

# ମା (Mum)

She wraps her saree around,  
So seamlessly,  
And smoothly.

She takes two minutes;  
She ties the petticoat,  
Soo tightly.

She pushes her saree in,  
Roughly,  
into the petticoat.

The other end,  
She pleats it so it's even.

She takes it around her back,  
Under her right arm,  
Then the front,  
and over across the left shoulder.

She doesn't need a mirror,  
She's so confident.

She just gets on with it.

Whereas, I am so delicate,  
constantly checking,  
overthinking it.

I wish I could be like my mom.

She looks over her left shoulder,  
Pulls her saree down,  
To a length she's happy with.

And off she goes on with her day.

# My Best Time in the Lockdown

The best time for me is either 1pm and 8pm  
I love the 1pm  
it's less chaotic,  
relaxed and my son doesn't have to attend live classes  
when we're homeschooling.

our tummies are filled.  
I love relaxing with a mug of tea.  
Son keeps himself entertained with his toys and of course the tablet.

Unfortunately, gadgets like his tablet are what keeps him silent.

At 8pm  
Having a sneaky chocolate with mug of tea  
whilst he's in bed asleep.

Another mug of tea watching and catching  
up on my favourite soaps on channel 705 on Sky.

# Cold Morning

The first thing in the morning,  
I get up and get my phone.

When I get the phone in my hand, I normally check my emails.  
I check my social media accounts to see how much engagement  
I've had.

I check on my son.

I do.

When I go to check on him,  
I check if he's covered properly, if he's in bed properly.

I move the curtain and peek through to see if it's daylight yet.  
On this particular day, it was snowy, cold, absolutely freezing.

Dropped son to school,  
I was walking down the street with my trainers  
ready for a very good relaxing walk.

Breathing in the fresh air looking around,  
at the trees and the beautiful blue sky  
stepping on wet muddy leaves  
feeling sad that they had fallen off  
and would just melt away.

# Smell of Baby Powder

I love the smell of Johnson's baby powder.  
It takes me to my happy memories of childhood,  
when mum arrived with a new baby,  
three times.

Feeling excited,  
the baby noises,  
the innocence,  
smell of softness.

Then again 2016  
In August  
I had my little boy,  
the smell of Johnson's Baby Powder.

# F & C

## Another Memory

Fish and chips.

Having fish and chips at Hollingworth Lake  
I would love to just catch it in a jar,  
keep it forever.

Sitting on the wooden benches  
unwrapping the food,  
ducks Quacking  
dog walkers  
walking their dogs.

My girlfriends  
known since High School.  
Before the Pandemic  
around 2010.

No need to wear masks,  
warm summer's evening,  
the plastic blue fork,  
it has to be fizzy coke.

Eating fish and chips  
covered with salt and vinegar,  
tomato ketchup, mayonnaise.

# Motorway Farm Smell

The farm smell  
When I was on the motorway travelling.

When I was a teenager,  
I would help my dad, map out a journey to my relatives,  
Whether they were in Birmingham or London,

In the 90s,  
We didn't have a TomTom,  
We weren't able to afford one.

So we had to get the actual book out  
A physical map.  
Dad and I would sit there,

In the kitchen,  
At the dining table,  
Planning the journey with all the exits to take.

I used to sit at the front  
With Dad driving,  
Mum and the siblings  
In the back.

While giving directions to my dad  
One mistake and we missed an exit.  
Trying to please my dad.

Dad would get angry. But then  
Praises received from relatives  
“Well done, you brought your family all this way.”

# Chai Tea Latte

Whenever I buy Starbucks.  
Whenever I see green circle logo

I get excited to have my 'me' time, a treat for me.  
I feel like the old Asma,  
The carefree Asma,  
The fun loving Asma.  
The warm chai tea latte.  
Extra hot please with soya milk.

Whenever I see, After Eights.  
I remember my dad bringing them  
From his workplace

He used to be head chef  
At many different  
Restaurants and takeaways  
In England

Whenever I hear the Bollywood song,  
Tu cheez bari hai mast mast (Mohra)  
It reminds me of my English best friend, Emma  
also, my music lessons in high school.

# Red Blazer

She was wearing a red blazer.  
The blazer's shoulders were high,  
very bright and red.

She wore red lipstick,  
her hair was black, short and curly.

She wore a mustard top under the blazer,  
a high neck top.

She was holding onto her clutch,  
as well as a phone and Vaseline.

What secret does she have?  
Her husband forced her to attend this gathering.

Her last holiday Wales,  
near the sea.

She's called Maggie.  
What's her secret?  
She's been forced to attend this gathering.

What's her dream, something that she believes in?  
I'm in the cinema, I'm stuck between two men.

What is she thinking?  
I don't want to be here.  
I wish I could be in the park,  
having a picnic with my friend  
on this hot sunny day.  
having fish and chips with salt and vinegar all over them.

# Bottled – JPG

Jean Paul Gaultier.  
My favourite perfume  
Reminds me of shopping with my little sister  
15 years ago.

When I financially was able to,  
With no one stopping me from spending however I wanted.  
I was working in the corporate sector  
And I had all the freedom.

Quickly snuggled in past mum,  
Hiding shopping bags,  
Telling mum  
“it was all in sale”

# Ramsey Street

Walking home from college  
I knew I'm home  
Smell of cooking curry

My dad was a head chef,  
My mum's always been a homemaker.  
Mum came to the UK from Bangladesh in the 1980s

She's always cooked,  
tasty meat curries  
fish curries.

Ramsay Street in Rochdale is predominantly the  
South Asian - Bangladeshi community.