

*Priyanka Joshi***Like Water**

I knead and I recall
 a time when I was once like water -
 powerful, fluid and free.
 Then I fell into this...hole.
 Parts of me sprinkled down,
 cascading droplets onto a pillowy mound
 of multigrain milled gold.

Irreversibly changed in shape,
 unable to escape,
 the fingers of time began to swirl.
 Coalesced my Self with 7 grains:
 chef, teacher and maid
 playmate and safe space
 entertainer and 24-hour snack bitch.

But I am still water,
 binding these grains together -
 now a multigrain multitasking masterpiece.
 Resilient in this sticky melange of life's new normal,
 where pangs of guilt hit me like fists
 and not-good-enoughs knead me into submission.

So I continue to bend
 adapt myself and mould
 because henceforth, normal is on hold.
 And being chapatti flour isn't such a bad thing,
 for even the humblest of dishes
 can offer tastes of the divine,
 when prepared with gratitude and love.

A round roti rolled
 in circle of trust.
 And in this new heat of life's kitchen,
 I undergo my transformation,
 lay myself down and engineer my re-creation.
 And like the white moon with her scars and imperfections, I will arise.
 Wholesome Brown soul food,
 for these two hungry little bellies, hearts and minds.

Priyanka Joshi is a London-born Wolverhampton based Optometrist and performance poet. She turned to poetry shortly after the birth of her first child, a life event that brought with it much inspiration but more so the essential need for self-expression to heal through post-natal depression. The need to share her story and raise awareness of PND was spurred by the lack of understanding of maternal mental health she encountered within the South-Asian community. Taking to the stage just 2 years ago sparked a love affair for spoken word, going on to become a poetry slam champion and regular at open mics, a member of the Wolverhampton Punjabi Women's Writing Group, and performing in the Wolverhampton literature festival. Reflection, love, identity and mental health are just some of threads running through her fledgling body of work, taking readers and listeners alike on a personal and deeply emotional journey.