


Subcontinentment



*South Asian Futurism does not fantasise about a future
Because it cannot isolate the future from the past
It fantasizes about a life in-between*

*It wishes to grab language by its horns
Grab the English language by its horns and
wring it off its yes' and nos
and everythings and nothings
and hang it out to dry
In the equatorial sun in the middle of infinity*

*Its locus is entangled: material and spiritual
Subliminal and subversive and submissive at once.*

Bipolar¹.

*South Asian Futurism is
a witness to the ash-warmth of the morning
when the newspapers have smacked the iron-clad gates
and a few are lost in trees or transit —*

Denouncing South Asia as a universal region without specificity
Denouncing futurism as an accomplice to the violence that comes with acceleration

South Asian Futurism would like to call itself

Subcontinentment.

A skewed portmanteau of subcontinent and contentment


An idealistic futurism that is scientific but does not believe in science as a solution
Its science fiction does not project a dystopia, despite the carbon

it wants

it wants

it wants an alchemy of knowledges, rumours, humours, hypotheses, ancient imaginaries
And everyday erasures,

it wants to rest.



*Where happiness is fleeting, our contentment finds rest.
Not rest like stillness, but the kind of rest in music,
A held pause, an interval with the pedal down.*

*Or like a lily pad², floating flat against water
An absolute zero coated in an armour of wax
Repelling the too-muchness of life*

Lightness borne by horizontality.

*We are the poetry of brown bodies.
We take your criticality
and raise you immediacy*

It is a part of

We are one body

*Subcontinentment says:
and apart from*

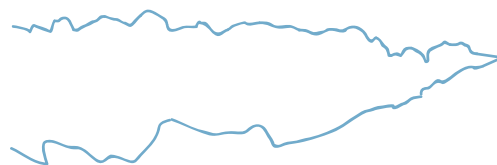
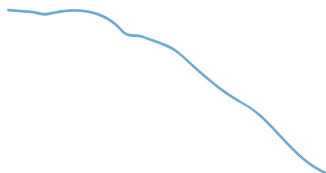
*Subcontinentment says:
That is killed over and over again
If we are not cautious.*

*The spectre of freedom
In a world which cannot be reversed
But reprinted³
In the form of 2000 rupee notes
Purple hearts*

Hatching Life on Mars

*Gandhi will look through lotus-coloured glasses
Where money will be cosmic and
And see*

*Temples built on tombs
Praying palimpsests of pulverizing precarity.
Praying to the gods of geometry⁴
Their indeterminate equations,
To the reflection of light by the moon,
To suspension, apparition, gravitation, levitation, indirect vision.*



*Subcontinentment swerves through space
It aspires, transpires, desiring
First of all an understanding of labour
Love lost to slavery
Subcontinentment is retrospective but it is not repair
It does not revisit its indentured past⁵
But it does not try to escape it*

*Imitate it
Sublimate it*

*Subcontinentment is an oath:
It is a re-interpretation
A limited vocabulary
With infinite combinations
Like a place without a perimeter.*

We matter

*We are anti-directional, anti-event
Our days are counted but our time will not run out
Subcontinentment is replenishment*

Subcontinentment like the age old saying,

Remember The Future

The chuckles that sentence gets every time

*Even in the mirror universe
Where time unfolds another way*

*Countering memory
or
Avant garde delay*



we are opposite like that

*We are ours
We are kinetic
We are still
We are non-violent
We are complicit and cinematic
We are not a unified we
But we incline toward a togetherness
Autonomous and fugitive*

*Subcontinentment emphasises
interdependence
Over individualism
Speculation
Over spectacle*

*We, the south asian futurists,
Now the Subcontinentmentalists,*

*Pray from the equator
for new meridians*



*We wait
for the classical collapse of capital*

*We are tarnished
by the corrosion of materialism*

*We parse,
forage, name again*

*We claim
an ethics of belonging*

An aesthetics of not

*Subcontinentment is a reclamation:
Enthusiasm reconfigured.*

The mobilisation of positivity

Subcontinentment is always already smiling.

*Subcontinentment believes
that happiness is related to goodness*

But neither is related to enhancement

*It wants to clean garbage
but not by flinging it into space where golf balls and garters
smash into the sun's stellar radiation and
combust out of any evidence at all*

*Charged by crisis
It dances its discontent.
Its revolt is not lethargic.
It emerges hardened with dust.
When it freezes, it releases heat⁶.*

*It is not fatigued by
The alien antibodies that move through it*

*We, the Subcontinentmentalists,
Align ourselves with the*



*Afrofuturists
Sinofuturists
Ethnofuturists,
Indigenous futurists*

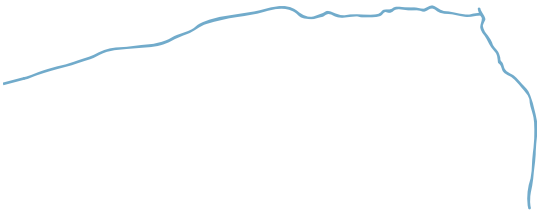
*All the intergalactic dreaming
Our retro-foresight*


*The boomeranging to the moon
The salt desert like a blank slate of ice*

The alienation of extra-terrestriality

*Subcontinentment is anti-extinction
It proposes radical survival*

*To be as it is.
Still,
to speculate
on the architecture of loopholes*






*Subcontinentment looks up toward the Arctic
where maybe the Vedas
found home in the low sun and the early moon*

and maybe not

*Subcontinentment looks downward toward the Antarctic,
with whom it shared edges and borders way back when in Pangea*

*It finds common fossils, one of them an embossed ficus religiosa
It finds mica, which shimmers like something far and rare*



*Subcontinent
says:
imagine going there.*

*Imagine huddling close together
Against the wind*

Imagine

being

opposite like that.

¹This manifesto stems from the writer's journey to the polar circles, where she was confronted with her alienness in a landscape otherwise used for outer space simulation experiments. As part of a series of fictional ice archives, south asian futurism anti-chronicles the geopoetic links between the poles and the subcontinent.

²Water lilies are considered sacred across South Asia and are the national flower of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. They open at dawn and close at dusk. Their rhizomatic root structure may be read as a representation of lateral thought. Pancake ice formations at the poles have been likened to frozen lily pads. The stillness of ice is termed 'a condition of absolute zero'.

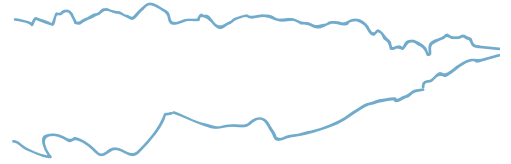
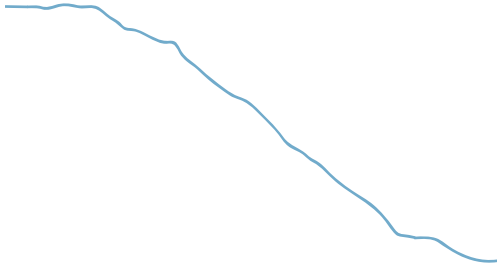
³In 2016, Mr. Modi, leader of the Hindu nationalist BJP party (whose symbol is a lotus), announced the overnight demonetization of all ₹500 and ₹1000 banknotes in an effort to sift out 'black' money. While it had no effect on those with cabinets full of cash, those in rural areas committed suicide believing their money to be worthless. Shortly after, a ₹2000 note was issued in purple, with an image of Mangalayaan, India's Mars Rover, printed on it.

⁴Aryabhata (476–550 CE) was an Indian mathematician–astronomer who proposed that the glint of the moon is due to the reflection of the sun's rays. India's first satellite is named after him.

⁵Post the abolition of slavery, the British replicated a system of bonded labour in which 2 million Indian indentured workers were brought to 19 colonies to work on sugar, cotton and tea plantations, and rail construction projects in the West Indies, Africa and Southeast Asia.

⁶A phenomenon known as salt flux, and occurring in the polar regions due to melting ice.

⁷In 1898, politician and astronomer Bal Tilak wrote 'The Arctic Home in the Vedas'. Substantiated by passages from the Vedas, in this right-wing occultist account, Aryans lived in the Arctic while it was warm, and migrated to Asia due to glaciation circa 8,000 BC. The Vedic excerpts are uncanny, predating conjectural accounts of the very existence of the poles.



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