

Voiceless
Nithin Charlly

Coughing through the night

As if he were a dog barking

Lips pursed, clubbed nails, cachexic

His pack of cigarettes lit nearby

Providing just enough warmth

From the cool evening

To make this nightly routine worth it

I asked them

Is Uncle Rohan okay?

They replied, "Of course, he's always been like that."

Yelling through the night

As if she were a siren being tested

Agitated, racing thoughts, aggressive

A force to be reckoned with

Or rather a voice to be heard

Is she crying out for help?

I asked them

Is Aunt Teja okay?

They replied, "Of course, she's always been like that."

Drinking through the night

As if he had polydipsia

Hennessey, Black Label, Crown Royal

His three closest friends

His breath precipitated his arrival

Then came the violence

This is not okay

I asked them

Is Uncle Veer okay?

They replied, "Of course, he's always been like that."

All this education, just to be ignored

I'm here to help

Poking fun at my accent

I'm the one that got away

Who are you to tell us what to do?

Respect your elders

America has corrupted you

They ask me, "Are you okay?"

I reply, "Of course, I've always been like this."