

An Ancestry of Aunties – by Ayesha Braganza

As it turns out

You know those bulk buys you insisted on?

The ones we scoffed at

Toilet rolls

Bags of rice

Kilos of Dhal

Tins of chickpeas

As it turns out

We needed those

We needed those, badly.

As it was then

You know those trinkets and beads, gleaming with their mawkish cheapness?

The ones you lovingly gave us

Well, now, we can't find anything that cheers us like those trinkets, and warms us like those soft-scented scarves.

Now it seems

Your clever hands that sewed

arranged

pulped

spiced and rolled

The ones we modern women secretly despised

Those same, worn hands garland us in old-found tricks, new-born from our wombs

The baking of bread

The sowing of seeds

The shushing of babies

And it might be

That those WhatsApp groups, the ones stuffed fat, that constantly belch out:

dancing gurus, singing children, bright-painted flowers and weeping statues.

That press on us annoying flows of home-spun cures

Tumeric and garlic

Ginger and cumin

Aloe and salt

Now, they make us wonder

Wonder if you were right

As it turns out

All those sentimental duty-bound words you threw at us, the ones we sometimes ducked.

Now, we no longer duck them

Now, we are reaching out our invisible hands to touch your soft-worn palms so far away

Now, we are gathering your words so closely to our bosoms they ache

Now, we are cradling each syllable at night, dreaming of the day we kiss you gently on the forehead and return your words

... returning to you in kindness

Ayesha Braganza 20th May 2020 written in London Lockdown in collaboration with her mother, Loretta Braganza, who though in the UK, is so far away...

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