

# Lapis Lazuli

## An International Literary Journal

ISSN 2249-4529

[www.pintersociety.com](http://www.pintersociety.com)

---

GENERAL ISSUE VOL: 8, No.: 2, AUTUMN 2018

---

UGC APPROVED (Sr. No.41623)

---

BLIND PEER REVIEWED

---

About Us: <http://pintersociety.com/about/>

Editorial Board: <http://pintersociety.com/editorial-board/>

Submission Guidelines: <http://pintersociety.com/submission-guidelines/>

Call for Papers: <http://pintersociety.com/call-for-papers/>

Lapis Lazuli

All Open Access articles published by LLILJ are available online, with free access, under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial License as listed on

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Individual users are allowed non-commercial re-use, sharing and reproduction of the content in any medium, with proper citation of the original publication in LLILJ. For commercial re-use or republication permission, please contact

[lapislazulijournal@gmail.com](mailto:lapislazulijournal@gmail.com)

**Halloween dreams, reality or synesthesia??**Anita Nahal

---

**Scene 1**

Priya was sitting propped up on pillows on the bed writing a story and also reading a childhood diary of hers in which she used to write two words with their definitions daily, as per her father's instructions. "Your vocabulary will increase immensely," he would say. Barely nine when her father started her on this habit, and not disciplined enough to meaningfully search new words every day, often, she would simply open the dictionary on a random page and put her finger down with eyes closed. On whatever word her finger hit, she would write that down. Many of the words did not make any sense to her then. But the practice brought her praise from her dad even though he knew she might not remember all the words she wrote down. She had found the diary in her father's library during one of her visits to India.

Today she was at her friend Udaina's home near DC and she had brought the diary along. When she met Udaina's young college going daughter earlier in the evening, she used a word to describe herself...synesthesia...that Priya had never heard about. It meant a perceptual phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway. Convoluted!! But simply put, it meant some folks had the ability to see colors and feel sounds, or hear sounds and feel it on their skin, and so forth...one sense allowing sensation in another. I need to write that word down in the diary she thought. When exactly she fell asleep, it's not possible to know. She did not look at her watch before she did. If she had, she would have written the time down in this story.

**Scene 2**

Priya turned her head around to look at the garishly scary bedecked house next to Udaina's. It was Halloween. The house was decorated with orange flame lights, with skeletons hanging from trees, with ghosts floating around, with spiders crawling in the lawn, a witch guarding the doorway, and a swing hanging from a tree which creaked and swayed when anyone walked by!

Her bedroom window, the one near her headboard, fell on the side of that house. She could see everything from her window. She tried to focus on her writing and the diary when she heard someone running outside. She pulled the blinds aside just a wee bit but saw no one. She continued to hear the sounds as she tried sliding further into her warm comforter. And then she heard the swing moving and the ghosts on the trees began to scream. She peered out again hesitatingly and that's when Priya saw them. Cut hands flying around. No blood oozed from them. Just dry hands cut at the wrist. What an odd Halloween addition, she thought.

And then she saw them again...bloodless, dry cut hands running around her now, and some coming to a standstill near her face, watching her. She could not see any eyes on them, but she could feel their look on her. "What the...what is this? What are you doing here?" she asked them quite loudly. No hand responded, just kept running around and stopping intermittently near her face, staring at her. Priya started flaying her arms hoping to kick away the persistent hands. Yelling, she suddenly woke up. That very

day she called the professor at her workplace who practiced tantrism (side passion) but proclaimed himself an astrologer (another side passion within a side passion!).

“What mantra did you give me to chant! I had this dream early this morning which felt almost real and was terribly scary!” She recounted the dream. “I don’t want to chant this mantra anymore. What was it?”

“Oh...I can understand how terrifying and creepy it must have been. The mantra was meant to invoke the dead to rise and test you and see how committed you are to going away from your roots and moving across the globe. It was only a test and you passed.”

“How did I pass? I was scared sh...!”

“You passed because you displayed resistance and strength. The hands were symbolic of the hurdles you might go through when you leave India. And your resistance shows you will be brave and trudge on.”



### **No, not the third scene, just epilogue**

A few days earlier before she arrived at Udaina’s home, while driving under a bridge near the outskirts of DC, Priya had seen an old man selling a collection of paper Hamsa hands. Hamsa hands are Middle Eastern symbols of good luck, of keeping the evil eye away. She watched them moving nimbly in the crisp morning breeze. They were tied to a string held between two makeshift metal poles dug in an ad hoc fashion into the soft gravel. She thought about the twenty years that had passed since she and her son made the US their home. The Hamsa hands seemed to be waving to her and the eye in the middle of the pattern looking benignly at her. Or so she thought.

When she woke the next morning, her laptop was still on and her childhood diary lay nearby. It was open on a page that had the word synesthesia written on it. Her childish handwriting had written its meaning down as well.

---

**BIO-NOTE**

---

Anita Nahal is originally from New Delhi, India and currently resides in the US. She is a poet, flash fictionist and children's books author. Apart from full time writing, Anita is an Adjunct Professor at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology and has previously served in the capacity of Assistant Provost for International Affairs at Howard University, Washington DC, and Associate Professor of History at Sri Venkateswara College, New Delhi. Nahal's interests are Diversity & Inclusion, U.S. History, African American Women's History, South Asian Women's History, International Relations, and Modern India. She has been a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, SUNY, Binghamton, NY, a visiting scholar of Gender, University of California, Berkeley, and a National Endowment for the Humanities summer teacher seminar awardee. Nahal's creative work has appeared in *Aberration Labyrinth*, *Better Than Starbucks*, *Confluence*, *Aaduna*, *River Poets Journal*, and *Colere*. Authorspress, New Delhi published two books by her, "Hey, spilt milk is spilt, nothing else..." and "Life on the go: Flash Fictions from New Delhi to America...", collections of poems and flash fictions respectively.

E-mail id: [anitanahal@yahoo.com](mailto:anitanahal@yahoo.com)

