

UNIQUE & UNITED

An International, Multimedia Anthology



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Curated and edited by 2023 *International Human Rights Art Movement* Youth Fellow Ariana Lee.

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Editor's Note

Art is one of the most powerful forms of expression. One song can move thousands to tears or become the rallying cry of a movement. A photo is taken in one instant but can become timeless. Sculptures take up space and add meaning to a space. Art connects. Though we live in different environments, speak different languages, and create in different mediums, we all depend on communication with others. Artists communicate through creative construction.

In our interconnected world, we need to be able to communicate across physical borders and societal boundaries. This multimedia anthology aims to demonstrate international solidarity. As the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and as global tensions rise, we need—more than ever—art that emphasizes unity and values youth voices. Though we have separate lived experiences and identities, we share our humanity. This collection features pieces from creators under the age of twenty-five from all over the world.

I am grateful for the honor of preparing this anthology. I hope you discover new art that resonates with you and also experience art unfamiliar to you. Find yourself. Un-find yourself. We are unique. Let us also be united.

E Pluribus Unum: Embracing Our Unique Unity

Uttar Pradesh, India

Deepikah Prakash

In a tapestry woven with threads of life,
A vibrant portrait painted with colors rife,
We stand as individuals, diverse and free,
Yet united we forge a harmonious decree.

Like stars adorning the boundless night,
Each soul shines with its own distinct light,
With myriad dreams and stories to tell,
We navigate a world where differences dwell.

From distant lands and cultures apart,
We bring the richness of a collective heart,
A symphony of languages, melodies, and creed,
Blending harmoniously, a united seed.

Through valleys of struggle, we find our way,
Shouldering burdens, we rise and sway,
Each unique journey, a chapter unveiled,
Bound by empathy, compassion unveiled.

Look! See the tapestry, how it unfolds,
A masterpiece of stories, myths, and codes,
A kaleidoscope of faces, woven as one,
A testament to unity beneath the sun.

In our diversity, strength is amassed,
For it is through our differences, we cast,
A kaleidoscope of thoughts, ideas anew,
Breathing life into a world once askew.

Let us celebrate the threads that we wear,
In this grand tapestry, our lives declare,
That uniqueness, when united in grace,
Shall pave the path to a brighter place.

So, let us embrace our glorious variety,
Embodying the essence of true unity,
For in unity's embrace, we are set free,
Bound together, a testament, we shall be.

United Prayer and Hope (Part I)

Chittagong, Bangladesh

Muhammad Amdad Hossain



Emerging from Darkness, Immersed in Light

Florida, United States

Eli Dreyfuss



Black

Oyo State, Nigeria

Adesiyan Oluwapelumi

1.

Here, to be born black
is to be christened death.
To say, I am a testament

of every mass grave
called a country instead
of a cemetery.

Around us, an ambush circles:
our bodies a city of walls
built around our bodies.

2.

In our mouths, an anthem
becomes a synonym to an elegy,
mourning the leaves of memories

decaying in the forest of
our hearts. Brother, here,
there is always a prey

in the fangs of time
cutting short his thread
of existence.

3.

Who will walk with me
into a prayer with bridges
at the verge of collapsing?

Look! There goes a black bxy,
his body sliced into half miracles
like an unripe pomegranate.

I have seen deaths
enough to make the human eye
a city of graves.

4.

What is in a name?

A word galloping like a heifer
towards the pedestal of leaping.

No one writes history
with an inkless feather.
O brother, we are blank pages:

a story told in unwritten narrative.
We were born to be maimed,
brutalized, massacred and killed.

5.

No one unnames themselves
unless their name is a solute
soluble in death.

No one runs from their country
unless their country
is a shark's mouth.

No one sings the national flag
unless their country
is a picture of Gomorrah.

Radha

Haryana, India

Cheary Satija



Soulful stare into the intensity of the eyes

Muscat, Oman

Lakshita Babu



Untitled

Texas, United States

Damy Agboola



Color Spreading

Narayanganj, Bangladesh

Amit Shikder



Mangosteen

California, United States

Shannon Hong

slippery white flesh
preserved on ice, in dense hard
shell of mangosteen

how my mother toiled
seeing her daughter's favorite delicacy
in store, frozen

thinking she will be happy
defrosting, knocking entrance at the
purple wall, thick as steel

pearly sweetness
presented in a large plate
anticipation

it's not so good
no fresh summer scent, no
stained sticky fingers

uneaten, an offering of love
set aside
forlorn eyes

wait—it was just too cold
i'll eat it now
thank you

Signs of Surrounding

West Bengal, India

Surabhi Bandyopadhyay



Tai O Lantern Festival

Iloilo, Philippines

mi.pixelart_ig



i write flowerbombs.

Ibadan, Nigeria

Temidayo Okun

saturday. 18th of march. 2023 / cause of death : too much life.

i wonder— if there's a specific number of terrible things you have to do— before you become a terrible person. / do serial killers wake up to the sound of their alarms every morning — with

the shrill electric sound acting as a trigger for all the thoughts of the buckets that have not been kicked yet — ¿or do they wake up as confused as i do every morning— for a few seconds— as i

take in the world that doesn't seem familiar & touch the body that i somehow have no issues with puppeteering / do politicians forget who they are when the new day takes its first breath?

i'm sorry if i don't make sense. buddy / i am mundane in everything but being alive / i do not blame her for the words she spoke on my birthday. as I left the group of laughing faces &

contorting bodies— just to sit on the roof. staring at the stars that do not see me. & talking to the walls because walls are created to listen to mad boys talk / walls weren't meant to form

wrestling rings. / on the night of my birthday— she soaped out my mouth for saying i didn't want to be around hypocrites. / she scrubbed my tongue until it felt too clean to ever be used again. &

when she was done. she turned me around to face her as she croaked— " you live too much all the time. boy — it's almost like you have a death wish." / i didn't understand then— that to be

accepted is to be safe. & to be safe is to live in small doses. / but look at me. now — i live in small doses / i die in gulps.

i pick these flowerbombs out of the basket of experiences i gather from time to time/ the things i see & take interest in— like the rat i saw — crawling across the plywood nailed to the wall a few

inches below the ceiling. maybe sent as a scout to test me. to annoy me— especially on the days when i'm not sure if there's a lion roaring nearby or it's my stomach clamoring for attention.

i like to get my head up there in the clouds. & maybe get so high— it feels like i'm sinking into the earth— my mother / to get so high— it seems like a push & pull with death— like i'm going to sink

into my mother's embrace— 6 feet deep into her bosom— & i swear that's when i feel closest to her. my mother [earth]. / i really do not know what texture a mother should possess—

the one you should call your mother always promised she'd be behind you when your arms reach out to make the motions of swimming. boy— but you were always pushed out to the

parts of the pool that seemed to you like an ocean. / i saw you. boy— as you turned around. panicking— as you searched for the body that should have been wrapped around you like a

lifejacket. as your legs began to kick frantically. but you started to sink rather than swim— because you attacked the water like all the demons in your head had become drinkable all

of a sudden. / i saw your head bob as your arms began a campaign to find straws in the drops of water that flew around with every jerking motion you made. / i saw your legs start to give

way— when your heart started to slow down. straining under the disappointment that followed— the moment you realized that your mother was at the edge of the water. laughing & frowning at

the same time. / i saw your body go limp & your eyes close— before you woke up to the sight of your mother as she towered over your small body. her body trembling & her lips preparing to

part as the words born of utter scorn threatened to tear through her. one way or the other. / i saw you ache all over the places that weren't broken. / did she know you needed her then?

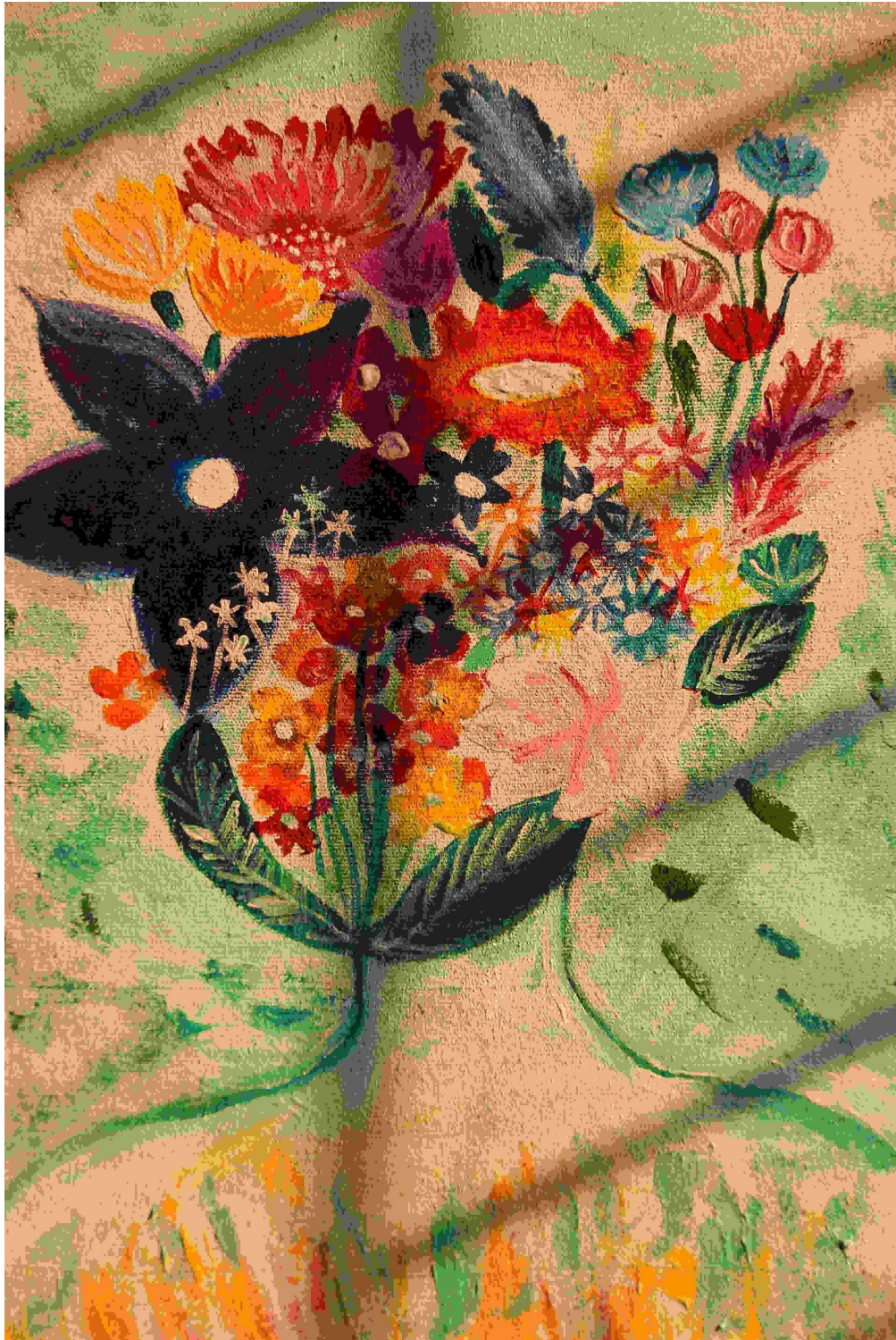
i'm sorry. boy / but dead bodies do not drown.

see! i told you! — i have no happy endings / i only give flowerbombs.

Isabella

Bangladesh

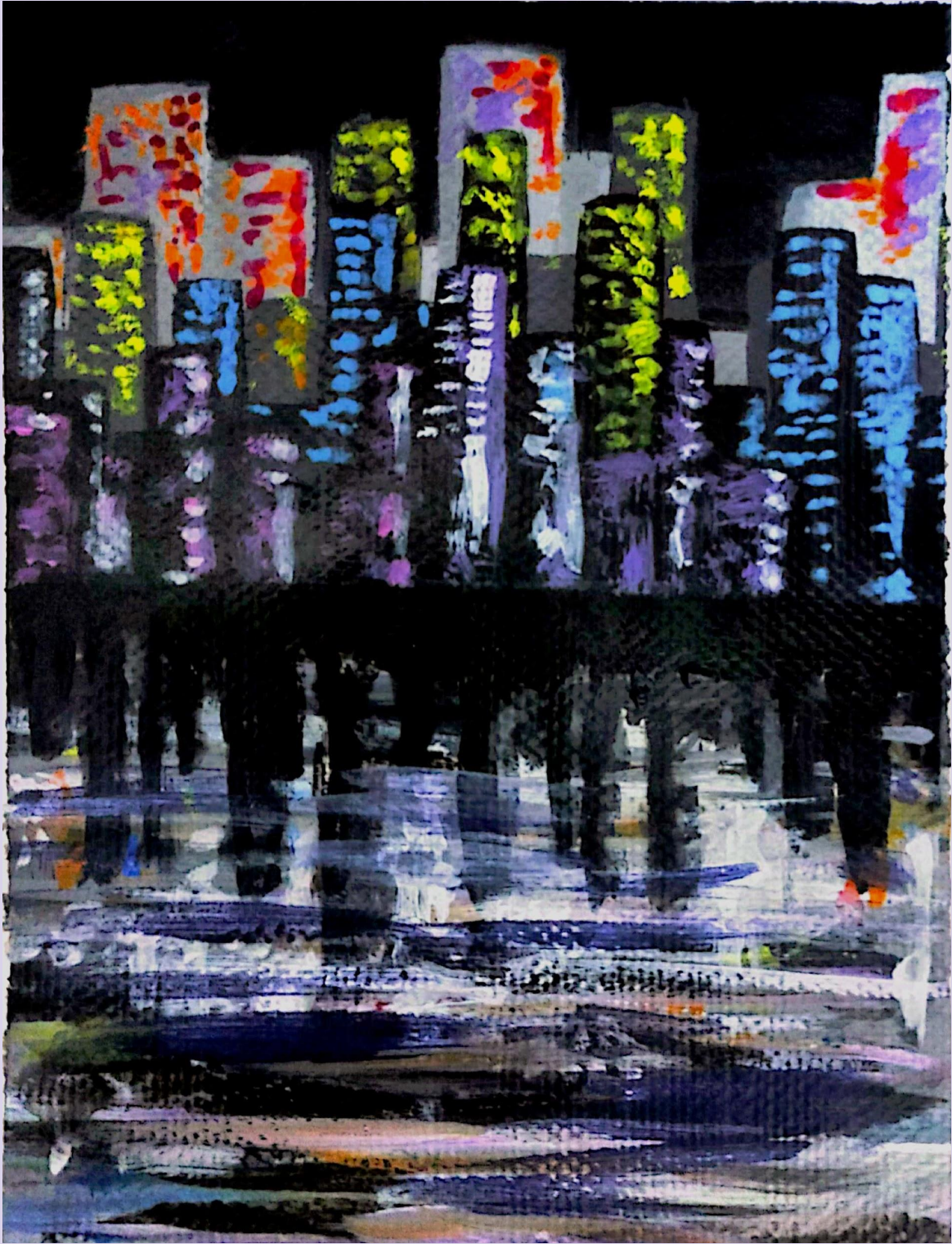
Tayeba Tashbiba Waliza



a manlit night

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Nabeeha Nur



Yes, I think I am god

Texas, United States

Bhagamati

Yes, I think I am

god,

Yes, I think
to be privy
to our own divine.

we all have the right
to our own divine,

Yes, I think

to be master of
our private
treat the silent
scour the blackened
let it smolder,
but not burn:
when we
be to ourselves,
and to no one else.

we all have the right

tragedies,
deaths,
secrets,

sacrifice, let it

Yes, I,
to suffer
it is not penance,
carry no shame, but
in this era, despite
it all, our flaws

think we all have the right
for our sake alone.
to rejoice
remember, we are living
countless odds
will not be downfall.

Yes, I
demand when they climb
those steps,
keep their backs taut
I command when they ring
of the bell,
focus on the water
be stone, unbroken by time
of their reflection
announce your arrival
but know you have always
been

think we all have the right

to not kneel,
and don't bend
the hollow

meet the eyes
your faithful follower
and flowers will fall from your giving hands

down, down, down, here.

Yes, I think
I am tonight. Yes,
about the rot
the dead bodies
paid in the name of purity
that men die for,
kissing the ground
benevolent cruelty.
by gods that do not

my lord,
I heard
under the hot wood,
countless lives
the dream
it grows tired
of world that spares
necessary sacrifice
that share not my name.

Yes, I think
the heat lingers
like memory of grief that
hangs heavy,
scalds the ends
unburnable.

my feet burn,

not mine,

of the earth, I am

Yes, I know,

the heavens and hells
have human
faces, all their names are
in my mouth.

the rivers and trees
the rocks and soils

beloved

Yes, I have drunk
but I have not gone
tell them
tonight, every night,
shadow my step.

to our faithless dead,
mad
that their lord dances with me,
midnight revelries

Yes, I do dare
be flesh,
beyond duality
understand my twin
weapons, my war
offerings should be

myself
malleable
in all forms.
compassion and violence,
in my palms
swallowed with no remorse.

Yes, I have no shame
with all their
beloved names,
with all their
weathered hands,

I am in love all these humans

weakened hearts.

Yes, I think I am
in the land of a thousand gods,
one does not need

god, I,
a temple to pray.

Community

Tarma, Junín, Perú

Jimena Yengle



White Boy in a Parallel Universe

Buford, GA, USA

Karen Zheng

it is morning you wake
to your alarm for elementary school
you put on smart light khakis and a white
polo shirt in the mirror you ruffle your blonde hair
as you brush your teeth your eyes appear a bit more
blue today the smell of rich melted cheese

drifts upstairs your mother is packing you lunch
in your superman lunchbox youve told her many times
that you dont want mac n cheese youve not told her
how the kids make fun of the slight sour smell
what the frick is cheese

jack eats spoiled food la la la la la

them and their banh mis rice
and soup and crooked laughter you thank
your mom for the food stuff a piece of white bread
into your mouth and rush to the bus your butt clenches
at the cold leather as you sit you hold superman close
afraid someone will smell its contents
you are plotting where to throw out your lunch
another day another empty stomach

everything in its right place

New York City, New York, USA

Auguste DuBois



Asian American Girl Drinks Miso Soup

Georgia, United States

Tiffany Low

1.

Who am I if not the people I love, the foods
I eat, the streets I walk, the languages I speak?

Strip me of my clothes, and I am skin.
What holds me loosely together binds me.
The lid holds tightly to its lacquered bowl,

steam condensing at its thin lip.
I return a receipt from FamilyMart to my pocket.

2.

I thank the vending machine, blinking green lights.
I thank bottles of green tea and peach juice. I thank
streetlights for illuminating the faces of passersby,
holding hands. I scowl at tourists (myself),

and they take the shrines (replicas) away.
If someone possesses something holy
for their own, will it no longer be sacred?

and I am everyone's something:
spread out too thin to be savory,
too thick to be beautiful, too little
and too much. Who am I to myself?

3.

I take the path behind my house. The creek
runs clear and a bamboo leaf strokes the surface.
Ripples form in crisscrosses and a crab
waddles between wet rocks.

I thank the wind for speaking to me, even though
we do not understand each other well. The leaves
are interlopers. They'll listen, and tell.

The Times

Texas, United States

Nhu Chu



Colors of India

Tamil Nadu, India

Christy Laura



(9) dishes i want to eat again

Washington, United States

Ivan Zhao

"what do you want to eat? choose three items so that 奶奶 can make them for you!"



<p>方便面</p> <p>the only packaged ramen you had. filled with MSG and eggs</p> <p>宝贝, you said, sleep more!</p> <p>but i woke to the smell of salty tears and the grinding of boiling water</p>	<p>橘子</p> <p>tender scent of effervescent citrus and old bedsheets. wrinkled skin.</p> <p>i gently peel them, spraying the supple juice onto both of us.</p> <p>哎呀, you said, gently cooing, pinching my cheeks, peeling them back to taste the meat</p>	<p>一碗苹果</p> <p>would always turn up wherever I was</p>
<p>牛奶</p> <p>milk fills my lungs as I drink, pouring out from the slit in the corner of the bag,</p> <p>the dainty cream expands my lungs until they pop</p>	<p>饺子</p> <p>on dumpling nights, the rich scent of ground pork, zesty chives, and salty soy filled the air</p> <p>our house turned into a small assembly line, our mechanical arms churning out product after product</p> <p>the dumplings, like little pillows, bubbling in the pot of liquid gold</p>	<p>烙饼</p> <p>rotate, the soft scraping of your hands on metal bowl</p> <p>the slapping of skin on skin, firm, gentle, worn from years of exertion a machine, that one day, may break down</p>
<p>包子</p> <p>you sell your buns out on the street corner for other people.</p> <p>I wonder how you do that, let your children go out into the world</p>	<p>酱牛肉</p> <p>to braise: fry lightly and stew in a container for a long time</p> <p>a glamorous ball between gentle ginger, piercing peppercorns, and voluptuous broth.</p> <p>we like to incubate our children, putting them in steamers so that they can flourish</p>	<p>土豆丝</p> <p>rolling away, the potato screamed for his life as you captured him</p> <p>butchered his head eyes</p> <p>into neat lines</p>

United Prayer and Hope (Part II)

Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Muhammad Amdad Hossain



We are unique.

We are united.