



نانی

SANAH AHSAN

instead of dying

have a coke with me
just a small glass
from one of the fifteen bottles you used to buy in bulk
in that little Slough kitchen i rarely entered

or how about a mango lassi and some fresh roti with daal that i never quite got round to
learning how to make you with pyaar
with these hands that never fed you

or place your tiny wrinkly hand in mine and squeeze it with mighty life in this place you will
talk to me and i will talk back in the tongue that is yours and still mine before the taking
as you speak with lips that fold in and out and in
like a bud uncertain of its bloom
i will receive every petal and say more words than *جی* or *نہیں* and the lords loom will weave
our sentences together in understanding
i'll tell you about the women i loved and long to love and you'll tell me about the ways you
dream you could have loved before being married at fourteen

instead of dying

let's take a flight back to your first home before the partition
me in a white sherwani you in that off-white salwaar kameez
mouthful of paan swigging from a glass green bottle of coke
as we step onto the wide-open runway
you place your hand on my shoulder and say
Masha'Allah beta



نانی ~ *Nani*

[Sanah Ahsan](#) is a queer muslim womxn, a clinical psychologist, award-winning poet, and all-round disrupter. Her work is centred on compassion, decolonising our understandings of mental health, and embracing each other's madness. Sanah's psychological work is rooted in liberation and community psychology. She draws on therapeutics, poetics, and activism as interconnected practices to support racialised and marginalised people. Sanah recently published her research on deconstructing whiteness within clinical psychology, and she is currently working to build antiracism as a core competency into UK clinical psychology training.

Sanah's work also includes features on: Channel 4; BBC 2; *The Guardian*; Ted Talks; and at the Southbank Centre, London. She is currently writing her debut poetry collection.

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