



# COMFORT FOOD

antinarrative zine - issue 01



antinarrative zine



***comfort food***

issue 01 - winter 2022

# **ANTI****NARRATIVE**

issue 01 - winter 2022

© 2022. *antinarrative zine*. all rights reserved.

*antinarrative zine* holds first-serial and non-exclusive archival rights to the work published in this issue. upon publication, all rights will be reverted back to the creators.

this issue of *antinarrative zine* was produced on the stolen lands of the cedarville band, wild turkey clan of the piscataway-conoy nation. we acknowledge that we are illegally residing and profiting off of indigenous territory and complicit in their continued genocide. we encourage those who have the means available to pay a land tax to the piscataway-conoy peoples or to the active tribe in their area. ([piscatawayindians.com/projects](http://piscatawayindians.com/projects))

website: [antinarrativezine.com](http://antinarrativezine.com)

twitter: [@antinarrativeZ](https://twitter.com/antinarrativeZ)

email: [antinarrative.zine@gmail.com](mailto:antinarrative.zine@gmail.com)

cover art and issue graphics by [lives sun](#)

dear readers-

when we started thinking about possible themes for this issue, we almost immediately decided on food. food means a lot to us all. it's a source of connection to our culture and loved ones, and a constant presence throughout our lives. above all though, food has always been a source of comfort.

when looking through these pieces, we sought to find works that would capture these same sentiments. the passion that the creatives in this issue hold for their craft is incredible, and we hope that you feel the same way.

with this issue, we wanted to find comfort. but, we also wanted to tell a story that celebrated food in all its forms. sometimes, this form can come with a feeling of familial closeness, like in the beautiful pieces by matt, daisy, and sumedha that highlight the food-making process. at other times, the emotion is a little more bittersweet: the writings of ivy, cj, and t capture how food can both serve as a reminder of the past, and a way of looking towards the future. these ideas of growth are also found in the works by sophia and anaïs, who write about how comfort food is both a form of connection and, ultimately, an act of love.

alongside the writing, we also feature three pieces of art from ananya, zaynab, and aileen. through dynamic scenes, intricate details, and vivid colors, these drawings help to fully emphasize the many ways in which we can celebrate storytelling and food alike.

thank you to all of our contributors for submitting to this issue, and to you for reading it. we hope you enjoy it as much as we do.

all the best,

*jannah yusuf al-jamil* *Salonee Verma* *Liv Sun*

jannah yusuf al-jamil, salonee verma, & livs sun.

**a note from  
the editors**





# **table of contents**

## **cart one**

<i>baking</i> by ananya bellary	2
<i>recipes from ama</i> by matthew hsu	3
<i>love, lumpia</i> by daisy miller-wells	5
<i>luchi</i> by sumedha sengupta	7

## **cart two**

12	<i>the jalebi girls</i> by ivy darcy
14	<i>realizations in a seafood city</i> by cj
17	<i>nectar of diaspora</i> by t. mahmud
19	<i>mai shayi</i> by zaynab bobi

## **cart three**

<i>confessional prayer to the arepa lady</i> by sophia fratta	21
<i>waiting room food</i> by aileen zhao	23
<i>love composts hate</i> by anaïs peterson	24



***part one***



baking baking  
**baking**

by ananya bellary



Behind the cold marble counter, Ama shuffles around the kitchen in her firm wool slippers. The rusted burners on the stove are never vacant; there is always a boiling black pot or a large pan of food sizzling away. She tosses thick noodles and vegetables sticky with sauce in a porcelain bowl, stirs green onions into the soy sauce dish with a slick pair of chopsticks, uses glass lids cloaked with moisture to silence the hissings on the stove. After she finishes, I pour myself a cup of bubbling ginger ale and feast, proclaiming “很好吃!”<sup>1</sup> in between bites.

Ama always wears soft, thin clothing that strokes my skin when she pulls me in for a hug. She lives an hour north in San Jose, so I see her every week or so. Whenever I visit, she pushes my head down, as if to shrink me below her five-foot-nothing frame (five-foot-three if you count her wild gray hair).

Her kitchen is constantly crowded, by a parent groping in the drawers for a soup spoon, by a dog scurrying to lick up a grain of rice, by Ama herself, adding a cheesecake baked to a majestic brown to the buffet. The refrigerator is a constellation of plastic magnets and foam-framed photographs. A gallery of cards, decorated with stickers and reading, “生日快乐”<sup>2</sup> in fat marker, has recently sprouted on the oak cabinets.

Sometimes, when I am lounging on the leather couch during family gatherings, watching whatever bubbly television program my younger cousins have decided to put on, Ama calls, “许茂哲!”—my Chinese name—and I hurry over to the kitchen. I watch as she folds dried cranberries into the dough of 馒头<sup>3</sup> to add a kick of sweetness, or lays strips of 猪肉<sup>4</sup> into a golden yolk mixture before rolling them around in a carpet of crackling breadcrumbs.

As I am watching her deft preparations, I notice a magic, an ethereal, yet commanding magic, a magic that both flutters and punches, rolling off her fingers and into the food. It is a magic that my father emulates when he drops chocolate chips into thick pancake batter to fry for my brother and I, that I emulate when I use bamboo tools to eagerly craft a long roll of sushi for the family.


---

<sup>1</sup> - “Delicious!”

<sup>2</sup> - “Happy Birthday!”

<sup>3</sup> - Steamed buns

<sup>4</sup> - Pork



We always leave Ama's house clutching brown paper bags stuffed with goodies: mesh bags of tangerines, packaged pineapple cakes, rice cookies snowed with trails of white frosting, plastic containers that hold dinner leftovers (because Ama always makes extra). The wild smells of her kitchen tuck themselves into the bag and set themselves free in the warmth of our car as we drive home after dark.

Whenever she calls the home line and I dash to pick up the phone, I tell her about my day in cluttered Chinglish. After that, she does most of the talking, and I perk up my ears. She instructs me to play more basketball because it will stretch me out, therefore making me taller. She provides a report on the family of hummingbirds that have taken refuge in her small backyard, often sending a picture of speckled eggs or beating wings on Line. She talks about how next time, she'll show me how to make 葱油饼<sup>5</sup>. She says, “我很想你,”<sup>6</sup> and I think I taste her food on the words before we say goodbye.

---

<sup>5</sup> - Green onion pancakes  
<sup>6</sup> - “I'm thinking of you”

originally published  
by kalopsia lit



# Love, by daisy miller-wells Lumpia

The beauty of it is that it is worth  
loving despite being  
tedious. It is worth the effort.

It is worth the slaps to the back of my  
hand, "Too big!" I first sat and  
watched,

awestruck over how deft fingers  
tucked and rolled and sealed, neatly  
packaging away filling like sending  
off a letter in the mail. We rolled it  
together, Pinay women with sunny eyes that  
ground you. I split open my ribs  
let in every sweet-voiced *tita* and *ate*,  
and we indulged together around kitchen table  
with our right hands.

The recipe followed me into adulthood, nipping  
at my heels like a dog that grows particularly  
unruly when I face hardship.

I roll egg rolls alone with phantom laughter in  
my bones, chipper Tagalog beneath my skin.

I eat lumpia on the kitchen floor, a silhouette framed  
by refrigerator light

and the glowing clock on the coffeemaker,

with my right hand.







The sky had started turning into a more discernible shade of blue and greenery chirruped as morning walkers paced towards the end of their daily regime. Meanwhile, Rhea's eyes twitched into life, shaking off the remnants of the foggy images of her school in her dream.

"Rhea!" her mother called out for the second time in five minutes. "It's eight o'clock already and your father is going to be very angry now."

"Good morning, Ma," she said, her lips breaking into a small smile. Her eyes took a while to adjust to the slanting rays of the morning sun iridescent on the mirror in her room. The mirror was shaped like a star, and she had identified with it for as long as she could remember— she, too, was waiting to shine in the morning to come.

"Rhea, I'm not going to say it again, you know," her mother called out, a tone of finality in her voice.

She rubbed her eyes and searched for her slippers absent-mindedly.

Rhea had just written her last examination paper a week ago, signaling a very puzzling end to her school life. She made it a point to steal a glance at the morning sky just after waking up every day, for it served as a satisfactory change after the year-long routine of waking up early in the morning when the fog-shrouded dark blue skies resonated with her state of mind.

"*Luchi!*" she exclaimed, seeing her mother carving intricate balls out of dough. *Luchi*, a deep-fried flatbread served on special occasions in any Bengali household, had been an object of her fascination for as long as she could remember. The *phulko* or the puffed ones were her favourites, and she enjoyed breaking the crispy surface of it and seeing it deflate, just like her baby brother's chest as he slept.

"Didn't you get bored of bread-butter?" Her mother grinned through the pieces of dough sticking on her cheeks. "Do you want to roll these out?" she offered, holding out the rolling-pin.

“What’s happening?” Her father peeked in through the doorway, almost as if he had been drawn to Rhea’s sudden exclamation of their favourite dish. She noted the glint in his eyes and tried to recall the last time he had overcome his lethargy to step in the kitchen early on a Sunday morning.

“Of course, why would you bother? By all means, just stare while I do all the work.” A sardonic grin crept onto her mother’s lips. “Rhea, weren’t you supposed to learn how to cook in your holidays? Why don’t you cook with your father today? Show me what you’re capable of!”

“I am sure Rhea has homework?” he replied weakly, enthusiasm withering away and the unwonted Sunday-morning gaiety visibly backfiring. He took just a moment’s worth of time to pick up on the twinkle in his daughter’s eyes and hastened to correct himself. “Leave it to us, Shyama.”

Shyama rested her shoulder against the frame of the doorway to the kitchen, her expression laced with sheer joy at witnessing a scene that was perhaps straight out of the wildest of her dreams and a hint of annoyance at the prospect of her kitchen turning into a heap of disorder of epic proportions. In twenty years of her marriage to him, this was only the second time he had taken to the kitchen. The last time was when Rhea and her father decided to make chicken *kebabs* inspired by a Bollywood film. She remembered how they had had to order pizza later that night.

Meanwhile, Rhea had taken to rolling the maida into circular discs, which her father would then fry in a generous layer of oil in a karahi. The first one she rolled out resembled a thick piece of brinjal more than anything else. But her father’s derisive snort was met with a hard stare from her mother, for he burnt the piece he was frying out of inattention.

The second one she rolled out turned to be too thin to the point where tiny holes appeared in the stretched *maida*. The next one, as her father pointed out (in a way lacking all sorts of subtlety), looked suspiciously like the country of Austria, and as if in a desperate attempt to avoid everything bluntness (like that of her father’s comments), the next one was far from the curves of the desired disc and vaguely resembled a Jester’s hat.

She got it right eventually, around the tenth attempt. By that time, her father was masterfully draining the excess oil after frying the *luchis* by touching them to the sides of the karahi.



She rolled out the fifteenth one in a haste and then carefully placed the large bowl bearing the fruits of her labour on the dining table. Her mother had curried some potatoes, for it was almost a sin to not pair Sunday-morning *luchi* with chunks of potatoes floating in a generous layer of oil and masala. It was a big day for them, one embellished with complex carbohydrates, and the smell of the curried potatoes wafting through the air added to the merriment in the heart of the household.

“My Rhea made breakfast today!” her grandmother exclaimed, her eyes lighting up with joy. “That means, everything will taste sweeter.”

As she carefully placed the *luchis* on her plate, her father admired the integrity of the bread. He marvelled at how dry and light it was. He showed off the crispiness, with unimaginable pride in his eyes.

“You see, Rhea,” he beamed. “Deep frying is an art!”

“What?!” she retorted. “You could never have fried it had I not rolled the dough perfectly.”

Shyama ladled the curried potatoes on her plate, fixating her eyes on their faces as they debated and questioned each others’ contributions.

Rhea’s eyebrows tensed as her father pointed out the irregularities in the shapes (which she promptly cited as ‘diversity’).

“It wouldn’t have been half as interesting to eat, had all of them been of the same shape, baba,” she pointed out, laying unnatural emphasis on each of her words. Her child-like eyes widening at her fathers’ jeers did little to support all the enunciation.

Her father recounted a story from his days back at Jadavpur University. He had almost sent back a plate of fresh, hot *luchis* in their canteen, just because they hadn’t been shaped perfectly. Only for the fact that they had been perfectly crispy did he refrain from doing so.

“Enough with Jadavpur, baba!” Rhea cried. “Whenever you are in a fix, your stories from Jadavpur magically appear to save your soul!”

All this while, her grandmother had been conveniently ignoring the banter. She had been checking out the salt shaker her sister had gifted.

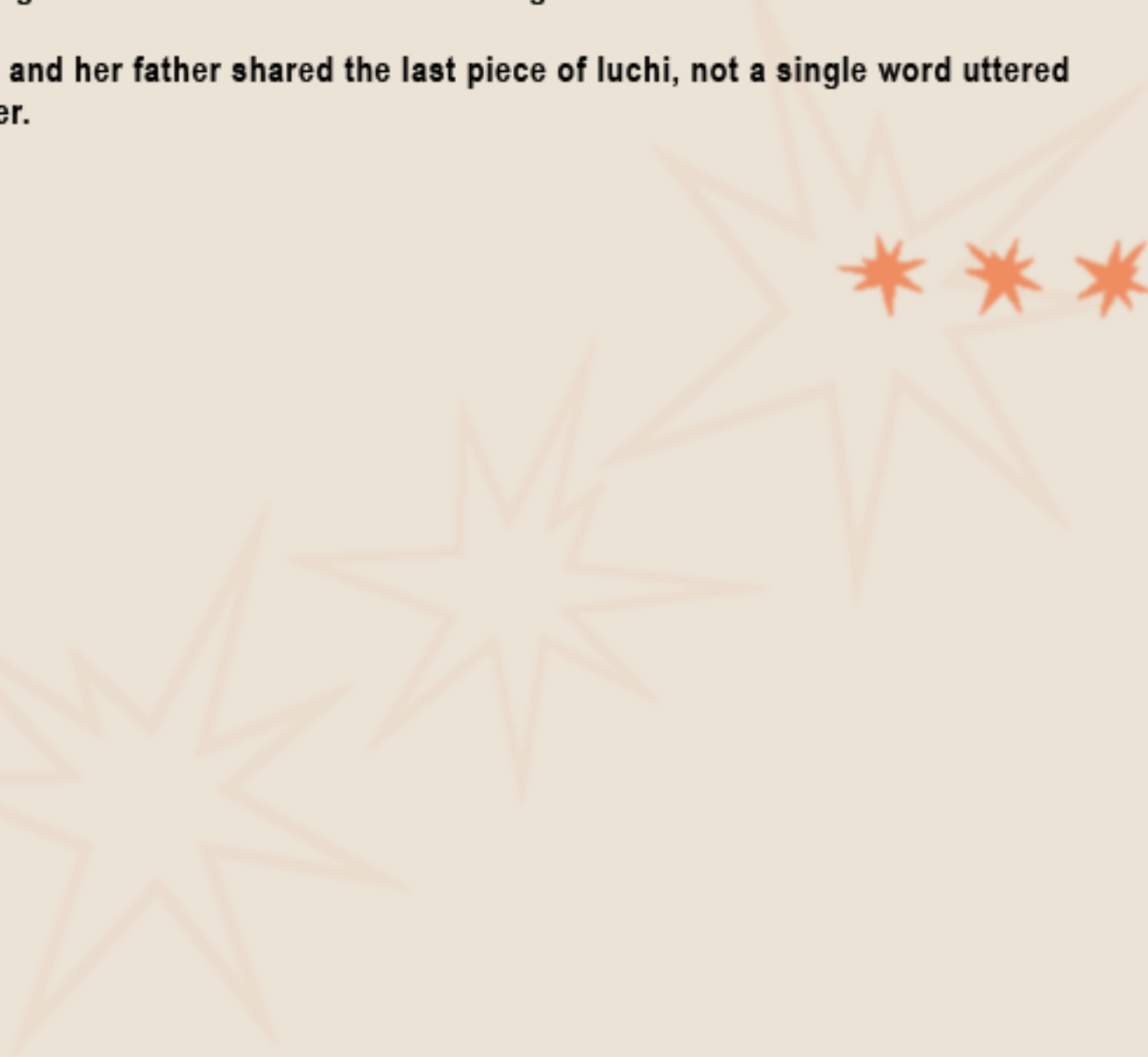
Her eyes had been transfixed on the intricate craft of the piece and she had sat admiring it at the background of all the hullabaloo.

“Shyama, who made the dough?” Grandmother broke her silence.

“I did, Ma,” Shyama replied, a small smile making its way onto her lips.

“Thought so.” She went back to admiring the salt shaker.

Rhea and her father shared the last piece of luchi, not a single word uttered thereafter.





***part two***

## **CW: brief mentions of suicide**

*"It cannot be like this,"* you think, your head pressed against the foggy glass of your bus. You took the wrong one initially; you felt the embarrassment enveloping your body as you stepped out and waited in the rain again, trying to catch the next one. At least you're here now, claustrophobic and damp in the dingy bus—cold and shivering, too.

The month has been hazy. It's your first month away from home, away from the shelter of your parents and desk and 14-year-old mattress. The thing is—you were desperate to leave. You clawed and chewed your way out of your tiny town, working (killing) yourself just to have a taste of something *real*.

(Here's the thing: you miss your family the most. Are you supposed to? Was this how it was all supposed to end? You remember the Christmases and birthdays and look back on your childhood with fondness. You can trudge through every crevice of your home and find a memory buried deep into each and every one.

You remember your eighth grade basketball tournament—you scored fourteen points and your father held you tight, a hand clapped hard against your back. You remember the worst night of your life—he was gone and freshman year was fucking difficult and your friends were moving on and you felt like everything was out of your control—and your mother crept into your bedroom. In her hands lay a plate of perfectly cut fruit and *Skyflakes*, dry and hard against the sweetness of the mangoes and pears and kiwi. She didn't say a word to you, just gave you the food and *left*. You remember the fruit felt bittersweet on your tongue. You remember the meals cooked for you, warm and comforting at the bottom of your belly. You remember the scraped knees, the bruised forearms, a sickness taking hold of your body—and somebody on the other side, keeping you steady.

realizations  
in a seafood city  
by cj



But you remember when *she* told you you would never amount to her expectations, and you cannot remember the last time *he* told you he loved you. You remember keeping secrets and keeping oaths, and they would pry and pry and you'd key yourself up—you never showed yourself to them—not once. You remember the love pouring out of your body, like sand in a sieve, only for it to be banished away.

Then again—it was familiar.)

The bus finally arrives at your stop—a supermarket twenty two miles from your apartment. It's bustling with life, even in the rain. You feel something surge back into your body as you step inside, clutching your bag tightly against your body. The smells of *home* rush into you—of the meat and food and fruit and suddenly, you're a little kid again—clutching to your mother's arm as she drags you around for groceries.

You drag your feet against the linoleum floor, not daring to make eye-contact with any of the market-goers. You speak their language but you don't; you are *them*, but, are you? Truly?

And because you have nowhere to go (you came here on a whim. Your refrigerator in the apartment is stocked, at least partially.), you walk aimlessly around the goddamn *Seafood City*, like a tourist in a foreign land. You pass through the rows and pallets filled with fruit—mangoes and dragon fruit and kiwis and rambutan and *all* your favorites—it feels as if you are returning home again. You stare at the fish in the packed ice and watch as people stick their arms into plastic bags, they grab the fish and inspect it just as your father used to do. (You never did that; you preferred to torment the crabs laid in the ice just a few meters away.) And you hear the butchers calling numbers and cleaning fish and the shrill noise of the bone saw and you are on the verge of tears. You are on the verge of tears in a *Seafood City*—because you miss a home that wasn't the kindest to you.

In the end, you take refuge in the chip aisle—the girl on the *Chiz Curls* bag stares at you menacingly. So, you take the bag and clutch it close to your body, a feeling of comfort and warmth surging through you. It was your favorite, when you were younger—you remember sneaking downstairs and quietly opening the bag and eating them, right there.

The tears burn your eyes, and something feels lodged in your throat. You've been trying to ignore this feeling for so long—that awful, scraping feeling of *missing home*. You're clutching the shelves, resting your head against it and praying—praying for this feeling to go away. Well, you brought this on yourself, did you not? (A woman passes by you, and she admonishes you in her mother tongue—as if you could not understand. It does not anger you—the mere acknowledgement of your existence in a familiar tongue feels like balm to a burn.)

But here you are—you clawed and bled and nearly killed yourself for a way out— isn't this what you wanted?

(I needed to leave. I miss you tenderly. I don't think I've ever shown myself to you. You love me anyway. I will never truly be happy here. I miss your cooking. I miss the *sinangag* and *sinigang* and *kare-kare*. I know you tried and I loved you for it. I don't think it was enough—but I wish it was. When the sun sets and the birds call out for a new day—you are all I will have left. And I love you, more than anything or anyone—unconditionally. You can throw me against the wall, over and over again and I'll make my home deep in your arms. I'll let you soothe my pains and lick my wounds. I wanted to leave home and never return, but I don't think I'll ever stop longing for it again. I'll call soon.)





# nectar of diaspora

by t. mahmud

**"I am large. I contain multitudes."**

The full-body laugh this elicited from you was worth the initial risk of obscurity. I was referencing the paradox of being a lactose intolerant person with a sweet tooth after you watched me inhale my mango lassi in one pull. Because it was our first date and we were sitting in the middle of a restaurant, I mustered the civility to use a straw. Otherwise, you would have found before you an older iteration of an annual summer scene in my mother's kitchen: me, glass tilted by both hands at a perfect forty-five degree angle, nose-diving into the golden ambrosia. The creamy mustache this left on my face was the equivalent of the sugary milk after a bowl of cinnamon toast crunch, the chocolate filling at the bottom of an ice cream cone, the crust at the end of a slice of pizza—in other words, the best part. I always found a mirror and smiled before licking my upper lip clean. This time, instead of the pimply face of my preadolescence, it was you who smiled back.

I had considered speaking to our waiter in the mother tongue. He picked up the emptied glass with a hand that reminded me of my brother's, and when I looked up I recognized the roundness in his cheeks. I don't think he knew that I was also Bengali. I am used to hiding. It did not surprise me when my tongue buckled under the pressure of your gaze—*Does the vegetable samosa come in one piece? Or two? Scratch that, could we get an order of the garlic naan to share instead?* My English had been sharpened by years of practice, years of sitting in classrooms with white boys and studying the backs of their hands. Now that I think about it, their hands are how I imagine your brother's to look. I caught in your pale eyes a reflection of myself in fragments:

quotes Whitman conversationally.

knows what she will drink without looking at the menu.

orders for her date

The waiter faced me and I took that opportunity to bury the rest of my mosaic in his retina:

has not spoken Bengali in three years.

imagines it's her mother peeling the mangoes in the back kitchen every time she orders a lassi.

spent high school too afraid to hold the girls she liked in public.

I think it was my buzzcut that really threw him off, though I know the question was on his mind. He had been looking at me the same puzzled way the Pakistani man at the Indian grocery store did each time I would set down a handful of khulfi on the counter, until one day, I came in and there was a prayer mat still laying on the floor. I wrung a Salaam out of my throat and he paused, either because he was piecing together the answer I offered him, or wondering how someone could sound so American in only two syllables. My mouth was warm with either guilt or embarrassment.

When the waiter stepped away from our table, you returned to your leisurely sipping of your own lassi, the one I insisted you had to try. You asked me about the secret behind the creamy, tangy perfection. "It's really just mangoes, milk, and yogurt. Honestly, the simplicity just adds to the charm." But if it's so easy, and I love it that much, why don't I just make it at home all the time? I hesitated. Here is the orphaned answer:

the last time I came out of hiding, I was exiled from the motherland. This was three years ago. Since then, I've learned that my kitchen is more bearable when it is empty. My first July alone, my heart ached in the grocery store every time I watched a kid float down the aisle like a balloon tied to their mother's shopping cart. I went home and nicked my fingers peeling the mangoes and my mother was not there to worry. I had hoped to pour out the liquidated sun of a dozen childhood summers, but my blender was only a quarter full with orange sludge. When I bent over the sink and sucked on the leftover peels, I was reminded more of a wild animal than I was of my father. The next time I met my reflection, I strangled the urge to punch glass. So yes, now I shell out \$3.75 plus tax and tip every time I want to swallow my nostalgia and digest two generations worth of heartbreak. And I avoid grocery stores.

"Believe it or not, and I know this will sound unfathomable after what you just watched, but the mangoes will spoil in my fridge faster than I could eat them." I like the way your entire body shakes when you laugh.



# *Mai Sharyi*



by zaynab bobi





***part three***



CONFESSIONAL  
**p r a y e r**  
TO THE  
**a r c h e p a**  
LADY

---

by sophia fratta







***waiting***  
***room***  
***food*** 

by aileen zhao

this is how i tell you i love you –crushing garlic under the flat blade of a dull paring knife in a foggy, cramped kitchen. pots pouring out of the sink, tupperware delicately stacked up behind warped faded pea-green cupboard doors, the white fridge covered in magnets and postcards, always home to an extra jar of peanut butter and too close to the stovetop. my hands are how i tell you i love you on anniversaries of massacres, fried egg, and rice sticking to the bottom of the pan. recently, i remembered i should never cook when i am angry so i hand you the red onions and the cutting board and both our eyes fill with tears.

on the days the ghost we nicknamed donny rattles the bones of our old house i fold one hundred gyoza and sprinkle rosemary in the bread pan. the blurry november dusk greets the weak stovetop light and they mingle in the furthest corners of the kitchen where dust gathers on our extra microwaves and we dance around each other, brownies and bread pans and content in the quiet. soon, the house will be loud and our sticky kitchen table will be a shrine adorned by cheap college pots and pans whispering i love you in the language of gurgling lentil soup and the sweet cinnamon wafting off the apple pie singing in the air. the type of love that only touches our tongues when we are eating.

the night will pass without the words ever being shaped by our lips exhaled from our bodies because there is no reason to repeat what the homemade bread and carefully cut cantaloupe are already saying.



# *love* *composts hate*

by anaïs peterson



# **contributors**

## **ananya bellary**

Ananya is an Northern Virginia based animation student and and aspiring scientific illustrator. She aims to effectively communicate science through the medium of art.

## **matthew hsu**

Matt Hsu is a high school senior from San Francisco, California. He works as a poetry/prose editor at Cathartic Youth Literary Magazine and Kalopsia Lit. His work has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, and he's published or forthcoming in *Polyphony Lit*, *Blue Marble Review*, *ANGLES*, and *Movable Type*. Currently he's querying his first novel, a thriller-mystery about a crafty assassin. In his spare time, he enjoys playing tennis and eating dark chocolate. You can find him on Twitter at @MattHsu19.

## **daisy miller-wells**

Daisy Miller-Wells is a Filipina undergrad student from San Francisco studying English. She is based in Salina, Kansas. Her work has been recently featured or is forthcoming from *Yuzu Press*, *Marias at Sampaguitas*, and *the levatio*. She tweets at @daisyjademw .

## **sumedha sengupta**

Sumedha Sengupta (She/Her) is a student of Biomedical Science from New Delhi, India. She was the only Asian writer to be nominated for the Margaret and Reg Turnill prize at the HG Wells Short Story Competition, 2021. Through her writing, she primarily explores the human experience, and her work has been previously published and is forthcoming in *Ayaskala*, *Analogies & Allegories*, *Twist&Twain*, and more. Someday, she hopes to discover something extraordinary!

twitter: @sumedhaa\_14

linkedin: sumedha-sengupta-a41428187

# **contributors**

**cj**

CJ is a young, Filipino-American writer. They enjoy writing about their passions: chess, kitchens, fruit, and fungi. They hope to move others with their writing, in any way they can.

**t. mahmud**

t. mahmud is a self-categorized unremarkable background character of NYC. Their native city is their main venue for making a fool of themselves and then fumbling to put that absurd experience into words. Secondary location: @trademarxism on instagram.

**zaynab bobi**

Zaynab Bobi, Frontier I, is a Nigerian poet, digital artist, and photographer from Bobi. She is a member of Hilltop Creative Art Abuja branch, Poetry Club Udus, Frontier Collective, and a Medical Laboratory Science student of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. Her artworks and photographs are published and forthcoming in *Blue Marble Review*, *Barren Magazine*, *Isele Magazine*, *Type House Literary Magazine*, *Night Coffee Lit*, *B'K Magazine*, *Olney Magazine*, *All My Relations*, *Salamander Ink*, *Anti-Heroin Chi*, *Acropolis Journal*, and more. She tweets @ZainabBobi.





# **contributors**

## **sophia fratta**

Sophia Fratta is a Colombian-Italian high schooler who enjoys writing about big little things. She has been published in Johns Hopkins University's youth magazine, *Imagine*, and her work has received several awards from the Scholastic Art & Writing Competition, including a gold medal in flash fiction. She can be found at her website, [sophiafratta.com](http://sophiafratta.com) .

## **aileen zhao**

Aileen Zhao is a writer and artist currently attending high school in Virginia. She can also be found hanging around fencing competitions, thinking really hard about ghosts, or going through her copy of the Iliad, again.

## **anaïs peterson**

anaïs peterson (no pronouns) is a climate justice organizer, mixed blessing, and lover of the sky. anaïs writes in black pen and garamond size 11 and tweets from [@anais\\_pgh](https://twitter.com/anais_pgh). anaïs' chapbook, "for the joy of it" is forthcoming from sundress publications in 2022 – you can find a full list of anaïs' publications and more information at: [anaispeterson.weebly.com](http://anaispeterson.weebly.com).



