



"Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender." —Alice Walker

Brown Sugar is an online womanist literary magazine for women, womxn, and womyn of color, of any nationality, sexuality, religion, or cultural diasporas that are misrepresented and underrepresented. This is a platform and space for womanists to take command of their creative expression. We aim to capture and promote the diverse cultures and living voices of women with all kinds of backgrounds and identities through poetry, prose, and art.

Masthead

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Ordinary: Happenings



I remember buying makeup for the first time. I was 16 and decided to buy some clear mascara. I was too afraid to buy black mascara, in fear of being scolded by my mother if she found it, or being labeled as "fast." As I purchased the clear mascara I thought, "It's clear. She'll never know." At 16, there were so many things I did not want her to know. Coming from a religious, conservative household, I was always anxious about sharing parts of myself and pushing boundaries.

I started to have inklings that I might be queer when I was 15 and getting close to a female friend. She was wild and free, and I was attracted to how sure of herself she was. I got butterflies every time we talked on the phone. My palms would get sweaty and my body filled with the heat of anxiety whenever we were alone.

As time went on, my feelings started to bubble to the surface, and I was so unsure what to do with them. I tried to hide my queerness as best I could. Like my clear mascara, it was on for the world to see, but no one was aware. I knew I was loved, but the fear of being rejected was very real. Fear of being rejected by my crush. Fear of being rejected by my family. I let those fears consume me and keep me in the closet for years to come. Much like my clear mascara, my queerness was a secret between me and god. A hope and a prayer that one day I could show the world the real me.

Cereal Lover Rejjia Camphon

I want my partner
to be like
honey nut
cheerios; healthy
for my heart type fella.



Permissions Victoria Namnama

Dressed in civilized ambitions, drown permissions in dark rooms. Mistake fruitful pleasures for rocky monosyllables: Hate, Burn, Hope. Invent dangers from evening conversations from stories, from books until sharp words divorce violent realities.

I don't know his name Natalia Benry

There is a secret that some people know about me, but only a few. I keep this secret in smiles, behind texts, in essays, in books, on the subway, in my bedroom, on tinder, when I make a new friend, every time I eat pizza, at school, at work, at the supermarket, in every body I touch, in the silence, on twitter, when I argue, for four years with my ex, in my hair, underneath the folds of my fat, when I travelled alone for work, when I take a walk in the park, when I drink at bars, when I slept with that cokehead from Portland, when I go to therapy, when I ran up three avenues to get away from those men, when I stopped answering his texts, when I fell on a treadmill, when I declined that drink, when I disappeared for three months, when I argued with that incel on twitter, when I read all those books that one summer, when I couldn't hold back tears, when I ghosted that sweet guy from Greenpoint, when I told half the story, when I couldn't get it out, when the police didn't believe me, when I wished I didn't have to keep this secret, when it sometimes comes toppling out of my mouth, when it sucks all the air out of the room,

in my dreams, in my body, on my skin,

and always in my eyes.



Cream Soda and Plait Bread Knystal M. Ramnoop

Saturday nights were solely dedicated to me taking refuge in my bedroom with my beloved blue bottle of sparkling Moscato. It'd been keeping me company...a rapid replacement for my boyfriend. Sorry, *ex-boyfriend*. Could you tell I'm still adjusting?

Ever since we called it quits, I'd been engaged to my sanctum in the Bronx and Rishi had been engaged to another woman in Queens—courtesy of his mother's stellar reputation in the Hindu community that she wouldn't dare tarnish because of me. I mean, who needed a diamond ring and his exotic surname when assuming the role of Mrs. Moscato had been my destiny all along?

You'd think this particular Saturday night would be no different than the rest but I was to blame for accidentally volunteering my baby whispering services for the weekend. Sure, there was instantaneous regret once the extroverted offer left my mouth but I somehow couldn't find myself saying no to Cousin Ishwar's toddler, Danny. Leave it to a three-year-old to address you sweetly as "auntie" and demand cuddles that'd make you contract baby fever.

The street lamps' fluorescent lighting illuminated our path while we walked in sync to a sizzling chutney mix reverberating in the distance on Liberty Avenue. *Temporary separation from my abode is all it'd be*, I kept reminding myself. There was no snow in sight to blanket the whole of Richmond Hill aka "Little Guyana" but the frigid air had managed to pierce through my puffer jacket and straight into my skin—as Ishwar and I, with Danny's gloved hands secured in each of our bare ones, passed Veggie Castle. Nearing our safe-haven, I shoved my hand further into my pocket, ridding the memories of mischief with Rishi that began to invade my mind. Without

even stepping foot in Sybil's Bakery and Restaurant, I could tell—like always—that a prolific sea of people had gathered inside.

My suspicion was confirmed the moment we reached the entrance. I pulled open the red door and Ishwar scooped Danny up in his arms. As if on cue, patrons turned around to grill us for letting the winter air infiltrate the shop's warmth, sighed, and then reluctantly shuffled around to make room for us. Ishwar yanked a red ticket from the dispenser, I kept my ears tuned on the wall-mounted television for the commentators' relay of the cricket match's events while examining the digital number plastered on the "Now Serving" sign. Number 60.

Ishwar sucked his teeth in disapproval. "Is always the same nonsense. I should get Danny to go and see who want to trade tickets with we," he whispered to me. I laughed, glancing at his hand. Number 75.

"Eh, leave my nephew alone," I told him. "I'm gonna get our drinks in the meantime before everyone starts blocking the refrigerators."

I politely excused myself to reach the refrigerator closest to where we were by the entrance that harbored the fizzy drinks, but standing in front of it was a stumpy auntie with a cell phone pressed against her ear, her chatter in Creolese loud enough for even the bakers to hear.

"You know how me sugar does get high," she announced. My eyes widened. Gazes were immediately pulled from the brightly lit menus above the counter and exchanged before landing on the auntie who was unfazed by the stares for her blunt diabetes announcement.

"Excuse me," I said to her. The auntie refused to move as she continued her conversation. I refrained from an outburst in Creolese but that's when he stepped in. Number 74. Rishi. He slipped his jacket hoodie off of his head and slid the refrigerator door back for me—earning a look of disgust from the auntie as it grazed her shoulder—before his hazel orbs met my chocolate ones.

"Still drinking cream soda?" he asked, mustering a smile. I nodded, too stunned at the fact that he'd been in here the whole time, and instructed him to pass me three bottles. His hand brushed mine in the exchange and quickly, my eyes reverted to the television. "I thought it was you but—"

"I think they might call we soon," Ishwar said, rejoining my side with Danny now standing on his own feet. "Nobody going to the counter when they calling numbers."

I didn't even get the chance to reply as, upon mutual recognition, the two men embraced each other. "Oh shucks! Long time no see, man."

Rishi chuckled. "Yeah, I'm still around, bro." Ishwar retrieved the cream soda bottles from my hands so I could lift an agitated Danny. The toddler's fingers latched onto the crucifix pendant on my necklace as he nestled his head in the crook of my neck. Rishi's hand caressed his cheek. "Last time I saw this little guy he was a baby."

"Yeah," I whispered, staring at the menu.

"You still kept that?" Rishi asked, pointing to my necklace.

"How could I not?" I said, turning to look at him. "You were the only one that didn't

have a problem with my religion."

"Seventy-four!" one server called.

"Seventy-five!" exclaimed another.

Saved by Sybil's servers, I thought, as the crowd parted for us to reach the counter.

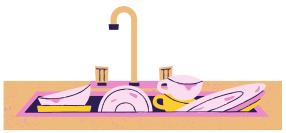
After our orders were placed, Rishi leaned in. "Remember when I jokingly brought you here on our first date?" he asked. I bit the inside of my lip, suppressing my smile. "I loved that you weren't fussy about it."

"You were buying me doubles, Rishi," I said, referring to the Trinbagonian street food that became the glue in our relationship. "I couldn't afford to be fussy."

He chuckled. "I wish things had worked out between us."

"Are things not working out with..." I started, before catching myself. "Sorry, I didn't...me too, but we're like..." I jutted my chin out to Ishwar's items on the counter, "cream soda and plait bread. We don't go well together."

Home Jaela Vaughn



Dirty dishes.
Dirty dishes and children crying but there's Love, too.
Laughter and Love and sometimes clean dishes, too.
Momma's here, Sisters too.
Yelling and screaming, still, there's no place I'd rather Be.

Meet Ashley Peanson

I will meet you at the cross section between greasy cherry flavored Burt's Bees chapstick // overlined lips and braces // IPod Nanos and your brother's headphones // thread barren pockets and the Sundance Film Festival // with Manic Panic Cotton Candy Pink hair dye on my coarse, black hair // blue bows and army green jackets // and rosewood stains on white t-shirts from my mother //

I will meet you at the blue tag sale at Salvation Army between scratched records and broken teapots // porcelain dolls and Connect Four // size six shoes and dirty floors // your mom's credit card and my dad's lighter //

Meet me at my house // I will watch 500 Days of Summer and miss the point // cut my bangs // bleach my hair twice over // widen my eyes // pinch my nose // wear a hat // hum a song // kiss you in the acid rain (yellow face down the gutter) // and become your manic pixie dream girl

Three dandelion zipper mouths Each smaller than the last Hold the universe.

Ode to the Yellow Backpack Victoria Namnama

Branded in "Jansport" tattoos, She waits and devours Like a teenage girl at a sleepover: Golden whale of Knowledge, music, sand.

She's always hungry for exotic cuisine But bursts at the seams.
Gets stuck between metal teeth,
Forgets to floss.

We're friends traveling on trains across the stars When sticky lemon drops Cover us in Earth. Spill secrets in our laps.

I scrub her guts, our memories With liquid Dawn soap— The blue kind.

Wash her in the bathtub. Drown her in the washer. Dry her with sun kisses.

Repeat forever Until threads spill onto the plate: Late summer daffodil spaghetti turns brown.

Heavy hands bury compost bodies In plastic black caverns.

Backpackers in foreign realms, I'll always buy another. We paint new stains on satin skin.

17

Sunday is waking up, blinks of crust, dry mouths and wild hair, still wishing I could wake up to you.

Sunday is breakfast crumbs in the sheets, lazy limbs, fatigued smiles
I wish to shine upon you.

Sunday is adagio, flushed cheeks, "I could get used to that" daydreams, a loss of time in you.

Sunday is hopeful, yet I'm hopelessly wondering if you could think of me this way too.

—Easy, Ashley Imanë, Co-Founder of Brown Sugar

2014 Breadbox Ashley Peanson

I felt a part of White America in a breadbox. Not a breadbox in the literal sense, but the small gymnasium in my high school. I was nestled between two sweaty White boys in one of the two sets of bleachers. Top row. Middle section. I would be featured in the back of their Kelvin filtered Instagram pictures taken on their cracked I-Phone 5's. I existed as half a double chin or the tip of a flat nose. Untagged. Because, of course, they did not follow me.

Our faces were painted blue and streaked with silver. My face paint was being removed from sticky sweat and being patched with Yellow. The breadbox smothered us all. The boiler was on high downstairs and snow was falling outside. We would all freeze our asses off after the game and throw our winter jackets aside, a pile of Colombia jackets as high as the snow ploughed hills. The jackets lied ignored as we whooped and hollered over the 3A division win.

Halfway through the game, I bought an Oatmeal Cream Pie from a PTA mom. My mom was Facebook friends with her. She was rural Mrs. George, a cool mom who served virgin cocktails and hosted brunch for her daughter on Saturday's. Her daughter called me slurs in fifth grade.

But, she did not know that. She only knew the PTA needed to raise enough money to buy t-shirts with the basketball teams' faces plastered on the back of them. And, she knew I was not a season regular. I could tell by her lingering gaze.

"This would be cute on a hoodie," The mother commented, "Hoodies are our stretch goal..." Her eyes lingered on the tip jar decorated with blue and silver glitter stars.

I nodded in between chews of Oatmeal Cream Pie and tried to ignore the bold AllStar4 font. I felt a part of White America when I dropped a dollar in the tip jar. I contributed to one of the world's most important causes—graphic design.

I squeezed myself beside three girls from my Algebra class. My spot alongside the boys had long been taken up by a pretty blonde from the opposing school. That night, on the bus back home, she probably tweeted a picture of the boys alongside the hashtag freethenipple.

The girls I sat beside were decked out in gear from the corporate casket that was Shopko. Their blue tutus scratched my legs and triggered my eczema.

I felt smothered and sticky like the heel of a loaf of bread in plastic packaging. I knew I would not escape for some time. Time was on hold for everyone in the breadbox. For a minute, our little part of the world paused, even as the snow deepened around us and the wind howled its sad songs.

The clock was ticking down to the final minute of the game.

I did not think the girls noticed my presence beside them. Their eyes were constantly trained on the court. The jersey numbers they had meticulously painted on their faces were long overstretched from continuous screaming, shouting, and stomping on the scratched wooden floors.

I felt a part of White America when I screamed for the boy's basketball team. I screamed for the star player with the unspeakable IFunny account. I screamed for the point guard who argued against Atticus Finch in English and the Center who

idolized Curtis Lepore.

One night, in the dead of winter, I decided to receive a temporary lobotomy for a sense of normalcy: To see the world through popular White eyes my sophomore year in 2014. To know only the worry of a 3A loss. To feel the thrill of a victory. To be a part of the loaf in the breadbox.

you are not a boy Natalia Berry

When I was eight, I started growing hair along the sides of my face, on the crevices of my belly, into the trails on my thighs, under the pits of my wilted arms, and all up down my prepubescent limbs.

My mother presented a blade to match her tone, a sharp mood to match her disgust, a quick gesture to hold onto her norms, a Venus pink prize attached to the curse between my thighs.

She pushed my fragile leg up against the white porcelain acrylic of an early 2000s bathtub, asbestos leaking through our titles poisoning our commonsense.

She sprayed potions and lotions up and down my taunt leg, and begged I stayed still.

We were to rid me of this disgrace, remove this vile fur quickly and quietly before my father saw.

you are not a boy

And she ripped the blade against my fuzz, clicking and burning through the potions, smoothing my tampered skin, shedding the shame from my body, nipping small cuts into my ankle, a scar I hold with me today.

"I will only show you once," she said.
"You must do this again on your own on your entire body and for the rest of your life because..."
you are not a boy
And for a while I wished I was because, I wished for control over my body,

you are not a boy

but I am not a boy.

Open 24-Hours Victoria Namnama

A man struts through automatic doors, He doesn't look like the type to yell at "90 Day Fiancé". Hot dog body, Shiny teeth reflect flickering neon green. I can read 7-Eleven in his grin.

Shoeless feet against chilly white tiles, I restock Cranberry Red Bull. Slurpee machines sing Blondie's "Maria" Under fluorescent bulbs.

God builds our hips for dancing. I'm the metronome, clock's little hand When the moon swallows the sun in one Big Gulp.

Mr. Cherry Cola voice orders: A turkey and swiss, extra mayo, add pickles Hold losing lottery tickets On whole wheat bread.

I don't tell him we're out of turkey subs Because I only want to Roll smooth Hello Kitty gumball eyes Between my teeth.

He brings my hands to his chapped lips But can't bite my Flamin' Hot Cheetos fingers.

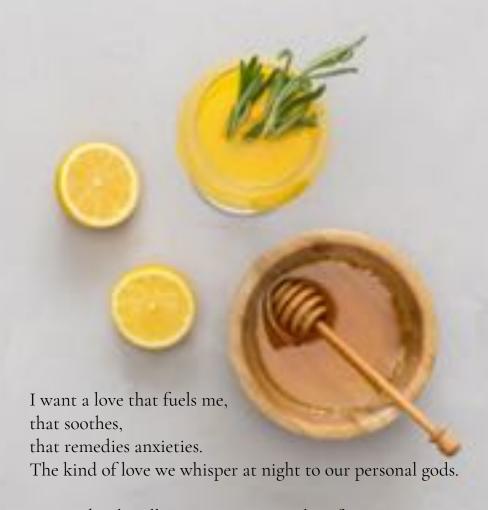
Face slides off his skin, Melts on the floor, Becomes wriggling gummy worms Swimming in chunky chocolate soup. Trust Rejjia Camphon

Sometimes an outstretched arm

could just be a

slap

in the face.



-Remedy, Shanille Martin, Co-Founder of Brown Sugar

Gone Today, Hair Tomorrow Megha Nayan.

I got divorced in 2013, after a year of marriage. The divorce was as sudden as the wedding was a whirlwind. When the dust settled on that short-lived union, one of the things I would say to placate my shocked friends was: "At least I got away in time, without lasting damage."

This is a lie. It is impossible to quantify how much a bad experience scarred you, and nobody ever gets out of a marriage without injury. No matter what the reason for separation—abuse, negligence, fraud or plain old incompatibility—every divorced person I know has paid a price, whether physical, financial or emotional, to regain freedom.

In my case, it was the loss of my mane.

At the risk of sounding pompous, I was quite the Rapunzel in my early years. My hair has always been my most remarkable feature. My father loves to narrate how I was born with a mop so thick that the obstetrician had to turn me upside down and wash it immediately after I emerged. I'd dismiss this as affectionate exaggeration, but he describes the scene in vivid detail to corroborate his claim.

In that sense, my hair has been less of a personal feature and more a family asset. My father is from South India, where long braids on women are prized and cherished. Mine were thick, jet-black, wiry. Growing up, hair maintenance was an elaborate affair involving the entire clan. Duties were allocated: my father would oil my hair, my mother would wash and detangle it. Getting a haircut was unthinkable—at most,

my mother trimmed the ends whenever they started to split. By the time I turned four, my hair went all the way down to my waist. Again, no lies here, because I'm wearing a bun, a massive edifice on my tiny head, in the pictures taken at my uncle's wedding that year. All hair, no gimmicks.

I remember this one time when I was in the school playground with some friends. A nice-looking lady walked up to me and asked, "Child, which shampoo does Mummy use on your hair? I want to use the same on my daughter."

I mumbled that Mummy used a combination of Shikakai soap and Sunsilk shampoo—the most banal of supplies that you'd find in every middle-class Indian home. The nice auntie listened to me most seriously, making mental notes. I must have been eight or nine. I was mighty flattered, and so was my mother when I narrated this story.

Cut to fifteen years later—I was stuck in a marriage that was testing my resolve. Even as I kept a straight face at work to show no signs of personal wreckage, my body began to crumble. There were persistent aches in random places. My head felt like a boulder all the time. Some nights, I couldn't fall asleep because my heartbeat would be thudding in my ears. The gloom spread to my hair too, and clumps of it began falling out. I told myself there could be a hundred reasons—erratic food, troubled sleep, dandruff, hormones, seasonal changes, dead cell build-up.

This wasn't my first tryst with hair fall. Every woman with long hair knows that monster like a bed-fellow. But this time, it was noticeably different. It wasn't just a few extra strands. Entire bunches would be floating on the bathroom floor. There was hair everywhere—on my dressing table, my pillows, my desk, my clothes.

In a few weeks, bits of scalp started to show. One fine morning, the house help decided she'd had enough of my fallen tresses getting stuck in her broom. "If you keep losing so much hair, you're going to go bald!" she bemoaned. "Do something!"

I panicked. Her exclamation stirred me into action. I asked friends to recommend home remedies, consulted a homeopath, and began a course of herbal medicines. Advice poured in from all sides: Eat vegetables. Have green tea. Sleep enough. Don't take too much stress.

That last part would make me smirk. Stress? Is that even the word?

As it turned out, the hair fall did not stop despite all my efforts. It took its own sweet time and toll, reigned in only when I finally moved back home with my parents.

By this time, I was exhausted. I could not go on with waist-length hair that needed constant care, especially when my sagging spirits needed more immediate attention. The hair felt heavy on my head, like baggage from the past that wouldn't let me be.

That's when I did the unthinkable. I rewarded myself with an extra-short crop.

This was my first experience of a proper haircut. I felt uncomfortable through the entire session, as if the hair stylist were chopping off one of my limbs, or worse, my umbilical connection to my parents. I'd felt ecstatic earlier at the thought of a new look, but sitting in the barber's chair, I felt a strange sense of remorse. It is funny how sanctioning a harmless change to one's own self can seem like an act of betrayal when the lines between love and ownership are blurred, the concept of bodily

autonomy understood yet not assimilated. I clearly had a lot of growing up to do, and the divorce was only one part of it.

It's been seven years now since I got that cut. The locks the stylist chopped away grew right back a couple of years later, as hair is meant to. Contrary to what desi aunties will say, the chop-chop did nothing to damage my hair. On the contrary, it relieved me of the constant tugs and pulls I felt at the roots, and liberated me enough to step out into the world without the inevitable crutch of rubber bands and tight plaits. I have subsequently alternated between long and short hair. I enjoy my mane while it is in good form, but whenever it disintegrates into a clumpy mess, I happily surrender it to scissors without an iota of guilt. The former feels like bounty, the latter liberty. Both feel, and are, equally legitimate.

I'm grateful today for that divorce—the divorce of appearance from identity. I've realized that as long as your sense of worth remains tied in with how you look, you will never have exclusive headspace to focus on who you're meant to become. I still love my tresses, of course—just slightly less than the things I've been able to accomplish since letting go of my preoccupation with them.

Sleepover Natalia Benry

Coming around at the end of the night makes me feel like crumbs, on shoes.

Is it the small of your back or the sweaty silence? On your sheets.

I think it's the smell of desperation that I can't hide from.



Folding Laundry Jeeks Rajagopal

Clothes emerge from the dryer like offspring from the womb: wrinkled, crumpled, warm, slightly worse for their journey.

The faintest aura of clean radiates around each piece—sweat and grime supplanted by detergent and softener fragrance.

These fabric waifs beg for messy wrinkles to be smoothed, erased, with a brush of the palm.

Faithfully they remember and happily accommodate our physical quirks in fiber-etched memories.

Celebrating symmetry, each urges the placing of sleeve with sleeve, leg over leg.

The human mind demands to classify, organize, segregate, pairing like with like.

So we accept and conform, and create neat stacks, folded, free of blemish, reclaiming order from chaos.



Beneath the Stars
Victoria Namnama

Winter sunset slips between slant skeleton trees.
Dusk shades shimmering crystals.



Grasping Vasundhara *D*.

Today I saw a man who looked just like you. He spoke a different tongue and he walked a different walk. He came and sat in a cab where I was sitting. I was in the back and he was in the front, nonchalant to my gaze of overwhelming affection and nostalgia. All I wanted whenever I saw the man's cheeks crinkle up like yours often did when you smiled—was to tap the driver in the back and ask him to turn around, and leave me where I would find you. And if I found you, I would slowly walk towards where you sat, I would gently take your hand in mine, and I would ask you three simple words: "How are you?"

And I would wait for you to look into my face, hold my hand and smile at me. And then no matter what your answer was, I would know the answer of how I am. I am fine. Right here, in the dip of your palm where my palm now rests, I am fine.

The man who kept looking and smiling, had lips just like yours. It made my heart stop. Not because of the fear of temptation towards a complete stranger, but a fear of love towards an estranged member of the past.

I wish I had fallen in love with the words you spoke. I wish I had fallen out of it, when the words turned bitter. Yet what I feel in love had surpassed all things on the surface, and it had come to where your presence lingered. Sometimes, in the back of the cab with a stranger's all too familiar smile. Or sometimes, in the emergency room with a stranger's all too familiar walk.

Suddenly, everything around me stopped with your single element of being and I would try to seize the moment to take whatever I wanted. To take whatever I wanted and hope that it won't stop too fast. Like it did before. It came to me as a surge of warmth; the kind that blossoms in the flowers of your pelvis. And it left me like a tornado; half empty and half destroyed.

Contributors

Natalia Berry is a Black Feminist writer and poet, born and raised in New York. After a career of managing supply chain at luxury fashion conglomerates like LVMH, she is transitioning into the world of publishing. Currently, she is interning as a literary assistant at Francis Goldin Lit and a student at The New School's Riggio Honors Program, studying Creative Writing and Screenwriting. You can find her trolling *Criterion* and *Goodreads* or *Diet Prada*, with lurid opinions on all three mediums. You can find her writing at natalia.berry.com or twitter @nataliafrombk.

Rejjia Camphor is from Baltimore, Maryland. Many people pronounce her first name wrong, but she pronounces it like "Ruh-G-Ugh" as it rhymes with "Momma Mia!" At 22, she graduated with a B.A. degree in Creative Writing, Visual Culture, and Women's Studies from Hampshire College. She has an array of passions but is best known for her hugs, personality, poetry, and some pretty wild experiences. Right now, she hopes to center her creative work and writing around healing, humor/joy, and spiritual truth and understanding. Don't forget to dance, laugh, and listen to music along the journey.

Vasundhara D. is a writer based out of New Delhi, India. Her words have been published in *The Anthology of Indian Poetry Society, Indians4SocialChange, Wine Cellar Press,* and beyond. She is absolutely passionate about women's issues, rains and teas, and can currently be found building things at *The Indian Feminist Review*.

Victoria Namnama is an honors college graduate with two degrees: B.A. in English with a concentration in Creative Writing, and a B.A. in Linguistics with a minor in American Sign Language. She enjoys making music, gardening, and playing board games. She has two cats named Simon and Teddy.

Megha Nayar was longlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2020 and the New Asian Writing Short Story Prize 2020. She teaches English and French for a living and writes to remain sane. Her work has appeared in *Trampset*, *Variety Pack*, *Burnt Breakfast*, *Ayaskala*, *Cauldron Anthology*, *Potato Soup Journal*, *Postscript Mag*, and *The Daily Drunk Mag*, among others. She tweets at @meghasnatter.

Contributors

Ashley Pearson (she/her) is a sophomore majoring in Creative Writing and Biology following the Pre-Med/Pre-Dental route at Knox College. She is 19 years old. She divides her time between Monmouth and Galesburg Illinois. Ashley can be found on Instagram @ashleynicolewrites and on Twitter @ashley___writes. Her work can be found in Catch Magazine, Ice Lolly Review, The Global Youth Review, Brown Sugar, The Hearth Magazine, BlueThings Zine, Ogma Magazine, Paper Crane Journal, Oye Drum, Down in the Dirt, Unapologetic Zine, SouthChild Lit, Melbourne Culture Corner, and elsewhere.

Jeeks Rajagopal is a librarian, fairly new to writing, and indulges in it in her spare time.

Krystal M. Ramroop (she/her), better known as Krys, is an innovative American born Indo-Guyanese creative writer, and aspiring film and television actress. A first-generation summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the City University of New York's City College (CCNY), Krystal's a music, film, and tea junkie at heart. She hopes her curiosity and niche for cross-cultural writing will allow her to share her research and experiences, and create a realm for readers to join her in. With upcoming releases in Caribbean anthologies, her writings have been featured in Promethean Literary Journal, Akashic Books' Flash Fiction Duppy Series, Brown Girl Magazine, Avaaz Media, Brown Sugar Literary Magazine, and her WordPress website, The Art of Storytelling. You can connect with her on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram @krys_mo_ram.

Jaela Vaughn is a recent SUNY Purchase grad who's just trying to ground herself during this pandemic by writing, sharing, and placing roots in all the things that make her happy and that further her as a writer. She's from the Bronx and lives with her mother and two sisters. With them, she stays inspired, loved, and continues to surprise herself with her talents every day.

Eboni Wyatt is a Black, queer, nonbinary artist making zines and art about identity, mental health, and healing from trauma and loss. Eboni is also a film photographer, taking photos of everyday musings, people, and nature. They hope their art inspires people to look inward and reflect on their own journey to finding healing and self-love. You can find them on social media @ebandflow.