

# NEEDLE

VOLUME II

SPRING 2022

The ongoing universal political state of affairs activated by discriminatory, supremacist and violent ideology has brought with it powerful demonstrations of selflessness, love and an astute sense of moral and political rights-and-wrongs. The last three years of physical isolation, too,

have brought forth instances of inspiring degrees of kindness, faith and care. While the current political condition still triggers doubt and hopelessness in the state of society and human relationships, they also expose us to sentiments generally undervalued and assumed absent.

# HANDLE WITH CARE

It begs the questions – should we care for the interests of those other than ourselves? Should we care for the interpretation of imprints we, as individuals, leave behind? Should we care for the state of the space we inhabit? Does caring for all these things lessen the scope for our ease? Do others care for us?

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I Care a Lot

# Un-understanding Care

~ **Kamya Vishwanath, *Editor***

I have begun my retreat from Jindal Global University's grounds. Looking back, all I can do now is think about how much and how little I have come to feel and know about a little thing we call 'care'. When we decided to proceed with the call for submissions for this issue, we had, at first, considered the notion of giving back to a world that we take so much from. Somehow, these conversations progressed into us deciding to understand care in general. Giving and receiving seem so obviously designed to refer to care and its opposite, but it can never be this simple.

Earlier this year, I was perplexed and debilitated when someone accused me of being violent for making flippant comments. They suggested that the words that came out of my mouth were unmeasured and that the truth of the matter was that I was uncaring. After several hours of regret and introspection, I began to realise that nothing is so easy. Promises to help are not that easily trustworthy, either. Acts of caring are more believable than the mere promise to assist, and comments made in haste, while sounding uncaring, can also stem from fear. We will never fully know what or who someone cares about, and my encounter made me realise this more starkly.

'Care' exists as a noun and a verb yet the latter offers me more comfort. During the pandemic, my

singular idea of care was disrupted, multiplying and dividing into sub-forms that are nearly indistinguishable from one another. Over the last year alone, I have come to see, hear, feel, touch, smell, and learn care in its varied forms. Care, just like the idea of justice and freedom, have begun to unravel and reveal to me (and, perhaps, not me alone) its lesser known sides.

Our world is shaped by acts of deliberate efforts made to help and enable one another. It begins with thinking about motherly care (and hardly ever fatherly care, because one is expected and the other is deemed a privilege in status quo), and the institution of the family and their proclivity to do nothing but care. We think about our schools and their teachers, the curriculum, and the institution that aims to impress and transform. We think about caring in friendships, caring in our romantic relationships, and caring for the world at large. We progress into University where we encounter independence and individual decision-making. Different ways of showing interest have begun to form themselves: there are words, but there is also music. Care might be pointed, or it might be subverted through the use of comedy and humour. When we think about care, we often subsume this under the ambit of love. That would result in injustice both, to care and to love, independently.

It was in law school that this subsumption of care and love was first contested. As students of Constitutional law, one is wont to assume that the Constitution of India is sacred — a harbinger of hope and promise. However, what was more intriguing was not a lecture in the Constitution, but in ‘constitutionalism’. Engaging in constitutionalism meant considering the shortcomings of this text — perhaps even its failures. This engagement did not mean rejection; it entailed accepting this text regardless of its flaws, but acknowledging them as flawed. A scandalising thought! How dare we question a thing so good? But dare we must.

We mistake love, devotion, patriotism, and care for blind faith without contestation. We think that reverence without question is caring in its pure, unadulterated form. We believe that loving means to accept without listening to what we might point out as a possible concern. Over the last few years, it has taken me several hours of time spent thinking about myself and those I consider as different from me, and those apart from me to realise that the strongest form of caring lies inside these feelings of antagonism — in resentment, in jealousy, in hate. It has taken several conversations with loved ones to understand that their honesty — even when unpleasant — is the only form of care that I can fully know. Has care, then, been a tendency to change someone or something? To change on our terms and not on theirs? A fine line exists between wanting to change for change’s sake and wanting to change for our own. Several times this year, conversations with my loved ones about what might be “good” for them have come from a deeper, more base instinct of considering whether this might also be good for



**To accept with the comfort that one can make their own decisions and own mistakes is how we can know and allow care to simply...be.**

me. Caring in these instances have been loaded in selfishness and self interest. We want for others, but what we really want is for ourselves. I have come to grow mildly skeptical of persons who want to save the world and who state it in those very terms; remember — the civilising mission, too, was a quest to save.

Where can one see this spectrum of care going?

Perhaps we all house an inner violence of care. Personally, I have come to find silence as a remarkable form of care in moments filled with wonder and beauty. Words might be reckless, unfurling desires to change/care. To accept — not blindly, and not with the intention of hoping that one fails, but — with the comfort that one can make their own decisions and own mistakes is how we can know and allow care to simply...be.

In this issue, we traverse many different explorations of personal encounters with care. Some are simple, some more tricky. The idea is to allow feelings to dictate our actions, and actions to guide us to help us realise whether something or someone falls within our realm of care. What we all might find, individually and collectively, is that there is little in the world that we do not care about.



1. *Countless particles of light  
Inhabit us.  
Reflecting what we see  
In light of others.*

2. *Rushed,  
I live in my head  
Heart longing for me.*

3. *Your voice fills my day  
With the sweetest time  
I hold on to its echo  
To silence my mind.*

4. *I wither like petals  
At one sight of you.  
Will you behold me  
In my fragments?*

5. *The emptiness of the  
Secluded heart space  
Longs to connect,  
More or less.  
Less with the form & its kind,  
and more with the lasting formless.*

## *Echoes of the Heart*

BY  
NITYA PRAKASH

# THE MYTH OF PROMETHEUS: THE TITAN WHO CARED TOO MUCH

By  
Sanjana Bajaj  
Kona Aditya Kalyan

We have heard countless stories about how man is good and how much people care. We always talk about humans caring for each other. Of communities that come together for each other and countries that fight for their people. All of these actions pertain to that of 'care'. Care is shown differently by different people, demonstrated in ways that might be ethically wrong or frowned upon. Throughout time, these stories have persisted; the ones we don't hear about are the stories that tell us about God's care. To care as a mortal is a justified idea because caring helps us resolve our guilt. It helps us answer the questions that remain in our hearts. Gods harbour guilt, but they are not blessed with a limited lifetime. Instead, their lives are living tapestries that never end. Their guilt is forgotten in their ordeal for greatness, separating the mortals from gods. The ability to forget guilt also takes away the ability to care. So, the stories about gods usually show how scary and unnatural they are. Gods, as immortal beings, do not care about mortals. Any interactions they have with humans always mean disaster for the mortals. This also happens in the story of Prometheus, a Titan who cared too much, but for what?

Prometheus, a Titan, trickster, and a god of fire cared for humanity despite being immortal. Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus were tasked with creating society and gracing them with gifts that ensured their prosperity and survival. Epimetheus gifted animals with their feathers, furs, and flight but had nothing left when he came to humans who had just been made from clay. Seeing as humans did not have anything, Prometheus stole fire from the gods who resided on Mt. Olympus and gifted it to the humans. He cared enough to give man the gift and taught them how to use it, which allowed for rapid civilization. Without fire, man would not have survived, let alone prospered and for that, he is considered a fabled figure across the arts and sciences. Zeus punished Prometheus for stealing fire by chaining him to a rock where an eagle would eat his immortal liver every day. The bird would tear apart his body and eat his liver, only for it to grow back. He was subjected to a never-ending life of torture with immeasurable pain inflicted on him every single day. After years of going through this, Zeus even offered to end his suffering if he stole fire back from the humans, but Prometheus refus-



*Prometheus Bound, 1618, by Peter Paul Rubens and Frans Snyders*

ed. He could not see his creations suffer, so he sacrificed himself instead as a benefactor of humanity.

Prometheus means foresight, and despite being aware of the consequences he would face, he did not change his actions or regret them afterward. Prometheus cared for the humans more than he should have. Does it mean that caring in its essence is a sin?

Prometheus was a titan. A primordial be-

ing whose existence preceded even that of the gods. He was one of the first inhabitants of vast empty space. For a being such as him, to care for creatures whose lifetime did not compare to his was a learnt experience. With the guilt of having betrayed his kin, fighting on behalf of the gods in the Great Titan War, Prometheus learnt to feel guilt. Altruism may not have been the reason behind Prometheus's action, but it does not mean it was not an act of kindness. All actions of living beings are reactions to

feelings. Prometheus had made humans from something as insignificant as clay, but he had modelled them after him. After all, humans were bipedal, with vocal organs and a heart that bled to live. Prometheus revolted against the Gods to care for his creations and, in doing so, performed the first of many acts that showed that immortal beings cared. Also significant is the question - what does care achieve? Prometheus' sacrifice could have meant nothing if the gods decided to wipe out the human race in the act of vengeance. What could humans, equipped with the power of fire, do against a lightning bolt that could decimate civilizations? Then, Prometheus' most remarkable achievement was not that he created human beings but that his care brought a sense of acceptance amongst the gods. The immortal beings were used to having their way, and rebellion was punished heavily, but in this one act of revolution, Prometheus made clear the fact that "care" brings along with it acceptance amongst mortal and immortal creatures alike. While all care might not be altruistic, it changes not only the lives of people who have been affected directly, but also the lives of those who are observing it.

In literature and theatre, Prometheus is seen as a noble figure, a titan who sacrificed himself for human folly by defying the gods.

*"Prometheus is the type of the brightest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends."*

This quote by Percy B Shelley, the Romantic poet, talks about Prometheus and the sacrifice he made for humans. For Shelley, Prometheus was the epitome of selfless action and noble intentions.

We may disagree with the motive to care, but we can all agree that "care" brings about noble ends. To care might be a selfish task, a horrific punishment, and a romantic notion, but all care brings change, allowing for the world's wheels to move. It is the only thing that holds us together, the glue that binds people together and enables bonds that survive the test of time.

# UNDER THE STARRY NIGHT

by  
Poojitha Lara

One of the first thoughts that come to mind when I think about self-care is sleep. However, it is also a need that is often neglected or taken for granted. It comes easily to some, while many have tumultuous relationships with sleep. *Under the Starry Night* is the portrait of a woman lying under Van Gogh's famous depiction of a starry night. The woman and the night sky convey serenity, which is the opposite of Van Gogh's relationship with sleep. He suffered from insomnia and often doused his bed with camphor to help him sleep. Eventually, this practice proved to be disastrous as he ended up getting poisoned by the camphor. Unlike Van Gogh's or most of our relationships with sleep, this artwork is what we aspire to achieve. A good night's sleep ironically seems like an unattainable dreamlike fantasy.



# READING LIST

*A Man Called Ove*

by Fredrik Backman

*Heaven*

by Mieko Kawakami

*My Brilliant Friend*

by Elena Ferrante

*Wounds*

by Fergal Keane

*The Muslim Vanishes*

by Saeed Naqvi

*Daniel Deronda*

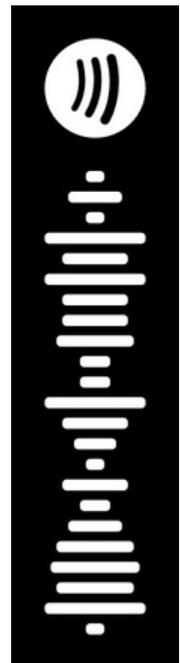
by George Eliot

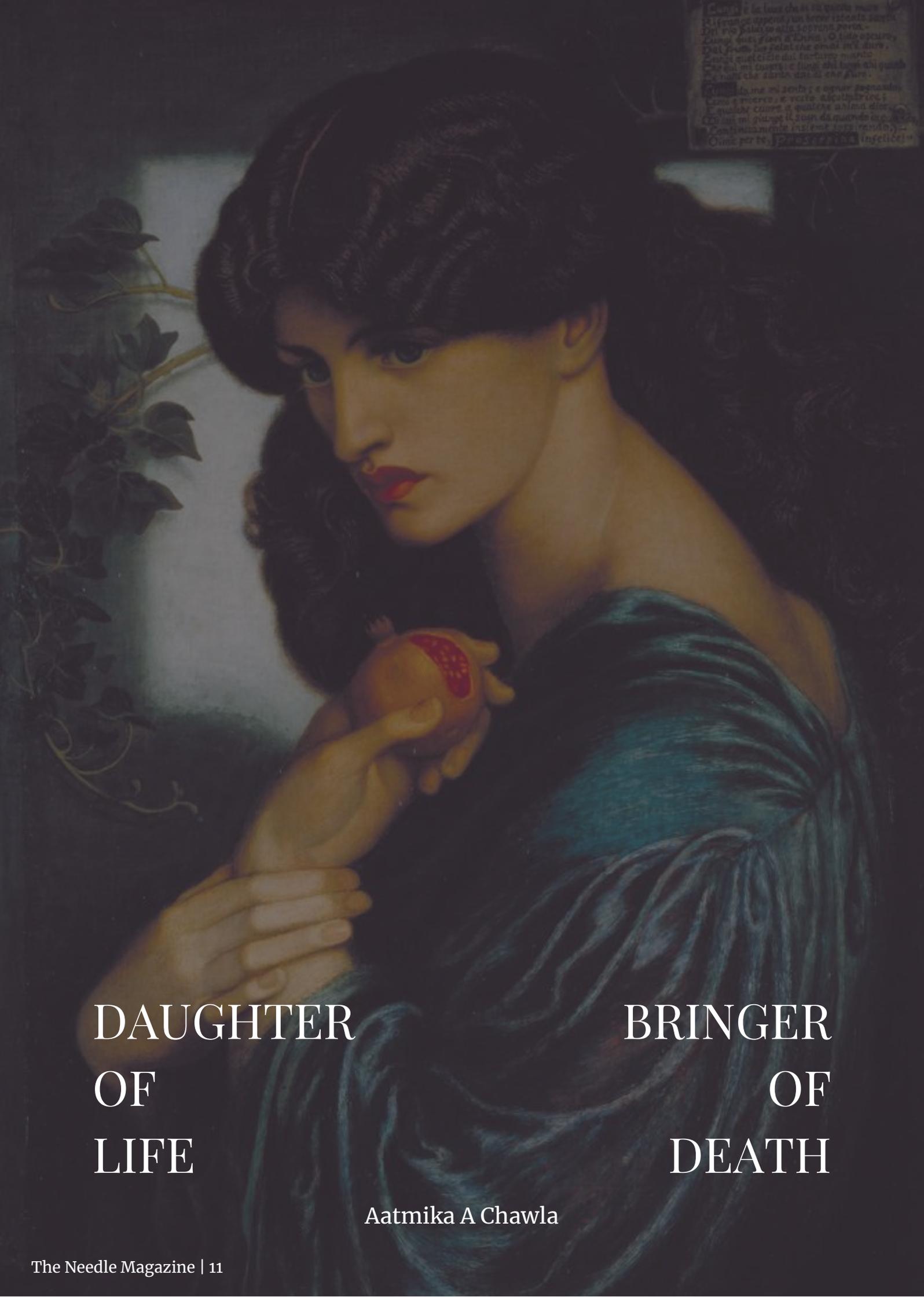
*Azadi*

by Arundhati Roy



1. You're My Best Friend, *Queen*
2. Nobody But You, *Lou Reed and John Cale*
3. What Makes me Love You Like I Do, *Richard Twice*
4. I've Known No War, *The Who*
5. Sympathy For The Devil, *The Rolling Stones*
6. Sail Away Sweet Sister, *Queen*
7. Ya'aburnee, *Halsey*
8. Hey Hey Rise Up, *Pink Floyd*
9. Heroes, *David Bowie*
10. Impossible Youth, *Peter Capaldi*
11. Yellow, *Jodie Whittaker*
12. Streets if Philadelphia, *Bruce Springsteen*





Caro è l'aria che in questo punto  
Si frange uena un'aria infusa sopra  
Di via palese alla l'opra parte.  
Lungo non vien il frutto, O l'aria eccita,  
Del frutto la parte che emiti in l'aria.  
Caro è quel che dal torturo muore  
Che al mi tuera: e l'aria che l'aria  
E non che l'aria che l'aria.  
Caro è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
Caro è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
E qual è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
Caro è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
E qual è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
Caro è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
E qual è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
Caro è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato  
E qual è l'aria che mi sento; e ogni peccato

DAUGHTER  
OF  
LIFE

BRINGER  
OF  
DEATH

Aatmika A Chawla



The grass prickled her feet  
And the wind was in her hair.  
Past the stalks of wheat,  
Kore left her mother's care.

Exploring the meadow, soft and green;  
Giggling like an unchecked springtime stream.  
Till the air went still; a cold hand wrapped her jaw -  
The sky overcast as the dark raven's maw.

The flowers in her basket fell to wither  
As the fair-haired maiden was dragged under.

Cherry wine and pomegranate for her last meal;  
With a slap and a kiss, the deal was sealed.

Six months overground, and six with her beloved;  
Kore was crowned the Underworld's goddess.

Her mother wept as the earth shivered;  
But when she swept home, so did summer.

Six months with Hades, and six with Demeter;  
But who she really "belonged to" was no one but her.

"Exacter of Justice", beautiful as could be -  
Earth and Underworld were ruled by Persephone.

# THE CYCLE OF REJUVENATION

BY  
AVRIL DIAS



In a world of uncertainty, shortcomings, personal trials and tribulations, it is often that we are weighed down by it. Like a plant without water and sunlight, these challenges can droop our weary heads and cause a strain in our back that once helped us stand tall in the middle of a sandstorm. We must make sure to keep watering our soul with affirmations, take time out to bask in the sunlight of joy and be grateful for the life we have got. This rejuvenation will strengthen us to tackle life's hurdles. Sometimes in the dark shadow we lie and our soul shrinks and shrivels like an unwatered plant and sometimes the sun comes out and things start to look up in the roller coaster of life. During both, we can stand tall above all. While being a depiction of self-care and the importance of treating ourselves with kindness, this piece also depicts the importance of preserving our natural resources and is a reminder of how the fast-depleting resources can be replenished with timely and efficient human intervention.

# I AM ENOUGH

by  
Sonam Chaturvedi

I am enough—  
because I am what I want to be,  
not more, not beyond, not fast,

less  
is enough,

slow, here and now, is enough,  
not desiring to own  
a house, a car, a person  
without marriage, children, security,  
being stably unstable  
is enough,

a small room, cozy bed, a cupboard and a stove,  
small dreams, small circle of friends,  
a little garden with occasional blooms to take care  
of, should be enough,

a warm coffee, a cuddle and a walk on a winter  
evening, sleeping for long hours  
without the guilt to engage/perform,  
enjoying a few silent moments of happiness  
to lead a simple slow life,

just surviving, one day at a time,  
perhaps  
that is enough.



# CINEMA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

# I CARE

BY  
VARUN I

“I Care A Lot” was a movie that came out last year, one that was quite good but didn’t make any waves. Everyone talked about it the week that it was dropped on to Netflix and then moved on to the next thing that was trending. This is how most of the art of cinema is being talked about. Given that Needle’s current theme is care, and the fact that the dying love of cinema is one of the things I care most about, I felt that it was best for me to talk about it here.

We live in interesting times. Cinema is undergoing a lot of changes. Theatre audiences have been going down and the pandemic has done nothing but accelerate the steep decline of those numbers. Netflix, Prime Video, Disney+ and hundreds of other streaming services are putting “content” by the bucketload on their websites, not one of which is distinguishable from the other by any sort of artistic flair or even an identity. Even major studios, like Warner Bros., are using AI to dictate what kind of scripts get made into movies. The Marvel Cinematic Universe

has become the talking point for pop-culture with everyone ignoring how bland, colourless, and corporate each passing movie in it is now becoming. Movies without a brand are finding it increasingly difficult to get made. This has been marked by something I call “the paradox of care”.

In her essay in the New York Times, 1996, writer and critic Susan Sontag writes, “Perhaps it is not cinema that has ended but only cinephilia – the name of the very specific kind of love that cinema inspired.” It is something that can be said about the state of art today as well.

One could, perhaps, say that care for the art of cinema is declining. However, this lack of care is contrasted by an increase in care, in fact, about certain things at the cinema. This is what the paradox of care is about. While there is an increasing disinterest in films without a brand, old films, foreign films and many others that don’t fit the corporate norm of bland and quippy, there is a rise in care about the



# CARE A LOT

BY  
SSARANI

properties these corporate products possess. People didn't care about the story of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, but they did care about Luke Skywalker dying and Rey being a "bad" protagonist (which she wasn't). People didn't care about the cinematography or the editing of the film, or what it brings to the table in terms of its art. What they cared about was how "force ghosts" ruined the lore of *Star Wars*.

A more recent example of this is the mammoth of a film that was *Spider-man: No Way Home*. Everyone proclaimed how it was "their favourite film of the year" and "the best thing they have ever seen". Now, I will not deny that it may have been a fun experience for those of you who liked the film, but the film itself is aggressively mediocre, maddeningly boring, and one of the most soulless corporate products of the last year. The film has many problems in its basic structure and writing (which aren't treated as artistic practices, rather wheels to shoehorn in the older *Spider-men's* appearances in the latter part of the film). Yet, everyone seemed to love it for one unanimous reason: many of the viewers were younger when the original *Spider-man* movies came out and the chance to get to see the characters they cared so much about back on the screen again was exciting for them, especially

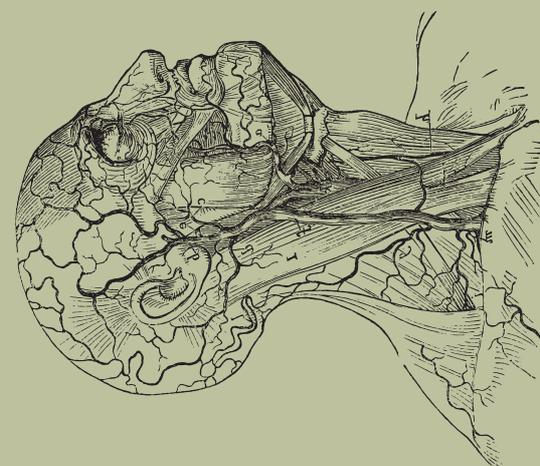
given the communal atmosphere of the cinema during *Marvel* movies these days with loud hooting and cheering going on, making the audience feel like they were a part of something bigger together. Yet, this care they had for the intellectual property of *Spider-man* overshadowed their appreciation of the film as what it is: a movie. And a very flawed one at that. This is the paradox of care: when there is a self-proclaimed care for the characters in a piece of art that overshadows the care for the art itself.

This is how much of the discourse about the art form is being shaped so far in the 21st Century. Our love for superheroes and brand IPs is causing a steady decline in various artistic ventures being taken up. However, the future is not all bleak. One of this year's most popular movies was *Everything Everywhere all at Once*, a small budget indie film. The other one was Indian historical epic, *RRR*, which is receiving global acclaim. These are signs that there is a tendency for change, to once again care about the art rather than the produce. So I care a lot, about cinema.

# I N T I M A C Y O F

Care for the self often gets left behind in the dust of a capitalistic lifestyle. You work so much for others that you forget yourself and lose that sense of self-esteem and uniqueness that once defined you. I, myself, have experienced this. Being part of a toxic competitive society that, at every turn, is ready to compare you to others ruined my self-image. It was mentally and physically exhausting to find the love I once had for myself drifting away. This is why I chose to show all the insecurities I grew up with that were otherwise hidden behind filters and heavy edits. My choice of clothing is integral as it showcases me in the most vulnerable state I've ever been in. Over time, the female naked body, once seen as an embodiment of spirituality and fertility, was degraded to a mere object of lust. Through this video, I also wish to change the worldview of sexualising bodies for voyeuristic pleasure.

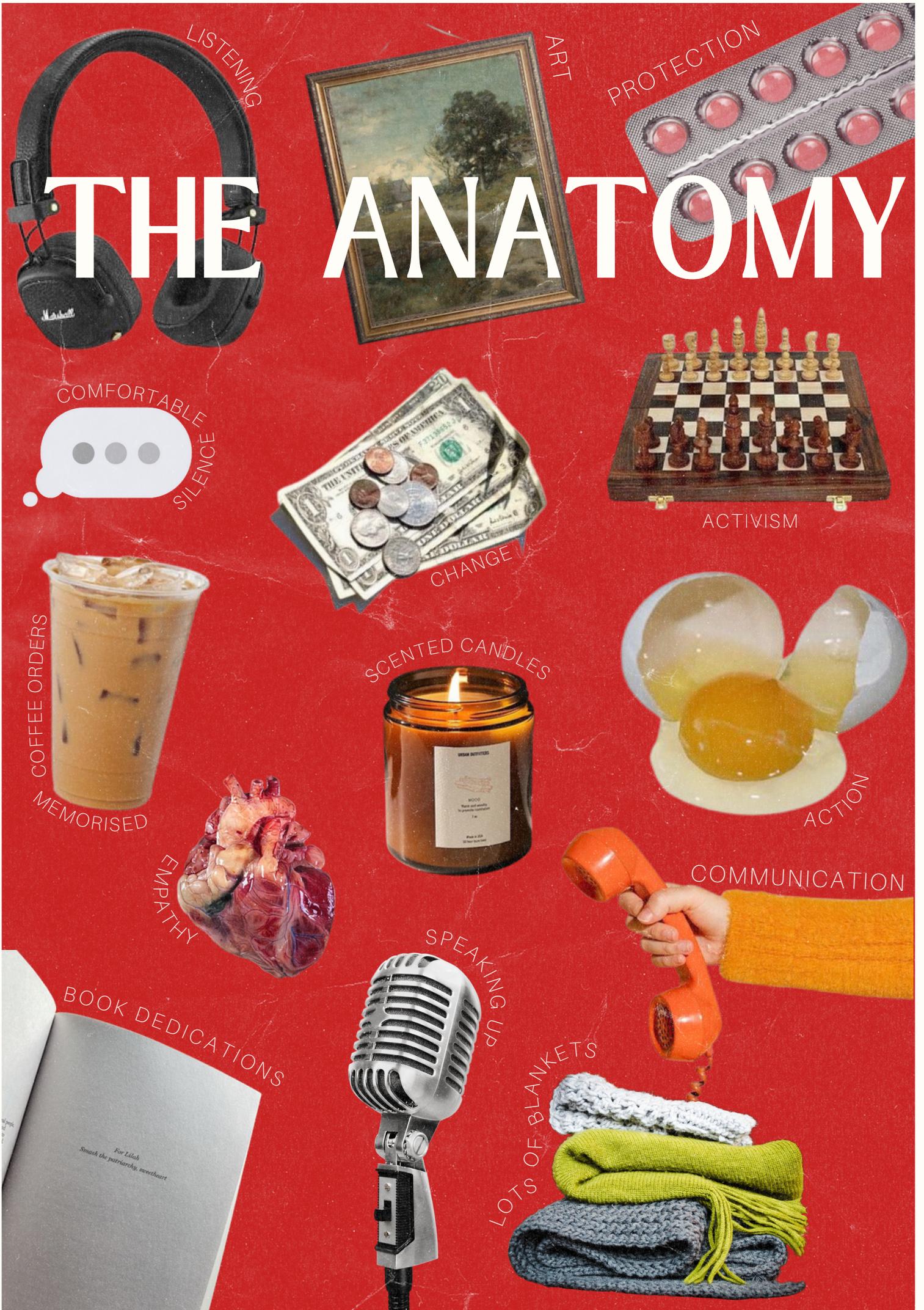
I was extremely self-critical throughout this process, but when it came to editing this, I felt happier and with my body – with the curves, the scars, and the spots. It made me realise that without them, I would cease to exist. This video is a golden step in the ongoing journey towards constantly loving my body.



# INSECURITIES



by Mehek Pandita



LISTENING

ART

PROTECTION

# THE ANATOMY

COMFORTABLE  
SILENCE

ACTIVISM

CHANGE

COFFEE ORDERS

SCENTED CANDLES

ACTION

MEMORISED

EMPATHY

COMMUNICATION

SPEAKING UP

BOOK DEDICATIONS

LOTS OF BLANKETS

*For Lilah  
Smash the patriarchy, sweetheart*

# OF CARE



HOT TEA



PLAYLISTS



FIXING

An encyclopaedia of how the editorial team at Needle understands and interprets care.



COMPASSION



LETTERS & POSTCARDS



SOMETIMES, PRETENSE



HOMECOOKED MEALS



LOOKING AFTER

OBSERVATION



RESPONSIBILITY



NOSTALGIA



FAITH & BELIEF



SHEET MASKS



MEMORABILIA



# Acknowledgement

As a magazine, we have done our best to string together pieces in this issue which best illuminate personal perceptions and encounters with everything that Care can reinforce and define. We hope that this collection offers the community a chance to explore how vitally Care affects and influences our inner selves and interaction with the wider society.

We thank Dr. Maaz Bin Bilal, our chief advisor and mentor, without whose guidance and encouragement this issue would not have come together.

We are thankful to have received so many submissions. Sadly, we were unable to incorporate them all into this issue. We thank you for your faith in the magazine, and have done our best to deliver to your expectations.

# Contributions by

Aatmika A Chawla

Avril Dias

Kona Aditya Kalyan and Sanjana Bajaj

Mehek Pandita

Professor Nitya Prakash

Professor Sonam Chaturvedi

## Faculty Advisor

Dr. Maaz Bin Bilal

## Editorial Team

Ananyaa Murthy, JGLS

Ira Sinha, JSLH

Kamya Vishwanath, JGLS

Khushi Baldota, JSIA

Oishika Sen, JSLH

Ruhi Nadkarni, JSLH

Sriyanshi Bhatt, JGLS

Varun Issarani, JSLH

## Art Works Used

*Prometheus Bound*, 1618, by Peter Paul Rubens  
and Frans Snyders

*Proserpine*, 1874, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

*Reflections*, 1919 by Norman Lindsay

*Faraway Look*, 1927 by René Magritte

THE NEEDLE MAGAZINE | CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

# HUMOUR

to:

get by,  
de-taboo,  
subvert

in:

politics,  
literature,  
cinema

for relationships,  
against oppression

F  
U  
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N  
Y

essays  
stories  
art  
poetry  
memes



**DEADLINE: 15TH OCTOBER 2022**

SUBMISSIONS OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS AND FACULTY FROM ALL SCHOOLS

Submit 

