



YOU ARE AN OPEN DOOR  
IN THE START OF A DAY

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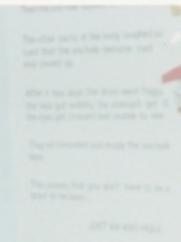
there is not much more/to you, they pale in comparison

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  
doe 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

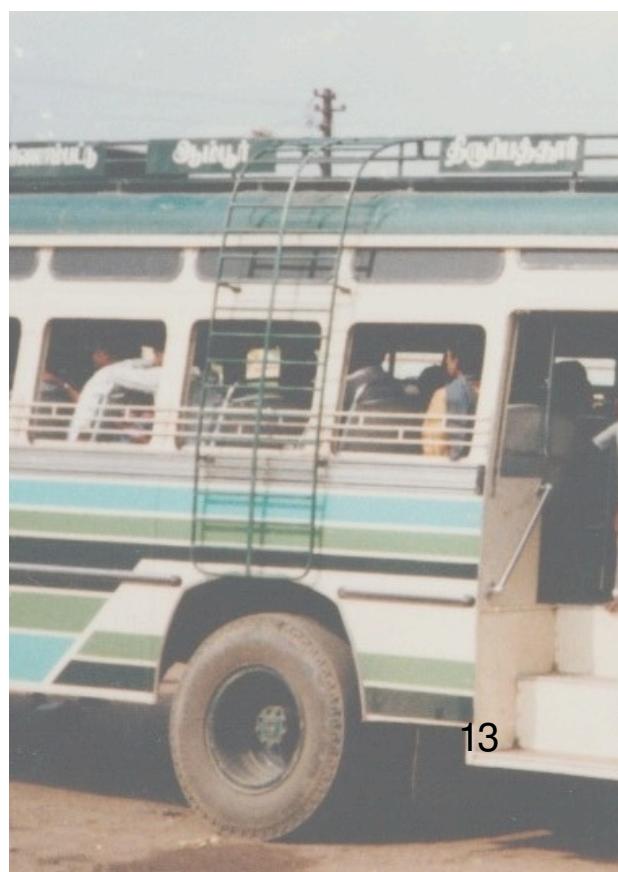
you are a sharp square of metallic wisps against the field  
you could be slim grey aliens  
in your tracksuits

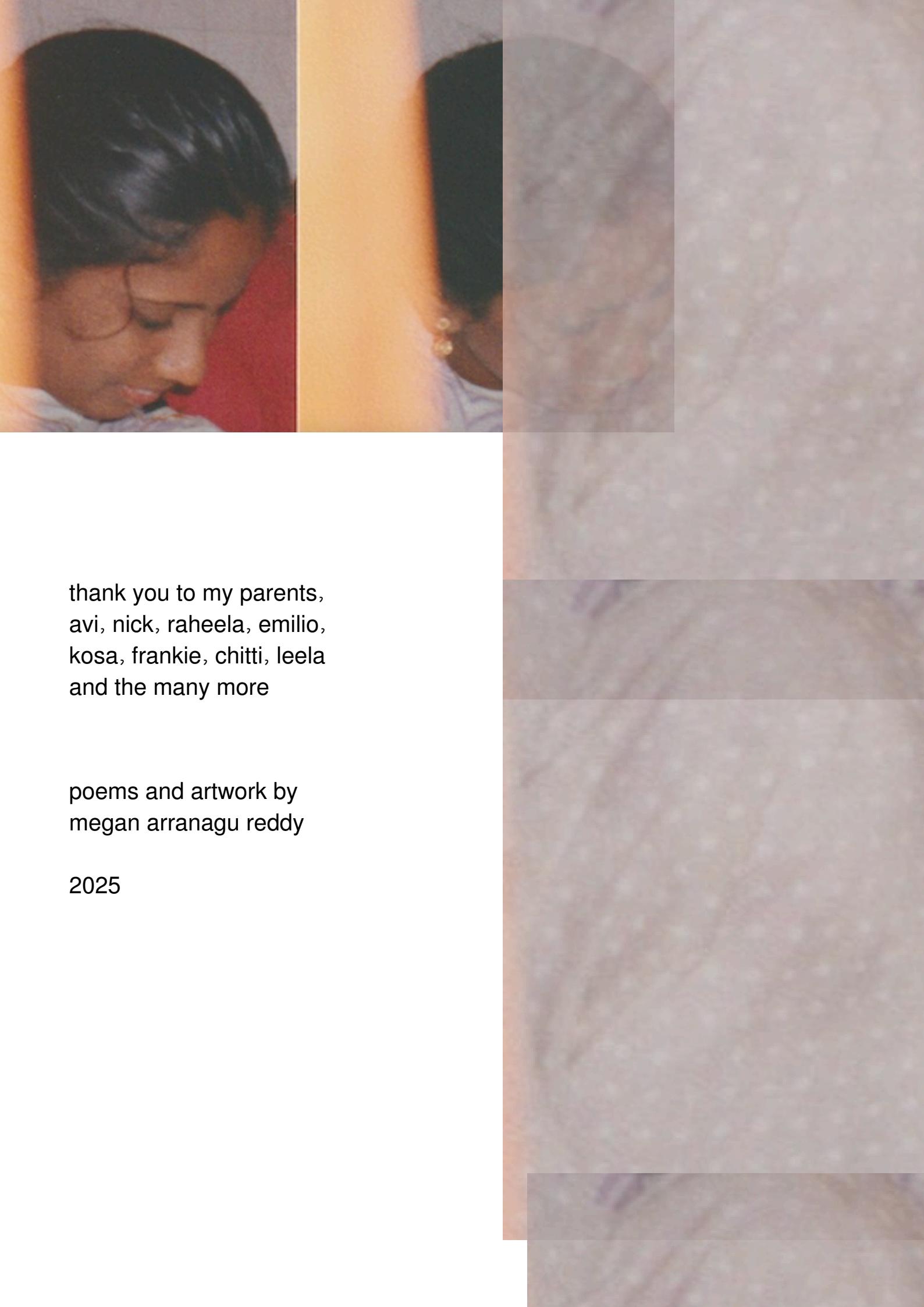
you are stopping gravity  
when you suspend this ball  
between you,  
the earth,  
and it seems you are skipping school on this bright and gorgeous afternoon  
one april

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,  
avi, nick, raheela, emilio,  
kosa, frankie, chitti, leela  
and the many more

poems and artwork by  
megan arranagu reddy

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