

If I open my eyes, I pray, I hope that I find myself back home.

The light fills my eyes as soon as I open them. My wish makes its way to the little box within my heart, unheard yet again.

My laptop welcomes me and foreign sounds interrupt my daydream. I feel physical pain as if someone grabbed me by the neck and threw me back here. My senses come back to me then. I notice the time.

I have class in fifteen minutes.

I clear my throat and place my hands on the keyboard but somewhere in my mind, chai* is served and everyone helps themselves to sugar except my uncle. My cousins suddenly feel the urge to fly kites so they assemble the materials with which my uncle will make the flying craft. Once again, somewhere in my mind, thoughts of longing takes flight.

English words roam around the classrooms. I've heard these words all my life, and knew them from the moment I stepped into the confines of a school. Falling down the pages of my books, the letters constructed words but those words never rang in my ears with meaning. It felt like every conversation I had with people had a limit, a certain restriction beyond which I could not express myself. Stuck in my chest, I felt all the things that remain unintelligible to others. My ears and mouth may be deprived of the pleasure that is comprehension but I have learned that my eyes never get tired of the scenery.

I look outside the classroom, welcomed by a lingering cool breeze. Bright green decorates the leaves and the smell of fresh dew greets me. I take in the stillness that lives among the chaos of the leaves that dance around from the wind. *It's beautiful*, I think. A type of charm I've never encountered before. These sights relieve my shoulders of tension and for once I feel calm and at peace, emotions that make me feel at home.

The landscape changes from the tall trees to moonlit darkness in my head and once again, I am elsewhere. The lights blur and the rumble of tires and an engine shake me. Sat comfortably in the backseat of a car with my grandmother, I let the quietness save us from all the heartache. The drive toward the airport is a long one and I keep my eyes facing out the windows, away from all those I will be leaving. I become aware of the life packed in

who has also let go of her strength. I see my Nani Ammi, her hand clutched around her yellow dupatta*, her face crumbling with sadness, her mouth mumbling something I'm too far to hear. Tears streaking both our cheeks, I turn my head back around and keep the memory of her face close to my chest. I keep her sadness a secret.

I hold the rope that she weaved with her heartbreak, and let distance stretch it until the wheels hit the ground, and it snaps.

I felt the difference and the change, as if the wheels themselves had nerves that travelled all the way up to me. Outside the small windows of the aircraft, I saw Australia. Outside the confines of the airport, I met Australia for the first time. The light seeped through my eyelids as the realisation of yet another daydream mixed with my flashback.

I open my eyes to see a hubbub of students stuffing their devices into their bag.
Class is almost over.

Rather than feeling distressed like I had felt before, I keep the feeling of longing safely within me, keeping it tame. Thinking about the lives unfolding thousands of miles away, I work my way through the mass of students, trying to give an occasional nod to the ones I knew. The ones that are my friends.

I walked outside the gates and