
the fridge

Sehar Moughal

Abstract

'the fridge' portrays the unattended parts of my soul, my being. Most days, I am exhausted because I do too much for too many people: I am a mother, I provide for my family financially, I am a graduate student, I work in the mental health sector, and I am a teacher at a university. People tell me that I have it all, that I am "passionate", and I am a "force to reckon with". But some days, I am just tired. On those days, I want to hide away, be "normal", neither *passionate* nor a *force*, but merely human. This poem was written on one such day, a day where feeling more than, being more than, was not enough and too much. 'the fridge' is not just a poem; nor is it just a metaphor. It is my reality of how exhausting it is to try to live up to whom I am meant to be, never carving enough space for who I am. 'the fridge' is my surrender and also my (be)coming of home.

Keywords

poetry, reflections, BIPOC, Brown exceptionalism, trauma, hero worship

the fridge

must be revelling in the attention

given that

it hasn't been cleaned in months

housing a dead fly

was it licking the spilt milk?

ignoring the cold

being greedy

a shrivelled-up broccoli

sauce stains

dried herbs

am i ashamed?

for not doing what i am meant to do

no not really

but today was special

as i wiped away the grime

and fuzzy fungi

i thought about the chaos

within me

around me

the instability

needed

surely

for stability

for order to ensue

i watched the movement of my hands
wiping
washing
squeezing
how easily
performing
fitting into their roles
my eyes dancing
from one spot to
another
my mind scanning for
any leftover stains
easier to spot when there are not many of them
standing out
being shamed
wiped
eliminated
for being the minority
and
and as i wiped the last remnants
of a chaotic year
i started to breathe
a little easier
pausing in between
thanking my lungs
my cardiovascular system

and everything in between

for doing it's job

letting me come back home

after a hard day

or a week

maybe a year

and as i put the half-empty milk bottle

no no

half full

does it really matter?

back into its space

i swear i heard it sigh

it was home

and so

was i

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Thank you to my sister, Mehwish, for encouraging me to be brave and show my vulnerability to others.

Author Biography

Sehar Moughal is a 1.5-generation Muslim immigrant born in Pakistan who has resided in Aotearoa, New Zealand, for the last two decades. Sehar is a registered psychologist, a board-certified behaviour analyst, a doctoral student, and a professional teaching fellow at the University of Auckland. Sehar's doctoral research explores a therapeutic model for people of Asian ethnicity with family violence trauma using a feminist and contextualist methodology. Sehar is also a mother to a 4-year-old. Sehar's passion for work and research stems from her own lived experiences.