

I JUST HEAR the music.  
I can't hear a thing, sorry!

When little things are reflective of somethings  
When the bottle is half the smell  
When you package the addictions like a perfume  
When I saw this coming  
When my big-fight with you wasn't about hiring myself into a **job**  
When the systems say everyone can become an entrepreneur and then gamify our freedom to do business  
When you call it "the **right** party"

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When time changes with seasons  
When you also commodify my **time**  
When you say I am bone-idle  
When I don't work for your profit  
When I am dancing with finesse, to the loud uproarious music  
When you interrupt my pirouettes with your **colonial**-capitalist canon  
When I saw this coming

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When you create the systems to complicate my rest, sleep and relaxation  
When you prescribe me golden tinctures instead  
When I can't afford those in coins  
When I am more and more exhausted  
When you continue to favor "**the select few**"  
When you efface traditional practices, histories and ancestral wisdoms  
When you foie gras me with ambition for lucre, nostalgia for the **great-agains**, and hate for my compatriot

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When you snub **crafts, magic, herbs** and the healing witches  
When you offer me "man-made" lozenges instead  
When you buy the seeds and stifle the agrarian practices  
When you curse me with ultra processed food in packaged tins with a long list of ingredients  
When you invest time in mass producing surgical bullets  
When your profit strategies don't differentiate: nutrition, weapons, forests, **futures**  
When you colonize regions for cinnamon and in exchange overwhelm the populace with salts, sugars and fats

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When I need to be liked to be defensible  
When I need to please everyone to be considered  
When I need to overcompensate  
When the streets are made for you  
When you are normal while I am the superhero  
When your passport color is coded *elite* with red, while mine screams **blue**  
When **random** checks in airports are predictable

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When existing in a constant state of defense I prep my body for various scenarios  
When people from here insist on knowing my geolocations  
When I use borrowed comebacks  
When I use the term coined by Homi Bhaba and say "I am a vernacular cosmopolitan" to avoid answering  
OR  
When I recycle Gayathri Spivak's words and say "I am the subaltern, yours truly but entirely"  
When I know as you do too that "yours truly" is a **white-lie**  
When I learnt the art of deception as a survival strategy and continue to tell you stories

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When someone asks me why I live here, I tell the chili story. Do you know the chili story?  
When a red chili and green chili appeared in a field at the same time  
When they survived the asymmetric symbiosis and lack of eco-sensibilities of the profit-oriented human  
When they agreed to not give into the radical competitive individualism  
When they agreed to act together, collectivize their fiery edge  
When they activated the pain receptors in the **human** body  
When, over time we people submitted to the pleasures of this pain too

I JUST HEAR the music.  
Can you hear society's song change?

### **Excuse me**

When I digress. In Telangana chili is the most sought-after crop as it is a companion plant to cotton  
When H&M and other rag trades need to sell us their cheap clothes  
When we grow cotton for them  
When we work in the fields, and  
When we get hungry we eat salted rice soured in curdled milk with a fresh green chili  
When we are what we eat  
When identity is just another river to cross, when it's not my home

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When my home is more and more unrecognizable  
When I miss where I am **from-from** while I am where I am from  
When capitalism is more dangerous than nukes

When the tricky truth of spice you see, is that it isn't a flavor nor is it a taste like sweet, salty or sour  
When capsaicin in chili is actually a deterrent, a protective compound and a defense mechanism against us animals

When we humans in some parts of the world get dependent on chili's effect on our body's sensory neurons

When the cutting cold of snow seeps into the body, can we taste the bones chilling?

When you can evidently see the link between the chili story and why **I live here.**

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Can you hear society's song change?

When you lobby for sugar, fast food and pharmaceuticals

When you ignore the edicts of wellbeing to sell us something

When you change medical narratives like you do blood parameters

When I knew a time it was ok for blood pressure to be 145

When you reduce the number of the BP to 120 so you can put a whole population on medication

When your **raj** is unwilling to think beyond profit

When I saw this coming

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When your capitalism gimmicks me into thinking that my Maslow's pyramid of physiological **needs** are my esteem needs and my **actual** self actualization

When I saw this coming

When I replace lamentation with pleasure

When I **punk** it all with my subaltern skills

When beauty is as beauty does

When I soak in splendor, love and glory

When I hold hands and lend a hand with you

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When you are somewhere, anywhere, and someone unexpectedly questions your **raison d'être**. Is there anything more painful?

When I turn up the volume and I sing aloud with Stromae "car les problèmes ne viennent pas seuls"

When Audre Lorde said "there are no single issue struggles"

When here it's my class, gender and caste that threaten you

When there it's my accent, color religion and race

When I punk it all up with my subaltern skills

When beauty is as beauty does

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When the roll of film is sprawled out like a movie-star or is it luxuriating like the gods negotiated to merge Marilyn Monroe with Silk Smitha?

When the film's skin is a river or is it water reflecting memory flowers shining back faces, smiles, feelings, making nostalgia for memories that aren't your own?

When you hijack my jolly viewing with propaganda

When I saw that coming

When I hear the laughter ring loud, raising the small hairs on my back. Is this nostalgia? Or is it an expectation of apprehension?

When the bus that just passed by, splashing water, kisses the road's cheek

When the rough sleeper on the street is able to sense their surroundings in a way that's unattainable to newspeak

I JUST HEAR the music.

Can you hear something?

When the rose could prick another, drawing blood even from those who are aware of the thorns

When I heard that sound from a busker's hand, it was the first time I ever saw a guitar or heard someone play it

When their hands were strumming the chords of a song that I didn't know and now I love it

When their fingers were pressing down each chord, holding a vision of a gardener tending to their rose bushes

When chords appeal to the **instincts** of the instrument and the singer

When the guitar hums melodies akin to a cooing mother rocking her baby while harvesting garlic

When baby is fastened on her back like a guitar on a rockstar

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Can you hear something?

When the guitar is made of rosewood, blackwood and purpleheart

When lutes stand testament to stretching the strings beyond the body

When Blues and Jazz are complex languages that are converted into melodies that fingerpick hearts

When our dances and tunes are named the same

When dances were devised to deter doubt

When dances such as the *Buzzard Lope* recite tales of plantations, **migrations**, and refer to animalistic movements that are un-pennable in the books marked "world history"

When I can only tell my story with dance

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Can you hear something?

When we dance with finesse, to the loud uproarious music and nothing interrupts our collective joy

When there are colorful crescents in the sky, and in the valley too

When we rejoice in all our **victories**

When you bring firewood

When I bring apples, bael and coffee too

When the fire rages with fierce pride

When we pay homage to Céline Sciamma and recreate *portrait de la jeune fille en feu* using selfies

I JUST HEAR the music.

DO you JUST HEAR the music too ?

When silver moonlight, blue clouds and white snow lay entwined like a cuddle pile on the earth  
When the colorful **queer** stars hangout on the rainbow bursting with exhilarated kookiness  
When I scream along with the raging oud, while our noises mingle, cracking open the skies  
When the water explodes from above and we get drenched under **cheerful** splashes  
When the celestial crevices burst open showering us with the treasures, whilst we sit around the fire  
boasting about escaping the great deluge  
When **hearts** move, reach across and dance with a vibrant vernacular  
When like dances our hearts too are filled with intrigue, vitality, expression, dynamism and freedom in  
improvisation

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DO you JUST HEAR the music too?