



YOU ARE AN OPEN DOOR
IN THE START OF A DAY



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there is not much more/to you, they pale in comparison

there is not much more
(warm bread)
important than this
(olive oil)
this is not something
(in the morning)
I grew up with

so I am you
and your many aunties
that have loved me
over the years

I, fighting, to be close (to you)
to you,
they pale in comparison
untanned and
uncompromising
in their not-you-ness
and after this
who can say
I take a step, eyes closed
in kinship with
the boys from []
and cousins on another plane
back home





letter to charif shanahan

were we
separated in a womb and spit
into different continents
we have laid flat on backs
waiting for
different parts of the knobbly equator of our spines
to heal
from fault lines and eruptions

having both travelled disastrously to
a half homeland, we are a certain kind of
half half, as they say
and you wrote our struggles with existence perfectly



on door frames

leaning on a door frame
in the morning
catch the sun in your collarbone
get dark once and for all
be human by
being a boy no matter what
in your gym shorts,
and small abs pushing over the waistband
tucked over
the drawstrings shy behind and, I know, gesture to
a soft below

there is a world beneath
the plastic fibres of your clothes
one I am wont to know,
and wanting

being a boy in the sun is, personally,
refusing the deathworlds they aim to
dole out over our dark heads, from the sky
and through windows
the cameras pointed at our face from
police vans
they know our names
they mean us harm
they said we never stood a chance

to be a boy in the sun
is to stop these
carceral hands of time
that arrest our development
make men of children and fear of the kind of kindness one is born with

in the sun I'm getting tanned for sure
warmed against the powers that be
I'm strong and tall (we're getting free)



auntie, as the bins are collected

an offering in her hand, an auntie follows
as the bins are collected, needing her own
personal removal
approaching a worker, who presses the button,
brings the bin down, an unplanned stop
her pale hijab glowing in the mist

I watch her sit on the sign to my road and know,
we will be speaking
when I say good morning unlike
the white residents she understands
this isn't a formality, but an opening

she points to my face and says
“you got...”

she might be wondering
if we're the same

“english?”
“yes english” because language, because this is the
only one I've got

“you got...”
I point to my face and say “I've got”

“thank you”

on departing (BA119)

the food we eat
at terminal 5
in the restaurant characterised by its
around-the-world-ness -
I am beholden to the one
who purchases a smoothie for me
whose oats and fruits I'm unsure of
but take inside, deeply
to become the person who can
step barefoot onto aircraft
and nestle in for a long,
long way





tawakkul

in hindsight,
listing the choices
it does sound like
I lost my mind because I
wasn't sure which way was up and which was right
asking God what I should do
who turns to me and says
'tell the truth'
that has always been
a challenge

raheela describes tawakkul
sounding out the syllables for me
'ta - wa - kkul'
to put trust or to rely
I am not a natural linguist despite
having three passports and
a mounting need to undo myself
with words, choosing someone who would disappear
to another world when he answered
the phone in [language 1] or read in [language 2]
that he was lost for a moment and I, on the other side,
could only guess at what he meant



I, who is an open door in the start of a day

I am an open door in the start of a day
I am what has been done, what is on the way
I am the field beneath raheela who rolls a cig and sees the shape
of muscle in my forearm
where the tattoos clasp each other gently
you are the motorcycle imaginings of our respective countries
you are the always knowing your way around west
still sleepy from guesting at rich friends' yards perhaps wondering if you'll ever
have a pretty block to your name
if we'll ever
come home
shopping bags in hand
and sweet talk the lock,
make a stew
let's rest, it's over
let's rest, we're older
(than we've ever been)
let's rest, I want to know
how you sound after some
sleep (inshallah)
your voice refreshed
let's rest, we've been
on the move, for so long
in semi-safe havens and flats the movers move in on the multi-leg journey to paradise, I mean
europe, reciting poetry and rolling the slimmest cigarettes for slimmer hands
let's rest we made it
overseas
and there's money here (inshallah) we might grasp one day
the breeze here
brings some cool
not just
more dust to cover
openings we would prefer to
look out of, hoping to see, blue sky

I want my sisters to be fed/possible roads

I want my sisters to be fed
I want to redistribute the food and the laughter
to rearrange death on this planet so it comes to us all
equally
I want to speak with me from after a dream
I want to stay beside
the vulnerability of tents that are
not a replacement for walls
bombed into pieces
to hang your sweet things, for a fragment of a mirror
to check
your moustache before leaving

I like
dusty skirts washed by not much,
sunlight and air
I am not worried by cleanliness
I am not stressed by most of this
material world

once again I'm thinking of
who has been deemed fit to occupy the space between
walls and
walk on the possible roads -
who is walking in the dark and through the wet and mountains
because those on the move know
the land is your closest
ally and your one true love, your rider
buildings only
sell you out and leave you dry





thank you for meeting me

we all touch and hug each other so much
in the fight for aliveness
and for their being alive
the kisses on my cheek
the kisses I never expected to
ever get the chance to
meet, to have on my
skin for a short while forever
thank you and once again I
never expected to
get the chance to
be kissed like that
leaving the venue
it's a lot of things
to me
a kiss like that
when I'm
leaving a place
a bangle clink
and I'm back to bed
and thank you
for all the rest
thank you
for being the best
thank you
for meeting me
at the venue
thank you



for kissing me
at the venue
thank you for
missing me
when I'm not there

in my life this thing has got to be
blazing overhead and
setting on the sun
worried I won't make it
to the screening, often fainting
like I tried to make a dinner cost very little
it wasn't quite enough
calories wasn't quite enough to sustain
even the skinniest
but thank you, truly, for feeding me

four boys playing football from a train window

maybe it is wrong
to say you are a piece of art
you, together, are a multiple
whole, and not pieces
you have not broken apart yet
for the perfect instant I am watching you
through a train door window

you are a sharp square of metallic wisps against the field
you could be slim grey aliens
in your tracksuits

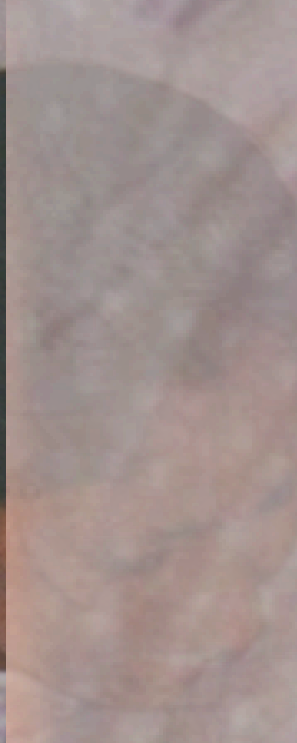
you are stopping gravity
when you suspend this ball
between you,
the earth,
and it seems you are skipping school on this bright and gorgeous afternoon
one april

because you seem so alone in your four-ness
I ask myself (quite breathless)
how did they get there?

-

after I've left you
they are building houses on your fields
with a sign that says Your future home
and your futures are very far from here
and they hopefully comprise of
football (forever)





thank you to my parents,
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