

A warm, golden-toned photograph of a desk. On the right, a tall, ornate lamp with a glowing light bulb stands. To the left, a large, messy pile of crumpled paper dominates the foreground. A hand is visible near the base of the lamp, possibly holding a pen or resting on the desk. The overall mood is one of quiet contemplation or creative struggle.

MYM LITERATURE

An Ode To Writer's Block

by Raadia Khan

Where Muslims come home to reflect

An Ode To Writer's Block

By Raadia Khan

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this is a piece about writer's block.

stars are in the sky and there are stars, stars swirling against a pitch-black tarp and drawing whirlpools of inspiration that fade and twinkle out into black holes, black holes that roar and consume all they can reach. negative numbers, numbers, placeholder concepts to put names to values that doesn't really exist or maybe did once but they don't exist now and they're just echoes, or maybe a singular vacuum where there aren't even any sounds to reverb-b-b-bate until they dissipate out of existence just like the stars.

run on sentences sentences sentences sentences endlessly trailing beyond the horizon like the margin from a loose-leaf paper all stretched out like thread except the horizon is behind you and you find yourself stuffed into some kind of sunless/starless purgatory and the sentences sentences sentences are hitting your eardrums steadily knocking out some kind of morse code, h-e-l-p you think it says but you're too out of breath to count the dashes and dots because the sentences sentences sentences are coiling like threads turned to ropes in the middle of your windpipe so the dashes and dots bounce off your eardrums and settle on your skin neatly into your pores waiting for a time where you might be able to draw them out with ink from a 50-cent ballpoint pen.

fires and smoke, and fires, and smoke, and fire, and smokes, lashing

out against an empty canvas but burning it to soot every time the tips of the tongues of the flames try to draw the spindly beginning of words and roaring into the void and thinking how fire is able to think at all and are stars not made of fire anyway and maybe if it burns through nothingness over and over again something will appear, a forest can spring from a lonely singed seed and if suns are stars and stars are fire then maybe warmth and sunshine can nurture some growth even though all you can remember at your hands of flame is destruction and sunshine is gentle and you are not.

this is a piece about a collection of cells staring at empty documents and blank pages and gaping canvases and waiting for words to come, something, anything, but they don't.

they don't.

Sometimes, inspiration can be dangerous. Sometimes, the canvases, the notepad, the computer document, can all be so dauntingly empty. But, writing is an outlet, a form of expression; a soundless scream that's been pent up for too long. I've always believed that when you write, you just sit down and bleed. This piece is about writer's block. About really, really terrible writer's block, the type that stretches over long periods of time and you can't seem to do anything about it. More than just writer's block, this piece speaks to one's own ability to push the boundaries and begin to write again. Pushing potentially judgmental audiences, daunting word counts, and the looming rules of grammar out of your mind and writing for yourself. It won't be easy but take the leap and may Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) grant you success.