

Three Poems

Momina Khan

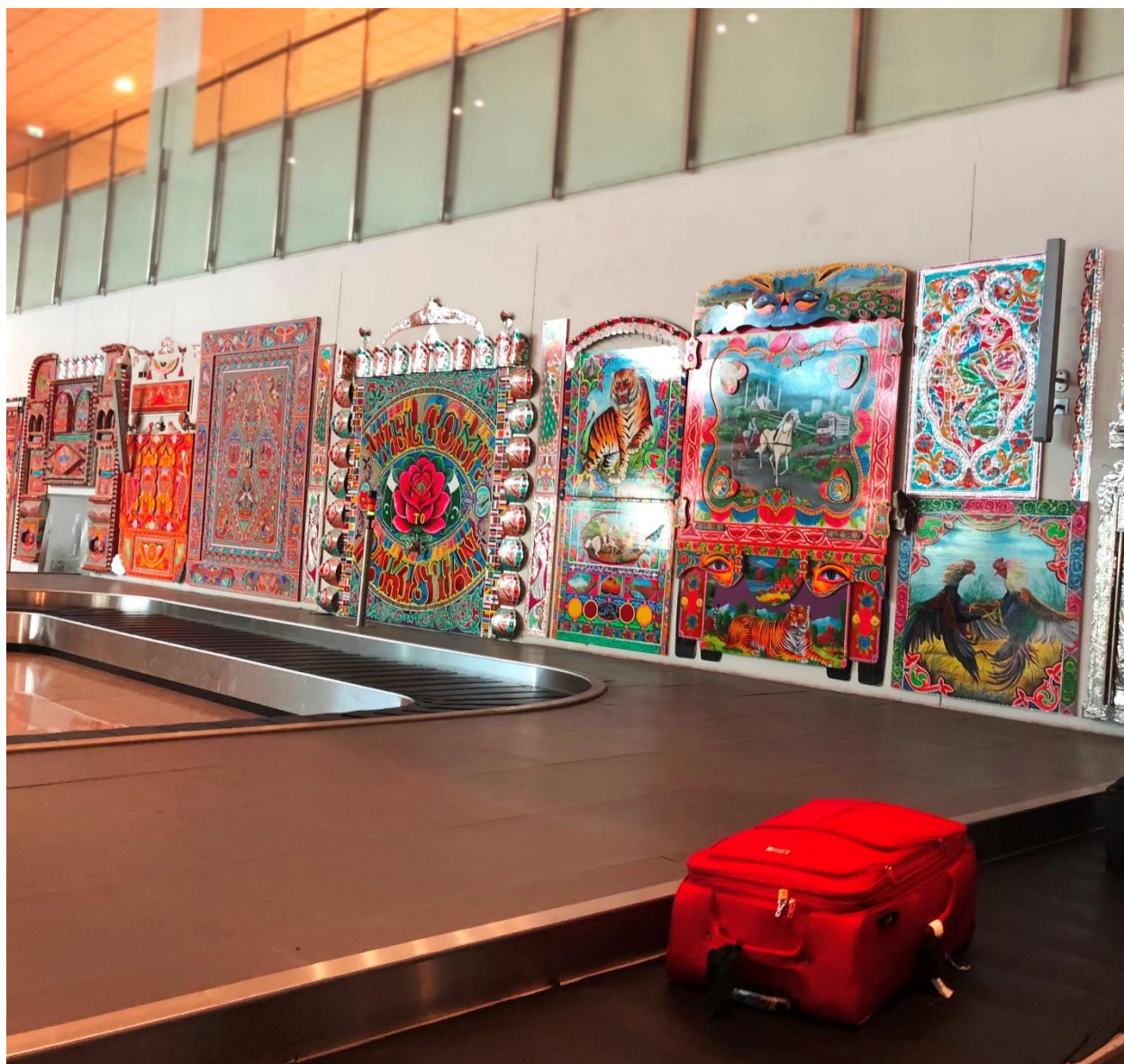
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Abstract

This collection of poems embodies my life journey through finding my sense of self and place in the world as a Muslim Pakistani Canadian woman. By deeply dwelling in my lived experiences, cross-cultural encounters, nostalgic memories, and soaked senses, I move into my own impossibility where I see newness toward an ambiguous and more flexible sense of self, humankind, and the universe. All the movements and manifestations of stories, sound, taste, smell, touch, and feeling introduce me to a perfect spirit, the spirit of repair, renewal, creativity, and wisdom. My poems (re)create me.

Keywords: Retelling Stories, Lived Experiences, Soaked Senses, Keen Consciousness, Non-negotiable Continuity



*Zaad e Rah*¹ by Khan (December 2018, Islamabad International Airport, Pakistan)

¹ *Zaad e Rah* is an Urdu word meaning “provisions for the journey.”

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Zaad e Rah: Retelling a Story²

we packed we cried we left

all we tried was to change
the story to change our lives
but do the stories ever change?
they do when they change lives
they do not when we fail to change them
the bag on the conveyor belt
swirled, turned, and returned
back and forth mapping the passage
in-between site scene scenario time space movements moments dimensions
engaged in durations, extensions, situations
of packing, placing, goodbyes
shelter in the shining stars
dripping, silent tears!
of history of memory of temporality
wrapped in rhythm, pattern, totality
slipping to wonders to screening
to sensations to observations to authorizations
emotive, intuitive, embodied, humanized. alive
waiting for the guardian angel, res(cuing)
immortal sanctity in a corporeal world
entrusted certainty encrusted in action
owning my(self) baggage bonding being becoming belonging
yes, stories carry us as much as
we carry stories of our lives
this shared weight of reciprocity
(en)lightens the load and unloading
creating particularities, routes, realities
immersed in lived rides, raised tides
nested manifested lived experiences
knowing in action reflection in action
interwoven senses, lives and identities
gifted disclosure and temporal closure

we reached we cried we unpacked

journeying into unpacking, with smile
living in hope — i am not alone

² Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



Nao³ at Naghuman River⁴ by Khan (March 2021, Peshawar, Pakistan)

³ Nao is an Urdu word meaning “boat.”

⁴ The Naghuman is a river located in the city of Peshawar, province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

NAO

soaked senses

e-v-e-r-y-thing
each moment silently dripping away

sailing across seven seas to see the unseen
reflecting in the prised waves of lost space
rowing with stories of shifting bounds
walking over mapped yet invisible boundaries
unsure of where they actually lie
on the move to composing memories

subliminally instinctually irreversibly
faded in shades and shadows of colours
embossed in rocks of roots and rhizomes
interconnected interdependent braided narratives
a second the minute an hour- the time
mobile fluid transportable nostalgia
present does not let me be separated ever
from the dissolved past and unimaginable future
every ounce of a moment demands attention

undivided uninterrupted unbroken awareness
ageless(ness) of time ripples and replicates
in sinking sun, the rising moon
whispering a story of moments and movements

to the dancing waves of the ocean
to carry a boat and its passenger
with an unpromised safe ride
i no longer seek to reach the shoreline
where the end desperately awaits
every journey is a destination in itself
neither water nor waves ever cease
learning to ride with surges of senses

to capture the essence of descending-ascending time
this brown body, eyes ears nose head and heart
mighty melodies— circling seeds of (re)creation
capable carriers of my being bonding belonging
i feel a thousand years old
digging the buried bones
under sagged flesh of reminiscence

where memory seeps and settles
like salt steadily sitting
gazing at the core of the see-through glass
obligatory stirring to witness the mix
water and salt dancing together, the grace of glass
visible becomes invisible and invisible becomes visible
the past the present the future, in-being
floating all over everywhere

the sight of the site
the smell of the scenes
the sound of manifestation
the touch of tradition
the feel of fulfillment
the sense of presence
recovering. therapeutic. healing.
sensual sensorial memorial attending
reviving recalling reliving

the lost moments the past moments
the gone moments the lived moments
precious prized praised — per(formed) moments
radical meeting merging re-emerging

it is not i in the moment
the moment in i is reliving me
reborn together through the ashes of epoch
cancelled binaries of past present future
far near wide varied — scaf(folded)
holding it all at once

my tightly closed fist does not comfort me anymore
the lines of my palm never fade
only a diasporic body knows
how to bring back the threads of time
living in, with and within memories
soaked in nonnegotiable continuity
creation!



*Ghuroob e Aftab*⁵ by Khan (January 2018, Hayatabad, Peshawar, Pakistan)

⁵ *Ghuroob e Aftab* is an Urdu word meaning "sunset."

Ghuroob e Aftab**S**inking **S**un

sojourning into a kingdom
of profound keen consciousness
attending an absence
unending presence.
of rhythmic readiness, blazing.
with promised passion
tossing streaks of hue
writing lines and lyrics
of shimmer of shine
on the canvas of sky
the beauty of being, in- within
a radical subordination
dripping in tranquility
descending to the depth
this utter submission
zenith bound to bow
striking an unmistakable
unshakable. balance!
bringing life to legacy
the sun must set
kneel. bow. down.
time to nap

in night's Womb

glorious **Rise**