

NAME: VINEETH SAM SEKHARAN

AT FIRST, THE MEDICINE MADE THE GIRL I  
LOVE FADE/ SHE GREW DETACHED, AND SHE  
FELT CONFINED/ SHE FELT LIKE A SLEEPING  
VAMPIRE/LIVING IN AN IN BETWEEN ZONE OF  
THERE AND NOT THERE/ CONSCIOUS AND  
UNCONSCIOUS/ FEELING ONLY HALF-THERE,  
HALF-ALIVE

YEARS AGO, IN HIGH SCHOOL, WE WATCHED A  
HORROR MOVIE TOGETHER DURING A  
SLEEPOVER/ I WAS SCARED/ SHE KEPT ME  
SAFE IN HER BED FORT/ THE GHOULS AND  
GHOSTS VISITED THE FORT AND ASKED FOR  
MY HEAD/ SHE MADE THEM ALL DISAPPEAR  
WITH ONE SWEEPING HAND MOTION/ SHE  
USED A CARROT AS A WAND/ WE LAUGHED/

SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER THE INCIDENT,  
BRUISES ON HER BODY HAD BEGUN TO FADE/  
SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE HAD FELT NUMB FOR  
MONTHS/ SHE WASN'T SURE IF THINGS WERE  
EVER GOING TO GET BETTER

YEARS AGO, IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I HELPED  
HER MAKE HER FIRST SNOWMAN/ SHE WAS  
SO EXCITED, SHE BROUGHT A CARROT TO  
USE FOR THE SNOWMAN THAT DAY/ ISN'T  
THAT CUTE/

LIFE AFTER WHAT-HAPPENED WAS DIFFERENT FOR HER/ SHE COULDN'T CONCENTRATE/ WHATEVER PERIODS OF ENJOYMENT SHE HAD WOULD END IN BURSTS OF DEPRESSION OR RAGE/ IT FELT AS IF SHE WAS INTENTIONALLY BEING INCONSIDERATE SOMETIMES/ TWO MONTHS AGO I RECEIVED A TEXT FROM HER TELLING ME TO GET OUT OF HER LIFE, THAT I WAS RUINING EVERYTHING/ EVERYONE WAS INVITED TO LEAVE, EVERYONE WAS RUINING EVERYTHING

SHE'S GETTING BETTER NOW/ AROUND 3 AM  
EVERY NIGHT SHE TEXTS ME/ ASKS ME  
WHAT'S UP/AND THEN I CALL HER/ WE DON'T  
TALK ABOUT THE ACCIDENT, THE INCIDENT,  
WHATCHAMACALLIT/ BUT WE TALK ABOUT  
EVERYONE IN OUR HIGH SCHOOL/ I GOSSIP/  
SHE LISTENS/ ABOUT THE NEW PEOPLE IN MY  
LIFE/ THE FAMILIAR CHARACTERS IN OUR  
SHARED LIVES/

LAST WEEKEND, I VISITED HER AT HER RES/ WE SAT AT  
THE KITCHEN TABLE/ AND WE LOOKED AT THE CAKE I  
BROUGHT AND SHE SAID LOOK AT ME SO I LOOKED AT HER  
AND SHE SAID VINEETH, DO YOU REMEMBER ME?/ AND I  
SAID YES I REMEMBER YOU/ AND HER EYES WERE ALL  
TEARY/ SHE ASKED ME DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN I  
PROTECTED YOU FROM THE GHOSTS AND GHOULS FROM  
THAT SILLY MOVIE/ AND I TOLD HER I DID/ AND I ASKED HER  
IF SHE REMEMBERED THE SNOWMAN/ AND SHE SAID YES/  
AND I LAUGHED/ SHE'S DOING BETTER NOW/ IT'S CLEAR



AND SHE TEARED UP AND THANKED ME FOR  
BEING THERE.

P.S. IT WAS A CARROT CAKE.

Caption:

Difficulties that individuals face with mental health should not be faced alone. The presence of support in the form of a concerned peer network and a visibly encouraging community can make all the difference. This is a semi-autobiographical piece about my friendship with a lifelong amiga of mine. It touches on mental health, the significance of supportive peers, and committing to friendships despite challenges that may be present.

Thank you for reading, and I hope you have a good day.

