

In Boston, MA

by Manvi Jalan

This is not me. This body is a sliver of a reflection of me,
This is not me, sitting in a stranger's house, wine glasses
on the table, hip-hop's greatest hits in the background.
TV chef Julia Child taught me the best way to cook a whole chicken.
The secret is patience, you need to sit it in the marinade for over four
hours and use an entire bottle of the best red wine. That way,
the skin chars into crisps ,catching fire quickly, sealing the flavour.
This can't be me, I never saw it happen, I never saw him peel
my pants off. It wasn't me, he told to come back for another taste.
I told you, this is not me, no , my breath is yet to leave my shaking lungs.
Now, she says, after the skin is golden, have a little taste, a test. My
breath comes in short bursts and won't give. Scream, scream,
but my teeth lost the bite. Careful, Julia says, don't let it
burn you, the fire is hot. Blow it out. It wasn't me, but then
why do I have the wounds to prove it?