



PEOPLE
You KNOW,
PLACES You've
BEEN

Hana Shafi

poems and
illustrations

"A joy to read."
—Farzana Doctor

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$E + M = P$

the
pla

all in an
for a
time!

IX

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Hana Shafi

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FIRST EDITION

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*It was but yesterday I thought myself a fragment quivering
without rhythm in the sphere of life.*

*Now I know that I am the sphere, and all life in rhythmic
fragments moves within me.*

—Kahlil Gibran

Chapter 1: Antiheroes

noun: **antihero**

a central character in a story, movie, or drama
who lacks conventional heroic attributes

apple pie

when my friend leaves, they say
he's regrouping
"regrouping."
i think that's because alcohol scatters people

i imagine
if he was a million pieces
thrown upon the sidewalk
he'd be coins, and multicoloured jelly beans,
and bottle caps, and pencils,
and teeth, and copper,
and those random pieces of
gravel or sand
that somehow end up in all old pockets

a lot of alcoholics are like that
scattered
there's one at the local bar
those pre-plague times
when he didn't see me for a month
he'd say it's been a year
i tell him it's not the case
then acquiesce
"yes, it's been a year,"
i figure his memories are scattered
and they are
as bright as they are blurry,
and friendly, and kind,
and hopeful,
and lost too



my friend left with me
our unfinished art project
his pencil remained
it needs my ink

friend, i will finish your drawing
while you pick up
the scattered things on the sidewalk
worn and lovely,
grimy and gleaming,
and tuck them back into yourself
beneath familiar skin
where all scattered things go

tough teen bitches

she was the scariest girl in school
suspended a number of times
later expelled, hangs in the toughest
of crowds, i heard she ripped out
a chunk of some girl's hair, i heard
she draws blood when she fights
she's the real deal, and damn you
alphabetical seating arrangement
we were desk buddies in English

every day i sat tensely, forced myself
to sit quietly, don't wheeze, breathe
sometimes my nose whistles
but i put a stop to that.

doodling during class, she looks
at my notebook
"is that *Lord of the Rings*?" she asks
"um, ya," oh no, what if she punches people
who watch *Lord of the Rings*?
"i love those movies!
i watched them all during christmas break!"
her smile is warm and i figure
she's not so scary after all

heroines

“you’re too hot to have a stain on your shirt”
she hauls my big sister to the sink
grabs her shirt and scrubs,
a hefty glob of that neon-pink soap
ever abundant in public bathrooms

she yanks her to the dryer
stretches the fabric,
manically waves her hand
to keep the automatic going
“all done!” we erupt in a chorus
of thank yous as she
smiles and saunters away
a total stranger, mind you,
offering spontaneous laundry service
to a girl in need

she just came in here to pee
not prepared for stained polyester
but women will be heroines if they must
called to action in inopportune moments
especially in a public bathroom
cause she-warriors gotta shit too

YOU'RE SO COOL



IN THE PUBLIC BATHROOM

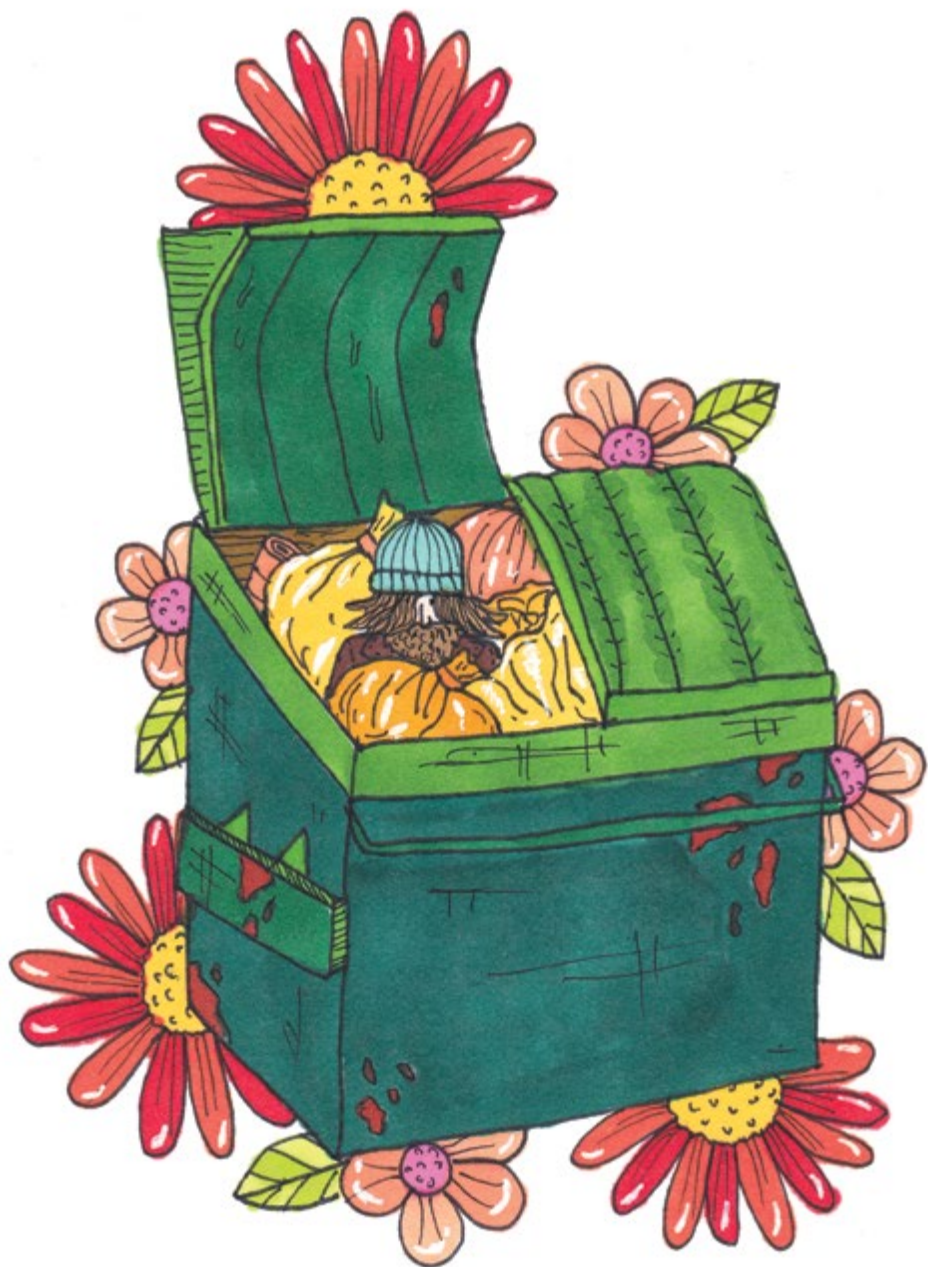
good trash

dumpster divers are harmless
but they'll give you a fright at 3 a.m.
walking back to the apartment
through the back door, a head
pops up from the garbage void
you give that awkward flat smile
the one office workers exchange a lot
i call it "frog smile"
you give a frog smile and you're on your way

i've gotten things from the sidewalk
and the dump before
new furniture? in this economy?
but i've never actually been in one of those big containers
stupid prissy me,
i'm probably missing out on some good finds

the maintenance lady once climbed right in
found a pink purse, dusted it off
and took it to get the zipper fixed

my partner found a dirty mini fridge
the inside covered in mould, dirt, and
god knows what
diligently cleaned it
now he's dry-aging meat inside
a true success story



i think people call this area *sketchy*
because of the dumpster divers
plus the makeshift market just down the street
a crowd, considered unsavoury by some
sell old shoes, protein shakes,
adult diapers, tarnished DVDs,
and remarkably legit looking
fake gucci belts

if a lawyer in a nice suit
offers you coke
in some swanky place—the nice part of town—
there's nothing sketchy about that,
but dumpster divers who won't
take your money or fuck up your life
or leech off your misery
are the ones you worry
are lowering the property value

and if you think that, i feel bad for you
how pathetic that you don't know
the simple thrill
of finding some really good trash