

Strategy of Rupture

I grew up with the myth that men were more sexual than women and I haven't stopped masturbating since I was 6. That's decades worth.

It's the only daily practice I have committed to aside from meditation, a distant second.

I am a hairy lascivious beast.

A few years ago, I decided to go on a journey.

It was time to fall in love with my hunch-backed, blistered, toothless, hairy beasts to caress them, hold them, to finally love all of me.

This is prayer in its purest form.

To give oneself permission to express desire unbound

We learn and grow through these dark, wet, urine-scented backstreets, alleys of our Self.

It sounds frightening, I know, dangerously uncomfortable.

We can't see very well in the dark and we have learned to trust our eyes above all other senses.

But I'd spent an entire decade in total darkness- gasping for air, for light.

These demons of mine paid no heed to my suffering, nor rent.

They squatted my mind my body, threw raves, caused havoc and all I could do was scream on mute.

And diligently rage against the cage that separated us.

This is the ultimate act of compassion, and our bravest encounter.

To be and bear witness to our being.

Just like the underground tunnels of a city reveal its deepest connections and structure so does a walk inside our desires.

Even the foul-smelling waste is part of our story.

Except we choose to bury it, make it invisible

It's why I came here in the first place. I needed to become In.vis.ible; concealed from vision.

I needed to run.

Not from anyone in particular or anything just from everyone, and everything familiar and violent.

Familiarly violent.

I used up every bit of privilege credit I had to get here. I arrived on a plane.
I waited respectfully at the “Other” queue at Manchester International Airport.
Clearly out of use. Queue for one?

The EU/UK line was packed with people.

Their looks filled me with a light feeling of shame.

An elderly man eventually wobbled over. He looked confused, clearly he couldn't detect my “otherness”.

One look at my passport and

“Ah, you're an alien”

Surely, alien doesn't mean Martian or does it?

I was about 6 years old when I started to learn English, around the time I started masturbating. I was highly fluent in both.

The Northerners were the first UK tribe I encountered.

It took about 5 days to decipher what people were saying.

“Alright, Luv, what's your name”

“Yesmean”

As in ‘yes’, I am ‘mean’”

These were tedious and slow conversations.

My girlfriend at the time had to introduce herself as Mad with an extra A.

We had to break down our names in this new place.

Pound them into a fine powder, add a bit of water, stir and serve.

It grew tiring after some time, so I gave up.

Years went by before I took notice of the rage filling up my lungs at the absolute and sheer laziness of it all.

It's hard to feel legitimate, to carve out a space for yourself, as an alien.

I reverted to reminding people....” yes, I am mean. Yesmean”

At what point do you go from alien to refugee, to migrant, to indefinite-leave-to-remainy to.....ching -ching bang bang! VIP!

London was never home.

It was my life's scaffolding where I unravelled myself with sheer determination and will.

For years, my gaze was fixated at what I had run from, only to realise that I had run straight into the belly of the beast.

The beast that pillaged and plundered the cultures, and societies I came from, their histories, their stories, their fossils their resources, devoured, and ravished them.....

We are also responsible, of course, we are.

But responsibility cannot be haphazardly distributed.

It is directly proportionate to power. The more power you have the more responsibility.

Simple formula but one that bears truth.

Simple formulas are easy to misuse because they are effective.

They make complex realities digestible.

Take this for example, devised by none other than UK and co.

Austerity = limited resources + too many people.

Limited resources = resources extracted from far away places with sweat, blood and tears mostly not ours, and brought here to create a life of peace and prosperity.

Too many People = non-British, non-European, immigrants, migrants, refugees, those whose blood, sweat, tears, and homes we have compromised. Usually means the eastern European shade of white, and all hues of brown and black.

The fact is too many people are coming on their shifty dinghies, with their shifty stories, to take away our finite and limited resources.

You know what reminded me of UK's limited resources?

France pulling up the drawbridge and threatening the broccoli supply.

Let's not talk about Cod.

The EU banning flights.

And just like that, overnight, the UK turned into Alcatraz.

In the ten years I have been here, it never felt more like home.

You know what was my first feeling when I woke up the next morning?

Panic, the same panic I woke up to in December 1998

They had all left. Those who could leave.

Those who had the passports and the means to leave.

Those who could cross the threshold into safety.

I'd been nowhere else but here all my life.

What lay beyond could've been Narnia, as far as I was concerned.

There was no other place but here and we had to endure it.

The United Nations' jeeps from outside the UN head office down the street were gone.

It was imminent.

The theatre of war holds supreme suspense, keeps you in a hushed torturous wait before....

Stand by, lights, ACTION!

Sound of Air raid siren starts

Baba 3al saree3 itfee daw il matbakh

"yasmeen ital3ee itfee daw il jnayne ou ta3ee 3al ghurfe bisr3a, yalla baba"

Sound of Air raid siren ends

Turn off the garden fairy lights?! as if they were a viable target for cruise missiles.

As if this simple act would make us invisible.

'This is BBC live!'

'Ma3qum qanat Al-Jazeera'

'This is CNN International Live from Baghdad!'

And we were live inside the heart of the action.

Reporter's voice with background air strike sound

معنا مراسل الجزيرة وليد في بغداد.

وليد اهل لك ان تخبرنا كيف هي الاوضاع.

نعم اهلا هالا لقد سمعنا نوي انفجار منذ قليل يبدو أن قد استهدفت بعض المواقع في غرب المدينة لكن حتى الان لم يشن الجيش الامريكي والجيش البريطاني قصف مكثف

من المتوقع ان تستهدف بعض المواقع الرئاسية التي تبعد عن هنا بضع كيلومترات ...

وليد؟

نعم المعذرة هالا يبدو ان القصف قد بدئ من جديد

وليد هل تسمعنا ؟

..هلا. يبدو أنا صاروخ قط سقط للتو قريباً من هنا

وليد هل انت بخير, وليد هل تسمعنا...وليد؟

Background air raid sound stops

We watched the reporter watch the missile fall.

We were in my father's bedroom glued to the TV.

We saw the missile explode on TV.

Three seconds later we heard it.

A beastly roar that reverberated through our every cell.

It shocked and awed us.

A fear of such magnanimity can never be transcribed.

The lesson: light travels faster than sound.

This show was brought to you by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the United States of America.

It must have been around 2007 around 4 years after the US/UK invasion of Iraq, and two years after the Kings Cross attack and only a few months since I'd left Lebanon, still burning from Israel's bombings.

Here I was 6.30 pm waiting on the platform at Acton town, direction East.

Trains usually take a long time to arrive.

I spotted a slim, well-dressed, 30-ish most likely South Asian man, sporting a beard that screamed Bin Laden.

This incident obviously predates the hipster beard movement which I cannot thank enough for helping, if not dispel, certainly confuse the "long beard jihadist" cliché.

There is an army of bearded hipsters now Lush had to manufacture products to care for those face bushes.

But in 2007, the narrative was going strong. Bin Laden was still on the run. A great American fugitive blockbuster.

So well crafted, and purveyed, even I had ingested the story, whole.

That man standing "suspiciously" on the platform- although I can't tell you for the life of me what was suspicious about him- was definitely holding a briefcase or was it a sports bag?

I was watching him discreetly, looking for signs, deciding whether I was going to get on that train or not.

My insides were at war, more than usual.

Am I gonna die? Is it all gonna be over right here? Yasmeen don't be ridiculous. But what if? You're just being paranoid. What then? You're brainwashed, but it could be true!

The battle was real.

I had survived 4.5 wars, I was not going to die on the Piccadilly Line one dull evening in London

The train arrived.

I vaguely remember getting on.

The lesson: always watch what you eat, not only the calories but the processed, ready-made truths.

I haven't stopped eating today. Or as my mother used to say " ma ti3ib fakik min il 3alik"

Bless her, she was always concerned about my excessive jaw activity.

I was always a voracious eater, I eat my emotions, of course, I do, but there is plenty of them to go around.

Thankfully, I had a Field Marshal for a mother. She instilled in me the power of discipline and self-control.....and a generous dollop of self-hate.

It's been over ten years since I've come to the UK and only one month since I've been made a citizen.

Freshly naturalised - from Refugee to VIP!

What a fucking journey....it sure as hell was about to kill me.

You'd think that crossing seas in rubber dinghies is the closest thing to death you could get to as a refugee.

But administrative procedures have a way of killing you quietly and politely

Some survive others implode or explode.

In case you're still wondering, I leave you on this note

I'm the birth child of extremes.

The daughter of chaos

A love extremist

A petrol bomb to put it lightly.

Loyal to love

So loyal, I burn all the hate I've been fed.