Rise
ZARA JAMSHED

This August, Karachi found herself in Atlantis’ palm over a thousand homes in ocean’s hungry mouth

I ache for a motherland slowly sinking, each monsoon season threatening to wash the whole shore away

what does it mean to reach for a place fading at the speed of rain when California burns, I find the smell in a memory of Pakistan

like shale gouged and burst wide, under the heat and pressure of a British heel, India frac(k)ured into three pieces each one named nation

trails of blood rising from sand and water after the fall of empire heat (global rising temperatures) and pressure (an economy licked empty) a gasp of sulfuric air rose

pushing brown bodies West like chasing the sun

I was not ripped out of the Earth only know my displacement in a language even my mother’s tongue can’t reach

know colonization’s violence as an open wound two continents pushed apart by ocean two cultures lost in translation

third culture children learn lessons in drifting what does it mean to dream a current of belonging, having only known its absence
the only language I’m fluent in is building out of nothing
in Urdu, the word for tomorrow and yesterday are the same
what we have yet to achieve we have already started

I understand my place as climate advocate and cultural wanderer
only in the want of reconnection searching the rubble
of extraction for something that feels like nurture
as the sea rises so do I

ZARA JAMSHED is a queer, trans, disabled Pakistani-American poet from New York City. They are the winner of the Oroboro Penrose Poetry Prize for LGBTQIA+ writers and have work published in Kiwi Collective Magazine and the Protest Through Poetry anthology. Zara is currently working on their first full-length poetry collection Neither Created Nor Destroyed, where they explore the joy of “contradiction” in queer/trans Muslim identity, lessons from the laws of thermodynamics, and diasporic longing. Putting their engineering degree to use, they currently work to bring the economic and environmental benefits of solar energy to California’s low-income renters in Oakland, CA.

Notes

1. Karachi is a large metropolitan city in the south of Pakistan.
2. The term “third culture children” refers to people who are raised for some or all of their childhood in a country other than that of their parents’ national origin. The influences of their parental/ancestral cultures and the culture of the country in which they’re raised combine to form a unique, “third culture” in their experience.
THE ARROW JOURNAL explores the relationship among contemplative practice, politics, and activism. Inspired in its founding by the teaching and social vision of meditation master Chögyam Trungpa, THE ARROW welcomes the insights of multiple contemplative lineages for achieving a kinder, healthier, and more compassionate world. We encourage dialogue on wisdom and knowledge arising from methods of contemplative inquiry, ways of embodied knowing, and intellectual disciplines. In doing so, THE ARROW provides a critical and much needed space for investigating the meeting point of contemplative wisdom and pressing social, political, and environmental challenges.
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At The Arrow Journal, we envision an awake society in which humans create political, economic, and cultural practices and institutions that support all people in discovering their innate worth, wisdom, and compassion; in living meaningful and fulfilling lives; in celebrating and respecting human diversity; and in promoting the health, resilience, and flourishing of the more-than-human world.

Mission
The Arrow Journal fosters thoughtful, nuanced, and scholarly investigation of the applications of contemplative wisdom traditions to addressing global challenges. We aim to be a tool of compassionate disruption of habitual cultural, political, and economic norms that wreak havoc on people and planet. In this way, we encourage contemplative practitioners to sharpen their understanding of how dharma calls on them to show up for suffering and injustice in the world. Simultaneously, we invite policymakers, scholars, and activists to consider alternative ways of knowing that fall outside the western mainstream as necessary and useful perspectives for meaningfully confronting the challenges we face as a global community.

What’s in a name?
In many cultures, the arrow is a traditional image of bravery and precision. Within the speed and chaos of our present world, the arrow symbolizes the courage to define a clear direction for how we might benefit others and society.