

Their Light Remains

A journaling zine for
explorations on grief



a dedication



We dedicate this ZINE to those we lost in 2023

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Santhalatha Rajan & Anish Rajaram
Nabaruna Karmakar
Misbah Batool & Iazia Zanoor
Pratibha Amarnath & Yash Honnal
Diana
Sonal Parihar & her two children
Nityadevi Ramroop

And to those we lost in 2022

Sadia Manzoor, Khadija Mohammad,
& Inayat Bibi
Saima Tasnim Shapla
Sania Khan
Mandeep Kaur
Gurpreet Kaur Dosanjh

And every person we've lost whose
names we don't and won't know







Their Light Remains

Over the past two years, our community suffered the loss of 22 beautiful souls to disturbing acts of gender-based violence. These individuals were our community members, our friends, our family. We invite you to grieve and honor their lives through Their Light Remains, a remembrance of their lives and a reminder to let their light guide us.

AN OFFERING

This zine an invitation and offering to explore and reflect on your grief—how it manifests, evolves, and moves you. Our intentions are to create a space for healing and to reaffirm a collective commitment to uprooting the culture and systems that lead to violence.

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by Veda Kamra

Grief is slippery and resilient. It comes to us in unexpected moments, flooding our bodies to remind us of our aliveness. To grieve is to experience a flow of emotion pass through us; perhaps it is a message from someone near, far, or no longer with us, a moment of acknowledgment for a past self, or a horizon that continues to recess.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, countless people have experienced the "big G" Grief of losing relationships, life-sustaining resources, and loved ones.



We all remain exposed to the "little g" grief of missed connections, opportunities, and futures.

Big or little, our loss and trauma are political. They indicate how we are enabled or denied toward our pursuits of justice, safety, and healing. In protest of constant denials, we gather to mourn the lives lost to violence across our communities. Simultaneously, we mourn yet another year gone by in which the world has stonewalled our voices as we call for liberation from patriarchy, supremacy, and carcerality. We insist that our grief must take shape. Our acts of prayer, questioning, silence, and rebellion define its evolving contours.

Within anti-violence work, we must often prioritize resourcing other people. Being numbed is highly efficient for our everyday functioning. We compartmentalize our experiences to the point that there is no more room in our compartments. It becomes too much to feel. We are pressed to cease caring and turn on autopilot. We are denied space to pause and derive meaning from our moments.



Our grief is a messenger of our humanness. In a world where vulnerability is interpreted as weakness, grief presents an opportunity to unravel the myth that stoicism leads to healing. If we let it in, grief will first unravel us, resetting our convictions.

As we desperately shut the lids of our compartments, our bodies may rebel, begging us to permit our exiled emotions to come out of their dark corners, fully and unabashedly.

What would it mean to open the lid to our containers and risk being witnessed as we overflow?



The waves that pour from within us touch the lives of those in our communities, knocking down walls that have guarded against pain. We can finally be seen, held, and joined in heartache, rage, guilt, shame, and overwhelm.



Amidst the pain—the overflow, the seeds of grief are watered. Instead of stomping over its persistent, curling buds, we can let more life bloom around its aching plot. As our tulsi blossoms each spring, so too, do our marigolds and frangipani.

We absorb so much life that we are primed to reform it and gift it back to the world in the shape of healing: We declare that as we traverse each others' gardens, we will choose to nurture each other's roots.



As we

embrace resist

the future the present the past

we work we struggle we begin we fail

to understand to find to unraid to accept to question

the grief the grief the grief the grief

we shift we wield we bury

into light as ash

across our faces

— Layli Long Soldier

She wore her grief,
loosely, like a
battered, faded
shawl draped around
her shoulders. She
had nothing to say.

— Arundhati Roy

"vulnerability and
tenderness for each other
and public grievability for
life itself are some of the
most profound acts of
community resistance."

— Harsha walia

breathe



come back to
this anytime

Inhale

i won't carry it alone

Exhale

i am no burden

Inhale

my journey is not solitary

Exhale

we heal together

Black Liturgies

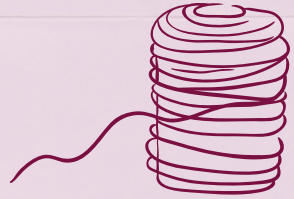
some PROMPTS for

journaling

&

making art





What connections do you see between lives lost close to home and lives lost around the world?

How do you hold & honor these lives, while also holding yourself and your loved ones?

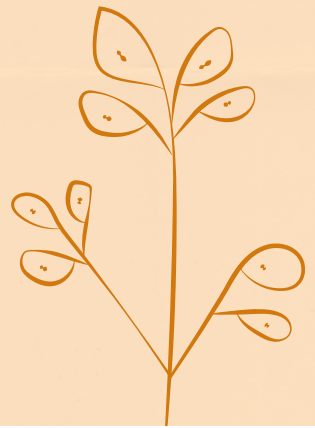
what emotions and
sensations arise within
you as you reflect on
these stories?

what memories do they
bring up for you?



How does the pain of
grief and loss, especially
in the context of
violence, stay in our
bodies across generations?

What does intergenerational grief
mean for our collective healing?



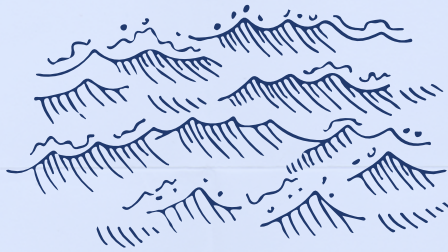
How do you grieve
someone you've NEVER
PERSONALLY KNOWN?



How do you honor their
life and memory?



When thinking about
and grieving loved
ones who have passed,
how do you celebrate
their quirks, dreams,
likes, and dislikes?



How is grief experienced when it traverses borders and cultures, especially for immigrants?

In what ways do cultural, financial, and geographical constraints affect our ability to engage in grief and mourning?

When are your cultural grief rituals not enough?

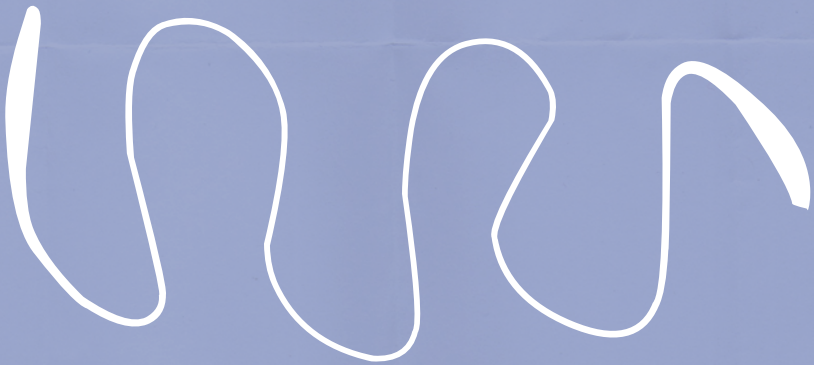
what does loss, especially
of a whole family, mean
for a community?

What could collective grieving look like
for family, friends, and neighbors?





How does your grief shift
when tragedies happen
again and again?



what shifts, and what
stays the same?

How can we channel our
grief to move us to
action and solidarity to
stand with survivors and
end gender-based
violence?



what commitments can you,
as an individual, make to
challenge attitudes and shift
cultures that fuel violence?

How can we make these
commitments together, as a
community?



we leave you with this offering

COMMUNITY PRAYER

WE WILL BE
SOFT WITH OURSELVES
WHILE DOING DIFFICULT
WORK INSIDE & OUTSIDE

WE SEE BEAUTY
EVERYDAY THAT
REMINDS US TO BREATHE.

WE GIVE EACH OTHER
THE LOVE & SUPPORT
WE NEED TO BE
OUR FULLEST SELVES
WITHOUT LIMITATIONS
OF THE HUMAN WORLD

I ASK FOR GUIDANCE TO
LOVE THE PEOPLE IN
MY LIFE ACTIVELY &
UNIQUELY

a few PAGES for

journaling

&

making art

:)

We will be re-publishing the zine with all of your reflections in February 2024, and we would love for yours to be a part of it.

upload your submission

To upload your submission, click this link:

<https://www.southasiansoar.org/theirlightremains>

Or, scan the QR code below.



submission guidelines

Share your musings or explorations on grief or the lives lost to gender-based violence.

Submissions can include:

- Writing (350 words) or Poetry
- Photography, Illustrations, Artwork
- Video (as long as you have a link)
- Breathing or somatic exercises
- Recipes & rituals

CONTRIBUTORS

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compiled by South Asian SOAR

about South Asian SOAR

South Asian SOAR (Survivors, Organizations, and Allies — Rising) is a collective of survivors, 30+ organizations, and allies advancing the national movement to end gender-based violence in the South Asian diaspora.

Learn more about us at www.southasiansoar.org



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