

# THE PERFECT STORM

**NUSHRAH YANIDA**

She is art I have no capacity to behold,  
A palette smeared with colours, bold,  
Teeming with secrets, unforeseen and untold.

She is merciless, torrential rain.  
Look too close and suffer immeasurable pain,  
But stray too far, and all one sees is dismal terrain.

She is chaos in its purest form.  
To conventions, she does not conform.  
She is, in all essentials, the perfect storm.

*The writer is a student of class 12 at South Breeze School.*



# Eurocentric Standards drilled into a Brown Child's Head

**SHANUM SARKAR**

*Sitting back and reminiscing back on times when I could hop on the bandwagon without having to worry about what my (un-tameable) hair looked like, an oh so favourite gratification.*

Throughout my not so long life, I've always wanted to be called beautiful. Looking back however, I'd say I didn't want to be beautiful at all.

All I wanted was to be able to cater to a standard. Be held high up on a pedestal. Be the epitome of unattainable perfection. Fit a Eurocentric narrative. Be *beautiful*.

It is very unusual to get an uplifting response when I say I've never felt beautiful. I've never felt like I properly adhere to the Eurocentric beauty standard imposed upon us. I've never been the one to make jaws drop, make heads turn, or even be thought twice of. Long lists of ingredients off the kitchen shelf to be grinded and mixed to put onto your skin, a quick fix to brown (dirty) skin is the gift passed down our ancestral heritage.

This is not being said in a "please shower me with compliments that my dysmorphic self will never actually be able to comprehend (thanks to you)" kind of way. It's in a way where growing up, I've never been genuinely called beautiful.

Every time I was, it was something along the lines of me being "pretty enough" for someone with dark skin, pretty enough for someone who wasn't blessed with a Eurocentric nose.

As for the few times when the compliment wasn't backhanded, I always (still) somehow managed to convince myself it was out of pity. Now that I'm a little older but still the same old (brown skinned) self-conscious child on the inside, the entire concept of compliments puzzles me. I've only ever been complimented sarcastically as a child.

And now every time someone's paying heed to me, I get on pins and needles because I convince myself they're just doing me a favour out of pity. Every time I do get a compliment, I wonder if my femininity is limited to only being a perfectly masked eggshell with a rotten yolk on the inside. Being nothing but a pretty face; a divine body.

Being nothing but a human sculpture to be gazed at: critiqued upon  
A picture-perfect sparkly trophy, ready to be won. (Guess I'm everything but human.)

Do not get me wrong, I have been called beautiful, countless times. By countless people. Apparently, it's now cool to be more "accept-



ing" and forthcoming to the idea that people come in all shapes and sizes (and colours). The desperate cry for "acceptance", for a yarn woven down to show the earthly grace of your inheritance and a defiance to colonialism, from your very own people is something that I don't think will ever sit right with me.

And by that, do you really think I'm beautiful? Or do I better cater to your (Somehow still existent but altered by the skin of your teeth) standards now?

*Shanum closely resembles a raccoon, send her reasons to cut down on caffeine at shanumsarkar18@gmail.com*