



don't stay small
SRISHTIKA PRAKASH

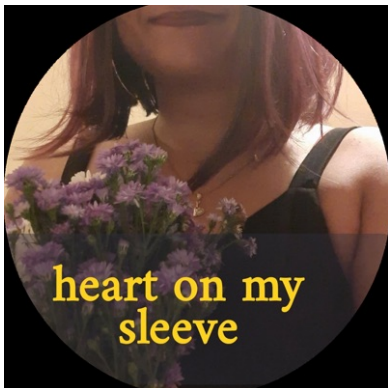
*for the love of humanity,
my care for this world,
I rage and write.*

Prologue

This book is a collection of my original poems written over the years. Part 1 was written while I was completing my graduate studies in the United Kingdom. A time that helped me go deeper within myself and become curious about many different aspects of my identity. It made me feel closer to myself, helping me build a home within, while being away from my homeland. Part 2 contains previously published poetry through poetry competitions and awards.

Poems in Part 1 are also available on my website as a podcast collection. I have also experimented with some of them, making them dramatic, embodying emotion and moving with the flow. They can still be accessed on my website, in case you wish to watch my recorded performances. Please check the details at the end of this book and follow the QR code or website link.

These poems are close to my heart as they were all written during a vulnerable time in my life. I hope you support my work. May these poems comfort your heart.



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heart on my sleeve: poetry mix is a collection of fifteen poems, originally published as a podcast experimenting with form, storytelling and movement.

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Part 1

One Of Those Days

Sometimes, I feel my dreams are larger than life—
it becomes necessary to leave a legacy behind.
Then there are times I think I won't make it past a day
and I remind myself to let my feelings dominate,
instead of those thoughts capable of leading me astray;
Trusting my heart to never play that game—
I close my eyes to avert the world's gaze,
let my mind be welcomed in its own dark shade—
I breathe into my heart for the light to grow,
my trance ends and I'm returned to a normal day
that leaves me to believe and wonder just the same.

Breathe And Let Go

My reality is my own,
celebrating my existence,
small and big wins making me grow,
overwriting my inner critic

who sometimes gets too loud
my ears deafening—
making me think I'm crazy
when I'm perfectly sane.

I must be wild to indulge
living in coexistence
of my own dissonance—

I make sense only to me,

I love just because,
I live to please my heart.

You witness me as 'I' –
you observe my becoming,
you are outside of me.

We see each other,
we acknowledge our existence,
we coexist outside of ourselves.

It is us who feels,
who thinks,
who exists,

yet– never in the same way,
never at the same time,
differently even in the same place.

How hard to be human when it is 'I'.

Beyond myself, I begin to observe—
extend myself to oneness— and then
how fascinating it is to be human,

to know that you are born to die
and in between our being and not being
we get to just be— become and un-become,
feel and un-feel, express or repress,

surrender, succumb, lead or conquer—
existing like a breath of the beyond,
the universe inhaled and we were born
and when it exhales so shall it perish us all.

Add meaning to your breath,
take it to your belly and feed your body,
add purpose to your sigh, it'll turn to relief,

do nothing– you still exist to cease;

breathe deeper and you shall prolong,

shorter breaths are too a good shock–

however you exist, you exist to be witnessed;

remember the witness is a witness,

don't let being witnessed dictate how you live;

just breathe and let go.

Who? A Queer Poem

I said I am a woman
and also not,
I am a man
but also never was,
you wish to define me so bad
that I become water— seeping through the land,
I find myself moving
sometimes up and at other times sideways
and when I'm forced
I push through and break:
sometimes people, sometimes places.
I cannot deny myself authenticity
or refuse my own nature
that you seem to want to contain,
when— you ask me my gender