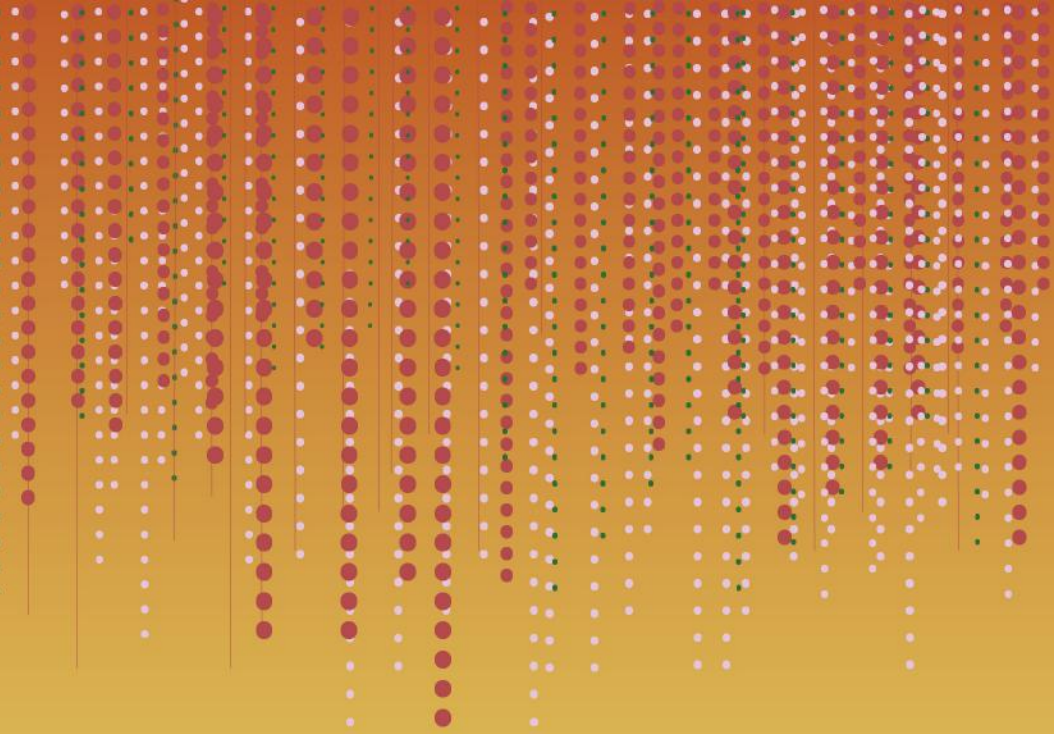


A DAY ON  
*Season*

A DAY ON

Sevon





# A Day on Devon

A Zine by Aao Mil

This collection of stories and art reimagines what Devon Ave could look like and celebrates what it is. They manifest as a commentary on culture, roots, community, and coming thru.

Aao Mil is a project of SpaceShift Collective (evolved from the prior Aao Mil Baithen) with the aspiration of launching a temporary arts space on Devon Avenue that embraces South Asian diasporic roots and serves as a gathering place for all folks in our community.

*Barey riaz se hum ne banai hai  
ye fiza*

*Khuloos e dil ke gulon se sajai hai  
ye fiza*

*Garoh bandi o shar se bachai hai  
ye fiza*

*Jo yun na aate unhe khainch laayi  
hai ye fiza*

*With a great deal of effort have  
we created this space*

*With flowers of love have we  
decorated this space*

*Free of caste or creed have we  
made this space*

*Those who wouldn't have come,  
have been pulled in by this space*

## SYED ALEY RAZA, CA. 1950'S

Translation by Romana Jafri

*Chalen jo saath toh aasaan ho safar  
Karein jo baat toh rawaan ho fikar*

*Toh chalo aao mil baithen hum tum  
Milaein jo haath toh yaksaan ho  
dagar*

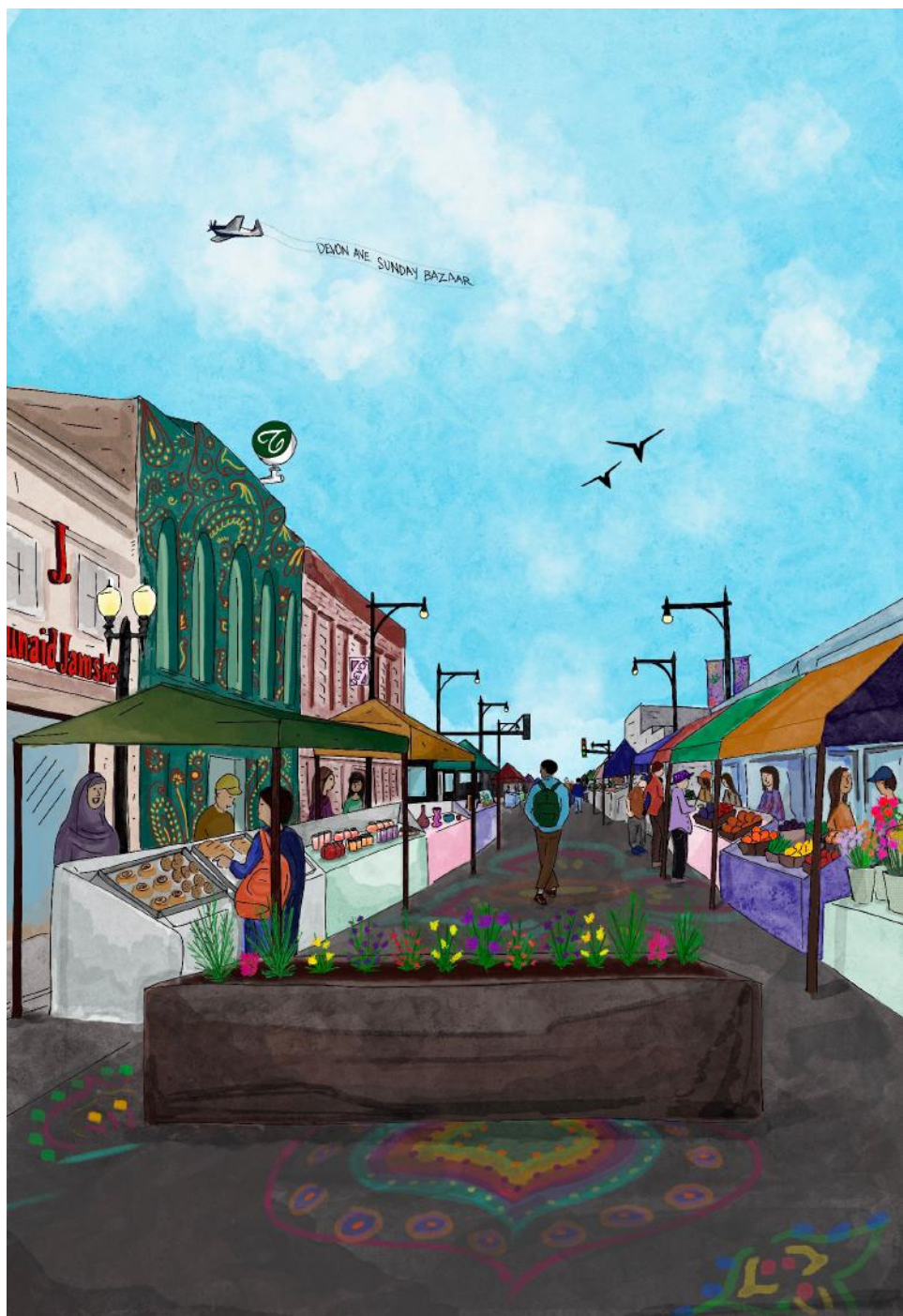
*Walking together makes the  
journey light,  
Talking together lets our  
thoughts take flight*

*So come, let's get together, me  
and you  
When our hands join, our paths  
will be true*

## SYED ABBAS MASUD, 2021

Translation by Romana Jafri





*"I wanted to do an imagined scene, so my idea is a Sunday Bazaar on Devon Ave. I picture it to be vibrant and diverse – full of food, flowers, and art."*

**NIMRAH TARIQ**

# ڈیوان کا دیوانہ ہوں

***I'm crazy about Devon!  
Like a moth to a flame***

ڈیوان کا دیوانہ ہوں  
شمع کا پروانہ ہوں

***(From) California Ave  
to Damen Avenue  
(You'll find)  
tunics, idols and the  
fragrance of cumin***

کیلیفورنیا Ave سے ڈیمین Avenue  
کرتیاں، مورتیاں، زیرہ کی خوش بو

***The folks over here,  
(they've) got big hearts***

یہاں کے لوگ  
ہیں دل والے

***Oh! The folks over here,  
(They're) my people***

سب ہمارے  
ہم سایہ

***So every night  
(you'll find me)  
on my way to Devon!***

تو ہر شام میں ڈیوان کے لیے روانہ ہوں

**ZESHAN B.**



[scan for video]

# RICKSHAW FREE LIBRARY ON DEVON

UROOJ SHAKEEL



Urooj Shakeel, a graduate from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, conceived the idea to design a Little Free Library shaped in the form of a traditional Pakistani truck that exhibits the art form called Truck Art for the community of Devon Ave. Her thesis, *Truck Art Meets Little Free Library*, explores the importance of creating safe public spaces for immigrant populations living in multicultural cities to transition into their adoptive country through culturally familiar objects. The truck was painted by Chicago-based artist Sabba Elahi.

Truck Art, or Phool pathi (flower border), is a vibrant and elaborate art form found on cargo trucks in Pakistan. It originated from Afghanistan and found its way into Pakistan in the 1980s. It is a result of the collaboration and creative exchange between the truck driver and calligraphy artists, and has since then developed into an artisan trade that is passed on. The designs on the truck are an accumulation of art styles rooted in the Subcontinent's multiethnic culture, combining picturesque imagery of landscapes and magical hybrid animals with Islamic calligraphy, which ultimately becomes visual poetry.



# IMPERFECT CIRCLES

BY TULIKA LADSARIYA AND MEGHA RALAPATI



SPECIAL THANKS TO  
REYNA LADSARIYA

# BREAD

کیا آپکی روٹی سانس لیتی ہے؟  
کیا سانس لیے کر، آپکی روٹی آپکی انترمن میں پھول کھلتے  
ہیں؟  
جب ایک سے انیک ہو جائیں، تب کیا آپکی روٹیاں اخباروں کی  
آواز کرتیں ہیں؟  
جیسے ریلوے سٹیشن پر چھائی کے پکوڑے، گرم لفافوں میں، یہ  
سنبھالی ہوئی ردی، چار پیسے سے زیادہ قیمتی؟  
کیا آپکی ماں، نانی، دادی، بیلن کے ساتھ آپکی کلائیوں کو  
چھوڑیں ہیں؟  
کیا اُنکے وہ میٹھے پسینے آپکی یادوں کو سینچ دیتے ہیں، جو  
آپ بنا ٹکٹ خریدے صات سمندر پار پہنچ جاتے ہیں؟  
اڑن پھلکا پھر ٹائم ٹریول  
یہ ہے میری روٹی،  
کہا کہ دیکھیے ذرا

*Does your bread breathe?*

*Does it breathe and make flowers bloom in you?*

*When it grows, becomes a stack,  
does it make the sound of newspapers?*

*Like warm envelopes of chai pakoras at the  
railway station,  
Or carefully saved junk, of more value than 4  
paise?*

*Do your mom, nanna, grandma, guide your rolling  
pin gently by your wrists?*

*So you travel across seven seas, to some distant  
land without a ticket?  
Flying-disc for time travel:  
That's my bread!  
You should try it sometime .*

SHIKHA SHARMA

# AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM ON DEVON



## STUTI SHARMA

Stuti Sharma is a stand-up comic and poet based in Chicago. She organizes with Chicago Desi Youth Rising. You can find her by the trees of Illinois or only eating at restaurants where the cooks facetime family.

IG: stutisharma\_\_





When I was 21, I ran an after-school program for youth on Devon. This work was one of the most difficult but beautiful things I have done. The program was run on fumes, with me as the only permanent and not even full-time person running it, and with an unsupportive ED at the time. She ended up deciding to cut this program that was such a good resource for youth in the West Ridge—where they could go and speak Hindi & Urdu freely, wear kurtas but talk about their favorite superheroes. They could come Monday to Friday at 3:30 for a free meal from the Greater Chicago Food Depository and get help with their homework from work study and volunteer tutors. I was very much a kid in charge of other kids.

Money was always tight. We had a two-pizza max quota for parties (& a one bag and one bottle quota for Takis & mango juice, the most constantly requested items), and there was never a budget for me to buy supplies for the kids. This ended up teaching me asset-based community organizing to use the best out of what we had instead of focusing on what we didn't have. I ended up getting money for supplies from working my other job at the Museum of Science and Industry and running a GoFundMe. Once we had the most chaotic day making slime. One of the kids threw slime on the ceiling and it's stuck there to this day, four years later.

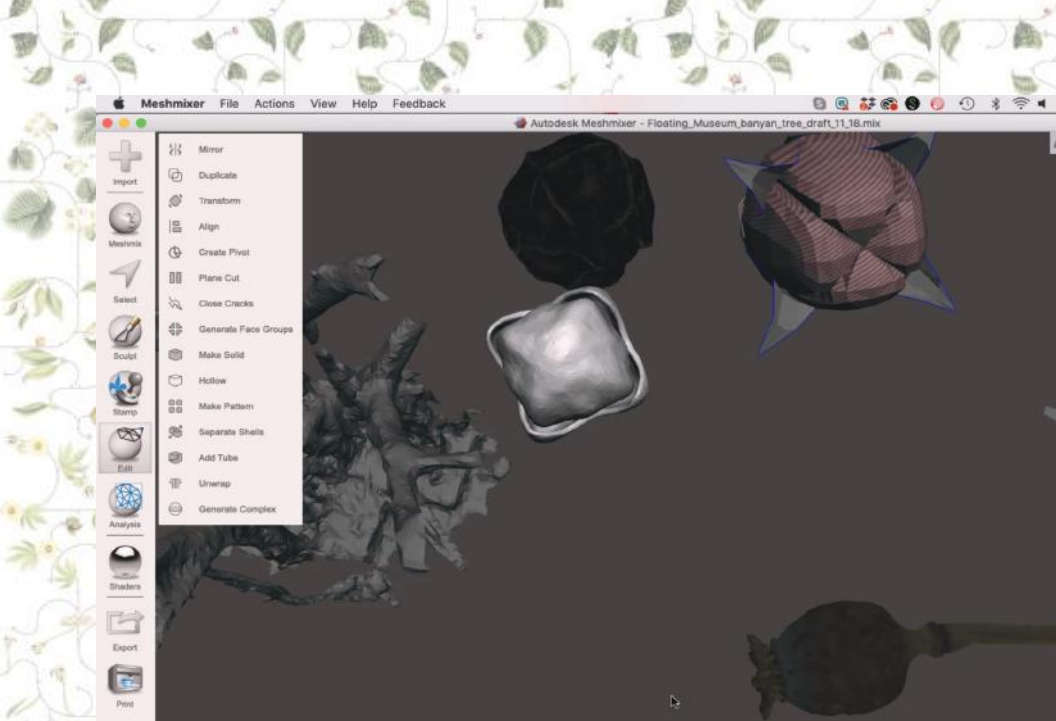
I got suddenly told the program was going to be cut the upcoming school year in the spring while I was planning and preparing for the summer camp version of the youth program. I wanted to quit but I had teens counting on us for a job through their After School Matters internship, as well as 50 youth from working families who needed to go somewhere safe every day that would also provide them a meal and some educational resources over the summer.

Despite it all, it was a good summer. We teamed up with the library, the zoo, the food depository, museums to give them books, a free bus and field trip to different parts of the city, and daily meals. My coworker and friend proposed to get them an ice cream truck. There's magic to ice cream trucks, when it comes down the block with the same annoying but luring tune and when it finally rolls through with brightly-colored brands all over it. And having grown up undocumented on Devon shopping from the discount rack at Fresh Farms, I know what it's like to not have the money for such a simple pleasure. Of course, our ED said we didn't have the money to make this happen and was opposed to it.

Out of both spite and love, I wrangled together my homies in comedy, my homies in community organizing, and ran a fundraiser. The ice cream truck company told me they needed \$65 to come out to the organization. I needed \$200 to make sure all the kids got free ice cream of their choice. Turnout for the comedy show was good but I wondered if, after the theater took their cut of the door, we'd have enough. I got the payout and with that and the donations from friends, the total was \$265.

To me, god is in the details like that. This whole experience taught me that revolution & rebellion can lead with joy.

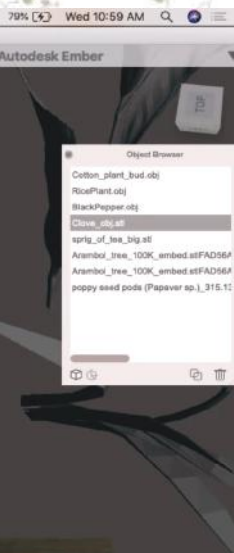




Where is our canopy? And who waits there?

A banyan tree is a space for council, meetings, rest, and reflection in most rural and urban spaces in South Asia. How might we create similar spaces that bring people together and share a sense of belonging? What does it mean to create a canopy for each other?

With these inquiries in mind, coming to Chicago this summer is a floating monument that focuses on the role of plants as world makers. Cotton, black pepper, poppy, rice and clove are depicted stacked among the roots of a banyan tree. Vasco Da Gama and Christopher Columbus sought out the Indian subcontinent for direct access to these plants. This 'discovery'/exploitation of people and plants as 'resources' have continued to shape the way we see ourselves, each other and the landscape that we reside with. The monument connects multiplicities through these routes of trade and passage. The word, diaspora itself has botanical roots - 'dia' meaning across and 'spora' meaning scatter.



# Floating Museum

is an art collective that creates new models: exploring relationships between art, community, architecture, and public institutions. Using site-responsive art, design, and programming we explore the potential in these relationships, considering the infrastructure, history, and aesthetics of a space.



# JUGGAD REMEDIES & RECIPES

**SADIA NAWAB**

People from the Subcontinent know the concept of juggad - 'hacking' or innovation- all too well. I feel the presence of my ancestors show up in this creative wisdom when I notice me or my people making something out of nothing.

Just the other day, my uncle needed to put his thumbprint on an application for his citizenship process. We couldn't find a stamp pad anywhere in the house, so I placed ink on his finger from a pen and used a makeup sponge to apply his thumbprint to the document. We were under pressure, but instead of sweating I tapped into juggad and we were able to finesse it perfectly!

Another at-home juggad remedy for a sore upper back is a clean sock filled with uncooked rice! Don't believe me? Dab some water on it and heat it up in the microwave for a few minutes. You can even put some essential oils on it for extra healing and and apply it to your muscles for some serious soothing!

One of my favorite examples of how our people are masters at hacking or resourcefully winging whatever task they have at hand features my dear late grandmother, Shamsun Nisa, lovingly referred to as “Apa.” When she taught me how to make her famous mint chutney, instead of measuring the ingredients with proper measuring tools, she used her hands for the measuring -- Genius! Please keep her legacy alive by preparing and sharing this delicious chutney with your loved ones as she would.



## APA'S CHUTNEY RECIPE

4 - 5 handfuls of mint

2 Medium Sized Tomatoes

6 - 7 Chillies

4 Cloves of Garlic

1/4 Cup Lemon Juice (eyeballed, of course)

1.5 Tablespoon Zeera/Cumin (eyeballed as well, of course)

1 Tablespoon Salt to taste

Grind all ingredients in a blender. That's all!



[scan for video]

# DEVIKA DHIR



My name is Devika Dhir, and I'm a student of Ustad Dilshad Khan, of Chicago. Ustad Dilshad Khan is a globally renowned exponent of kathak (patiala gharana), and has been teaching dance in Chicago and Indiana since 1990. A few years ago, Guruji, as I call him, met Kirti Sheth, owner of the beloved Devon Ave restaurant, Arya Bhavan. A partnership was formed, and every week, Guruji holds kathak class at the restaurant. Students are rewarded at the end of class with Kirti's delicious vegan fare. It's a truly unique, and classically Devon, experience in my opinion. This video offers a small glimpse into my experiences with studying, performing, and sharing community via dance on Devon Ave.



# FROM THE ARCHIVES...

AYESHA RIAZ

August 14, 1984  
Pakistan Independence Day  
Devon Avenue





भूतिया शब्द: झल्कि

लेख: बोधिका

वह कौन्से शब्द हैं जो भूतों कि तरह उस रात मुझसे लिपट गये थे? दोनो हाथों में फल-सब्जियों के थैले थे, भरे हुए, भारी। यह काम मेरा डेली वेकौंट हुआ करता था। फलों को उठाना, सूँघना, कुछ क्रोधित होना कि देसी लोग यहाँ भी लौकियों को नाखूनों से चेक करते हैं -- फिर औरों के लिए इन लौकियों को आधे चंद्रमा के चिन्हों समेत छोड़ जाते हैं।

बड़ी मुश्किल से, पीछे से छोटी सी लौकी मिलती थी, जो अक्सर कचिया निकलती थी। भई चीज़ छोटी हो, भद्दी हो, तो खाने में ज़्यादा अच्छी निकलती है -- ऐसा पापा ने बताया था। पापा को मँडी से सब्जी लाना बहुत मज़े का काम लगता है। आस-पास के मूडी, घमंडी पढ़े-लिखे लोगों से ज़्यादा, पापा को गाँव वाले लोगों कि सरलता से प्रेम है -- सब्जीवाला, गमलेवाला, दुकानवाले का नौकर, कोई भी, चप्पल में, जिसकी भाषा साफ़ हो, नज़र अडिग हो।

उस रात, करीब आठ बजे जब मैं सड़क पार कर रही थी, उस सुनसान-सी डगर पे, लफंगों की तरह, जाने कहाँ से यह शब्द दिमाग़ में आ ठनके -- 'बूटी' और 'बेल'। वह 'बूटी' नहीं जो आजकल अमरीकी फिल्मों में सुनी-दिखाई जाती है। वह भी नहीं जो ऊन से नानियाँ अपने नन्हें-से नवासे-नवासियों के लिए बुना करती हैं। यह वो उभरी हुई, रंग-बिरंगी, अपने में संपूर्ण आकार हैं, जो दर्जियों के दिमाग़ों में आती हैं, और इधर उधर नाचती हुई बेलों के साथ, इक साधारण से कपड़े को कलाकृत बना देती हैं। इन्हें सुइयों से, महीनता से, मूर्तियों जैसी औरतें, आदमी भी, काढ़ा करते हैं। कभी-कभी मशीनों पे यह काम किया जाता है। लेकिन काम करने वाला कारीगर सादे कपड़ों में भी इतना सुंदर नज़र आता/आती है -- पूरी तरह लीन -- तन-मन से!

इतने सालों से मैं हिन्दुस्तानी कपड़े इस अमरीकन हिन्दुस्तान कि दुकानों में रोज़ देखती आ रही हूँ -- लेकिन न कभी यह शब्द याद आए और न ही वह लोगों कि भूली-भटकती यादें। इधर बेल, उधर बूटी, जुदा भी, जुड़ी भी...



## Ghostly Words: A Vignette

By Bodhika

What words were they that wrapped themselves around me like ghostly spirits the other night? Both my hands were gripped around grocery bags, filled to the brim with produce. This used to be my daily workout in pre-covid days. Lifting the fruit in my hand, inhaling its aroma, often suppressing an annoyance if there were signs of more invasive examinations by fellow desis, having left telltale signs with their nails, like half-hearted presents marked with tiny half-moons, especially on laukis (sold as the mysteriously named 'opo' squash).

With great difficulty, an unmarked lauki would be unearthed from way in the back of the display. A thing that looks smallish, uglyish, turns out to be sweeter, juicier, a little nugget of its essence – or so papa had said, a long time ago. My father loves going to the mandi for produce. Much more than the moody, arrogant, edu-literate, papa loves the ways of the out-of-town rustics – sabziwallah, gamleywallah, naukar of the dukanwallah, or anyone, really, in dusty rubber chappals, with a clear speech and a steady gaze.

That night, around eight o' clock, as I was crossing the street, on that nameless corner, like loafers, those words rolled into my mind's eye -- 'booty' and 'bale.' Not the 'booty' you see and hear in American films. Not even that booty that grandmas knit with love for their grandbabies. These are the in-relief, color-fluorescences, complete and autonomous, as it were, forms, that enter the minds of darzis, and meandering around leafy vines, transform a piece of cloth into a fanciful adornment. Through needles, with intricacy, mesmerized, murti-like women – men, too – embroider these. Often machines are engaged for the work. Either way, the one producing this skilled labor, though nearly always dressed in the plainest clothes, appears sublimely beauteous, other-wordly, working from a dream.

All these years, walking this street, I've been seeing desi clothes in this American desi market. But never did I so vividly recall either those words, or those long lost to my mind people. Here a booty, here some bale, a little distant, though still connected.

0 J 2  
6 u 0  
1 n 7  
8 e 2

Sector77  
Devon

**///TRANSMISSION INTERCEPTED///**

They're celebrating Holi Days again. Can you believe what the CryptoChamber has done in the name of 'unity'? My nana said most of these festivities were done when we had seasons and not at this time of year.

Digipacks in multi-colors are being handed out to each sector resident, as well as a re-up of crypto. Same mealpacks as usual, nothing special there.

I'm telling you, we need to reject all of these handouts. We don't need them. That's the only way the Medina will succeed.

And, don't you want to taste those sweet mangoes? I know we'll get it right soon. The Hydrobath house station is so close to perfection.

Anyway, the L stopped elevating...again. So, I'm going to walk to practice. "Azaadi" is going to be our best song yet!

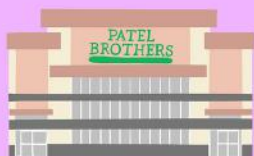


*Devon Avenue,  
Chicago*

DEVON AVE



WESTERN AVE



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