

dis-memberment.

daughter of an immigrant,
who is the son of an immigrant.
i handled in my teen years
the disapproval of a society with anger.

anger toward my customs
customs of my ancestors
ancestors and dusty land, i met with avoidance -
avoidance is escapism.

so then
i carefully studied the etiquette
of a people that appeared different
to the natural state of my family home.

copying the habitual mannerism of a people,
discarding any foul commentary
on the blackness of my hair, eyebrows, eyes, and body hair.
i have come to believe that
my given space here is a non-space truly;

out of order, ordered, and dismembered cruelly.

my dis
 member
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follows a ruthless
dissection of my persona,
based on bias and belief
about my existence as a danger
in a society
that has never shown me mercy.

born in the wrong body
at the wrong time and in the wrong place.
as it seems-
otherness is a crime.

the first time i read orientalism,
i kept a box of tissues close to me.
as i recalled the image of teen girls
calling me exotic, barbaric, and hairy.

my father left his country
so that I can find my roots here.
so that people can curiously ask me,
“where are you from?
i mean no, *where* are you from?
no, no... where are you
originally from?”

can i prove my originality with my blood?
i need some scissors and first aid for that, i guess,
for there is no other way
to satisfy their uncertainty.

ordinary customs are highly praised.
so i stutter when i speak my mother tongue now,
as i anxiously rub hair bleach onto my arms
or call my ancestral land, “where not *I* but my parents
were born and raised”.

no matter the effort – i see now,
there will always be a lone man
on a lone train
on a lone ride
talking to others about me –

turning his head and furiously yelling
go back to your country!

pointing out the obvious state of my otherness.

and stripping me of
my dignity.