes feel like gora boys look at me just to leech away the melanin from me and leave the soul of me inside even more exposed and shivering because the melanin is protective to the soul but shhhh....let's keep that a secret between us people of colour.

I wrote another story the same time last year and it was about listening to nusrat fateh ali's music before getting drunk on secret vodka alone in my bedroom while my parents slept in the room next to me and this time i don't have vodka and I ran out of weed and I ran out of willingness to move outside of my bed and it's hard just to raise my head sometimes these days because I feel waves of sleep the bad kind of tiredness the dry eyes and raw throat kind of sleepiness smoothing itself over me and I can hardly stand up anymore I just want to lay down on the floor and sleep for a week while it rains in windsor and then mama can wake me up on Friday and drive me back to the whitest university in ontario and I can try and pretend to be awake for four more months again.

Time to get lucid and linear for a short little moment: time to sound smart and pretend I know what I'm talking about. I don't know a lot and the knowledge (lie!) I have can be maybe put inside a speck of red dust from the fruits of mars but the little I do have leads me to believe that the things around me are not maybe even half as decent as they could be. But I can also see the net and iron nails and the crucifixes made from red marble they have surrounding us that make it so hard to get outside the prison of the hereness and they got my baba thinking of equity and property power and he wants to own land and build buildings that touch the sky and his little plots of land make him feel like he's owning some of the hereness but how can you ever completely own something that they genocided and pillaged and enslaved humans for? All that blood and flesh that went into conquering all the little plots around the world and they ride through the lands in their range rovers and throw out patches of grass and market it as freedom/control/ownership/independence and then they giggle off into the bleeding sunset.

No matter how hard I try I can never write anything without mentioning the detroit river from the windsor side and I wondered for a long time what my obsession with it was. Last summer i would bike to the bushes and rocks that lead down into the greengrey part of the river and I would climb down to the slipperiest lowest rock covered in old mcd's french fry boxes and bits of dead fish and foam from the nameless sinister factories on both sides and I would lie back and think. And fuck it because my thinking would always end with some tourist cruise motherfucker rolling by with syrupy white pop blasting and vibrating and polluting the river and I would look up at the sunglassed sunblocked sunburned-ahem-tanned motherfuckers and I

would have to climb back and ride my rusty purple bike back home in muggy windsor summer evening and there would be a bad taste in my mouth that had nothing to do with the pollution in my river.

Did you notice how i wrote MY river instead of THE river up there?

There is a tinge of narcissism in my ache to create disorder with anything with my words with my eyelash movements with the curl of disgust in my lips because I want them to see me seeing through them and this exhibition in voyeuristic resistance gives me pleasure makes me feel tingled and heady with differentness.

Hello hello it's 12:32 am december 27 here on sunset avenue in windsor ontario and I'm dreaming of a terrorist lover made of metal halide and together we can burn cheap synthetic flags of monstrous nations together and share a dirty bong before we fuck and he can teach me how to wrap a neon pink hijab around my head and I can polish his rifle (dick!) for him and together we could try to help all the ground zeros happening in countries with high percentages of melanin content in their ancestral grounds.

Sometimes I think that the dirtiest filthiest most rotting emotion of all is shame. And is it any wonder that it's built in and ingrained in any colonized nation? It's like a gradual sinister case of a progressing mental carcinoma and you feel it there but you can't stop it from growing and the more it multiplies the more it fucks you up and the harder and harder it gets to look your parents in the eyes.

If I loved myself would I consume less drugs? Is that the cure for that hyper-educated self-mediated social anxiety ridden trembling fingers running and bustling over rumi's fresh words kind of addiction? I recognize the pakiness in me is beautiful and I even recognize the beautifulness of some of sentences that float into my mind when I'm sandwiched in between 4 and 5 am. But it's hard to translate that flitting spastic sort of love for my ancestors into acceptance of acne and the hairs over my upper lip and grey elbows and the folds of my stomach folded into by brown skin because the tv makes me feel ill sometimes.

Tripping over words and cunning tools and the nazis in my brains warn me that even though I masquerade as a lover I'm really a fighter in the soul because the thoughts that are generated inside the walls of my sacrum are inherently pathetically flawed and yes I mentioned nazis up there and now I feel bad but don't worry i'll just burn them alive in my brain right now hang on a minute shhhhhhhh. Here's what I have so far: white supremacy is an intoxicating drug the strongest stimulant out there because it's already so easy to hate darkness and colour that when they tell you that it would be better if you just fell into their perfectly carved masterfully syndicated hyperpolarvortex of propaganda—I mean they do have darwin and watson and crick and fucking churchill on their side—it would be so easy just to put the down the awareness of your own systematic oppression for just a little while and relax and let them tell you all the reasons for why you're fucked up—brothers and sisters it's a miracle that we manage to turn away and keep marching on with a sober mind.

I don't like want to live through the next 6 days here in windsor because I like to have certainty and acoustically mundane regularity in my home-home routine but now that it's about to be changed I'm all sour on the inside and the outside and I keep snapping at my brothers' smiles and I keep snapping at my own self for being so permeable to the outsideness of my surroundings because I thought that I had kind of reached the point where only my insides and the chemicals in my brain could affect my insides but I guess you can never truly be free from that absolute external connection.

The acoustics in this room bother me. I spent 15 years trying to cover the curry smell buried deep into my clothes with bath and body works sprays and lotions and gels because I wanted to smell like vanilla because white girls always reek of vanilla for some reason and now years and years later I've finally figured out that I was born with the incense of turmeric in my veins and there is no perfume strong enough on this planet to cover it up now. This state of mind is of a city full of brown people all with white names and white people with bindis on their heads and buddhas in their well-lit houses and brown people being afraid to go back to home-home because their brooding son might get thrown in Guantanamo on the way there or the way back and the white people that take expensive cannon cameras to the slums of Delhi to coo at poverty porn and use brown bodies as steps to (fake) enlightenment and some deep shit consciousness about humanity and

this state of mind is of the brown bodies that are left behind when the cameras and the white gazes and the gold coins in cold vanilla hands go back to their well-lit houses in their stolen land and the white people recline back to go through the pictures in iPhoto and the brown bodies get stepped on by the next busload of tourists.

How long does it take for an artist to stop being an imposter and start being themselves? Does anyone ever reach that point or do we just become better imposters the older we get?

Too swift too fresh for this shit too dope too beat for your fucking shit too ill for you racist dreams too full of life for your talking down gringo ass too young and careless for your columbus (fuckboy) fantasies too smart too slick for your manipulative gendered micro-aggressive entities too here and too present for your colonial wet dreams too tuned in too aware to let you walk all over me and I'll apologize to ms.jackson and I'll apologize to my parents and I'll even apologize to myself and my best friend and I'll apologize to Pakistan and Istanbul and Leila but I'll never apologize to them (you know the them I'm talking about and if you don't by this point then why the fuck did you bother to get this far?). And now I can maybe smile for a little while and go to sleep (temporary kind fear not!).