



Aspy In The Skype With Diamonds (A Love Poem)

Description





Aspy In The Skype With *Diamonds* (A Love Poem)

Author's Memo

Brown Boy on the Menu; Racing from Camptown One Night in the Late 1980s; Hide Self View: Life in the Livestream; Monkey's Wedding Makes Front Page In The Times of India; Casablanca Marmoset – the End of a Beautiful Friendship; Giving Thanks to the Great Lizard; Aspy in the Skype with Diamonds (A Love Poem); How to Make Puffins Disappear are all pieces which explore through personal experience the cultural phenomena of migrant loss of identity and subordination, post colonialism, othering (pathological racial and sexual) and the effects on the self of online interaction increasingly taking the place of physical relating.

Monkey's Wedding Makes Front Page In The Times of India

In this piece no one belongs where they are. The brother, the sister and their mother are all migrated from their mother's land to places where English is spoken differently. In her old age the mother dements to living an existence of memory and imagination in her country of origin. Neither child is truly at home.

Brown Boy on the Menu

Here the young Asian man is fetishized by the white girl, who views him as a potential possession: entirely unaware of the possibility that he might have the autonomy not to find her attractive.

Racing from Camptown One Night in the Late 1980s

explores the sexual status of two young men: one white, one brown in relation to each other but also in the case of the narrator in relation to his ingrained post-colonial perception of himself.

Hide Self View: Life in the Livestream

journeys into the claustrophobic psychological effect of zoom life using only command vocabulary from that platform.

Casablanca Marmoset – the End of a Beautiful Friendship

envisages a world where bit part characters away from the centres of attention also have lives and aspirations as valid as the those of the famous. Here the only option is to leave an occupied homeland and try to create a new life far away.

Giving Thanks to the great Lizard

demonstrates the profound anxiety caused by goal orientated performance pressure in a society where, if you are the "wrong" colour or sexuality, you are not entitled to the same progress as those who dominate.

Aspy in the Skype with Diamonds (A Love Poem)

is a rhythmic love song from within the experience of being autistic – using autistic traits and behaviours to share the experience but also demonstrate the pathologizing brought to bear on the neurodivergent.

How to Make Puffins Disappear

touches on the societal and generational impediment to recognising and embracing identity, particularly sexuality due to internalised restrictions.

All of these pieces arise from personal experiences, and I think show the effects on a person of various cultural forces.

The AutoEthnographer





Identity Loss for Pexels by Mikhail Nilov

Brown Boy on the Menu

There, blocking the way out,
the way in, Susan watched me,
her body twisted, one shoe flat

to the floor, the other rotating
on the toecap, back and forth, back
and forth.

Head inclined; her blonde bob hung
lop sided, blue eyes
reading me like the menu

in a curry house, trying to figure
what she might fancy, what might
be palatable. In the silence

I picked up the scent
of head cold that followed her
into class, come summer,

come winter, imagined what it would be like
to have to taste that, and all the while
her gaze probed me,

plumped every inch of me like a pillow.
*You know, you're quite handsome –
for someone of your race.*

Racing from Camptown One Night in the Late 1980s

I met a Scottish guy in a bar in Covent Garden –
this was one summer night late '80s. My hand
merged with the mahogany countertop: his

was a slick of spilt milk We got drunk.
We went back to his, near Aldgate somewhere.
I woke up: 3 or 4 a.m. He was on his back
next to me beating a rhythm

on the mattress with his fist. I couldn't remember
his name. I waved my hand in front of his face.
He was out, but his lips moving.
Moaning swelled to muttering,
muttering to humming and me freaking

because he was singing
Camptown Races.
I slid soundless from his bed,

pulled on my shirt, my suit, closed the door
with a click. I walked through dark London
by the yellow streetlights,
in complicit isolation
with road cleaners and foxes.

Next day at work
I was useless,
I breathed my own fumes.
I got home,
opened the A to Z
measured the walk
from Aldgate to mine.

It was five miles.

Hide Self View: Life in the Livestream

Mute. Touch up my appearance,
enter waiting room: the host will
let you in soon. Jitter.

Permission granted, view speaker
full screen grid. Allow unmute,
livestream participants,

enable accessibility. Open the invite

window, jump to chat, share
simultaneously side by side,

with everyone or privately.
Share screen, on top when sharing –
spotlight mode.

Reactions. From me to participants.
Security decline, low light, limit share,
suspend activities: leave.

Post processing, suppress noise.
Resolution: choose my background,
rename myself,

Mute. Touch up my appearance,
enter waiting room: the host will
let you in soon. Jitter.

Monkey's Wedding Makes Front Page In The Times of India

It's your Robbie-Gee here, my Sister.
Do you remember what Mumma
used to say, when it rained
in full sunshine?

She'd say it was a monkey's wedding.
Some important monkey
to influence the elements,
Huh?

It rains mostly here –
little sun. Not like where
you are. I visit her twice
a week at least,

but she, is also far away,
skipping through the parks
and gardens of a Bangalore
still lush,

playing jacks on dusty paths,

racing paper boats on ponds,
now dry, with brothers and sisters
long since dead.

Sometimes she wakens,
whimpering, begging her mother
to stop bleeding,
but calling your name.

Sometimes she calls me Uncle Christy,
boasts how none of her schoolfriends
have uncles who are journalists
for the Times of India.

She cries when she recalls
our father, their rows,
but then she smiles, coos
and bares an empty breast to feed

some baby – you or me I guess. Anyhow,
just wanted to keep you in the loop,
let you know how she's doing, how it is here.
It's a monkey's wedding.

The AutoEthnographer





By Metin Ozer for Unsplash

Casablanca Marmoset – the End of a Beautiful Friendship

Perched on Greenstreet's shoulder

in the shadow of his fez,
her half-closed eyes trawl over Rick.

Sacrifice spices the air of the Café Américain,
she sees it now: black and white,
cut and dried: no prospect of compromise.

Awakening to the inevitability of the narrative,
she hops down, scoots
into the teeming Souk.

The last plane out
leaves the endless dunes behind.
Over rolling breakers,

she dreams of the New World,
of cornering the market in curved fruit.
Love can wait.

Giving Thanks to the Great Lizard

I turn out the light. In the few steps to my bed,
I turn into a gecko in the darkness,
crawl beneath the boulder of quilts,

lie feet splayed, belly skywards, forelimbs
at my flanks, hoping for quick warmth.
I am at a party. Whose, I don't know.
Where, I don't know.
A group of us, strangers, watch two emus

in sequin dresses perform Riverdance,
taking turns to stand on one leg, flick
the other behind so fast it blurs.
I've had enough,
I'm the only brown person:
I don't know anyone.
Sliding doors into the next room:

there's Ben, my poet friend, spread on a sofa.
Next to him, his husband, Michael – except
Michael isn't his husband, he's Paul's husband.

Here, that doesn't seem to matter.
I'm glad to see them.

Ben reads his latest piece from the book
in his left hand. In his right a slice of pizza.
I'm hungry. I hope he'll offer me some. He doesn't.

The piece describes the River where
I played as a child. It's like I'm there again.
I love the voice. I say, "I love the voice, Ben."

Sly, Michael smiles at Ben, then back at me.
"Oh Yes, Ben's *fine* with the *voice*."
Ben mock scowls at his not – husband,
the meaning, transparent:
"Don't let the private cat out of the private bag."
I'm still hungry for Ben's pizza,
but enjoyed his poem so much

I'm warm. Beneath this heavy mound
my feet are splayed
my belly skywards.

I am, for once, at peace.
I give thanks to the Great Lizard
that the tail has fallen off
A year of nightmares.

Aspy in the Skype with Diamonds (A Love Poem)

Diamond is a solid form of Carbon arranged in a crystal
structure called diamond cubic. Its Strunz classification
is 1.CB.10a,

da, de da (do the Skype Song), nah, nah, nah, (rock your body).

Asperger's is a form of autism now categorised
in the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision
as Autism Spectrum Disorder (6A02),

da, de da (do the Skype Song), nah, nah, nah, (rock your body).

Diamonds are rare – concentrations of only parts per billion
in source rock. They are often found coated in Nyf,
an opaque gum like skin,

da, de da (do the Skype Song), nah, nah, nah, (rock your body).

The prevalence of autism is 1 in every 59 people as reported
by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention in 2018.
To fit in, autistic people often camouflage,

da, de da (do the Skype Song), nah, nah, nah, (rock your body).

The basic descriptors of diamonds as devised in 1953
By the Gemological Institute of America are fourfold:
Carat, Cut, Colour, Clarity,

da, de da (do the Skype Song), nah, nah, nah, (rock your body).

Stimming is frequent in people with ASD and can be tactile,
visual, auditory, olfactory, and vestibular, e.g., rocking. Scripting
is the repetition of words, often from movies. Play it again, Sam:

da, de da (do the Skype Song), nah, nah, nah, (rock your body).

Is it just me, or does anyone else see irony in the word Echolalia
being so sensual to repeat? Carat, Cut, Colour, Clarity.
Da, de da (Echolalia), nah, nah, nah,

rock your body.





for Pexels by Kamaji Ogino

How to Make Puffins Disappear

Between us, the air is static.
He scans November clouds
above my head, eyes far off
as a new May sky,
recalls his Nan's puffin coasters, laying
them next to each other making
kaleidoscope shapes

nothing like puffins.
With the side of his thumb
he strokes September stubble on his jaw,
wandering the many rooms of a grand
house, long since sold. The skin
around his eyes furrows, he scythes
fingers through hay hair.

Between us, the coffee cups are empty.
He smiles, nods a gentle nod,
walks away.

I go home to my wife.

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The AutoEthnographer