



CAYENNE PEPPER DAYDREAMS & CASTLES MADE OF BAY LEAF

A FOOD POETRY ZINE
BY MUNEA WADUD





ABOUT THIS ZINE:

What memories connect you to the people most significant to you? How do you keep those feelings alive later on in life? Mine are connected to scents, tastes, different types of ingredients that have helped me put together these thoughts. In this zine, I describe my relationship to the women in my life through food. These following poems are a collection of subconscious reflections on generational trauma and sisterhood with an added flavour of garam masala. It's dedicated to diasporic folks and gender minorities like myself who often don't feel like their stories get told enough.

I hope my work reaches you -

Coconut Milk Memories

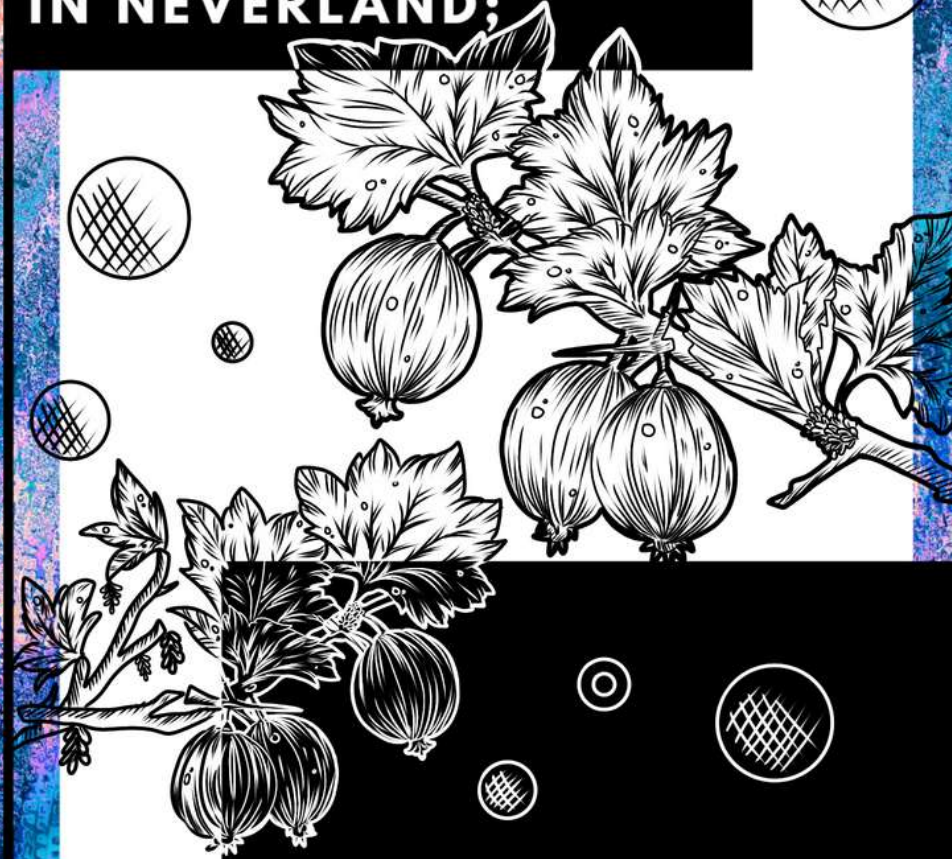
I'll always remember mother's curry -
Sweet aromatic cinnamon sticks,
Cardamom, coriander seeds, cumin,
And just a hint of that sea storm heart of hers

Kind kind hands that once haunted my dreams,
The first time I see mother
Smile is in the kitchen,
Surrounded by every colour,
Every taste, every texture,
The only place where
She doesn't seem like a monster,

Mother's curry is ruby red,
Like the bloodstained dress
She handed down to me -
Telling me that I'll wear it someday,
I'll wear her claws too, her fangs,
Her long dark hair,
Maybe I'll cook like her too,
Remind myself of home -

She shows her feelings through
What she puts on a plate,
It's the only way she's ever told me
That she loves me.

**I FOUND WILD
GOOSEBERRIES
IN NEVERLAND;**



**I SWALLOWED THEM WHOLE
(I KEPT THEM IN MY THROAT)**

Plum Cakes, Lemon Drops and Hard Candy in Her Pockets

Grandmother's sweets taste like loneliness wrapped in train station nostalgia, filled with all her hopes and dreams from her past, you can savour the forgotten memories - days spent reading books by the window, sunlight dripping over her head as she chased her brothers around, long braids tied at the ends with yellow ribbon, she thinks of a time where things felt timeless. Where she did not have to grow up so fast, where she could sit on rooftops and count the stars like they're sprinkles on a cake. Her honeydew shaped eyes and strawberry red smile - stretching from ear to ear like I've never seen before.



**HE FED ME
POMEGRANATES,**
he smelled of saffron,
he always took the last plane
back -

A Trip To The Moon, A Trip To The Centre of a Peach Pit

Follow the smell of mutton
Back home, auntie,
I promise you, a feast is waiting for you,
You'll find old recipes your sister left for you,
Tucked under the jars of
Brown mustard seeds,

I remember the smell of kababs
When I would see you,
Hands dug deep into the mixture,
Resembling that of a child
Playing in the mud and a huge grin
Plastered on your face,
I haven't seen auntie this happy in a while,
I used to think,

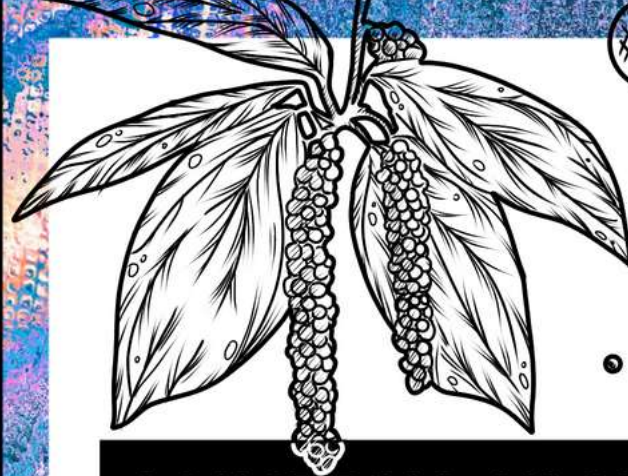
Your excitement flows from bindi
To saree to bangles clinging
And clanging as you rushed down
The staircase in your heels,
Tasting the maple syrup on
Your fingertips, you say -
This country tastes nothing like
My own, sweet and new,

You think fondly of your
Mother's lentil rice though,
How it's a perfect blend of
Her hurricane spirit,
And her moon shine smile,
Just a dash of starlight -

It tastes like forgotten mango trees,
Old banana leaves,
The last remnants of childhood.

For This Spell, You Will Need: Clementines, Rosemary and Ginger Root

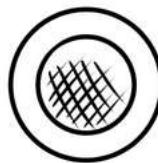
My sister still sleeps with the taste of lychee smokes and Marlboro's on her tongue, just a bit of that stale coffee from breakfast this morning, some smeared mascara in her eyes, thirty seven missed calls, fifty two unread messages, voice mails left from our mother - telling her that dinner is ready. Sometimes, father comes by with her drive-thru order, memorized. From how much milk to how much sugar to how much cream - he only remembers the small things, never the big things like her first heartbreak or the way she climbed trees, up and up and up until she could taste the sky. Until she could take a bite out of the clouds, until she could mix their cotton candy texture with sugary sweet raindrops and make her own magical concoction. She was always a dreamer, thinking up the unthinkable - waiting for Poseidon's sea to take her away.



I ONCE READ AN OLD BOOK OF FAIRYTALES,

I pulled it out and it
smelled like sesame seeds and
white pepper -

I pressed flowers in to the
pages, made paper stars,



Things That Are Left Behind Bus Stations: Old Pineapple Bubblegum, Emptied Bottles of Mango Jack Fruit Juice, My Tender Heart -

One day, I made myself a crown of berries -
Blue ones that make me think of the ocean,
Of concord grapes, of damson plums,
Of cornflowers too.

I used dark ones -
Black currant nightmares,
Liquorice stick potions,
Coffee jelly incantations,
Burnt toast, the taste of
Winter cold days spent
Indoors with nothing but
The ghost of my lover -

I added some red berries too -
Like cherry galaxies,
Crushed chilli pepper and powder,
Just like the way
Hades used to mix it for
Persephone's next recipe,
Warm, distinct and fragrant -
Just like the way
The universe would taste to God,

I used to make rings out of seeds -
Counting one for every man
Who painted my skin
With turmeric smeared fingertips,
With tamarind
Still sticky on their tongues,
With the smell of war
Still fresh in their hair,
With sadness in their eyes,

The trail back to father's always
Had breadcrumbs along the way,
Once I would get there, he'd greet me with
My favourite cup of spiced dragon chai, a
Plate of vanilla cookies from the
Convenience store and he'd hold me like a
Small flightless bird, like a frightened deer,
Like a burning soul -

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About the Author:

Munea Wadud is a 27 year old artist, writer and creative currently living on the unceded, unsundered Territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin people. She is self-taught and mainly focused on creating work that validates her identity as a non-binary queer person of colour. She has an art business where she designs and sells patches, pins, stickers and much more. Her work has been showcased at Ottawa Art Gallery's Youth Showcase as well as their gift shop. She has been featured in notable fairs such as Feminist Fair, Flamingo Arts Market for LGBTQ+ Creators in Toronto as well as the Inside Out LGBTQ+ Arts Market and Film Festival.