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convinced she is reading her life play out on paper.

Dear Miriam, It was all for nothing. The entry dates are just a few days from the last. I saw her, Not 'you'. Standing, watching the burial from a safe distance; out of my family's sight. She had aged, she was much taller than she was when we were younger, and even from a distance, I could see the way the world had shaped her physique. She was looking for me, and I couldn't take my eyes off of her. When she spotted me, it wasn't a look of eagerness. It wasn't the longing temptation we once held in private. It wasn't anything but remorse. Her body fell with a sudden disappointment. I found her after. She lingered, waiting for me despite her apparent lack of interest. Tears welled in my eyes, but it felt repelling to be around her. Any attraction, any connection we once shared, had vanished. She yelled at me, sobbing, screaming my name. I had ruined her and left her to pick up the pieces. I ruined her life in the way my parents ruined mine; she told me.

The ink runs off the page and pools up in small watery bolts on the paper, making it increasingly more difficult to read. Shelby studies Esther's words as if they were Eden's, letting each one of them strike her over and over. *She hated me as much as I loved her.* She set the notebook down, not being able to take any more, and blew the candle out. It laid open, with only a couple of pages left, as she shoved her belongings back into her box and bag. With a sudden sense of urgency, she knew she had to go. She had to find Eden. Taking that month's rent, she left behind the journal, letters, and ink-stained floors, and headed towards the bus. She was going home; she was going to Eden.

Dear Esther,

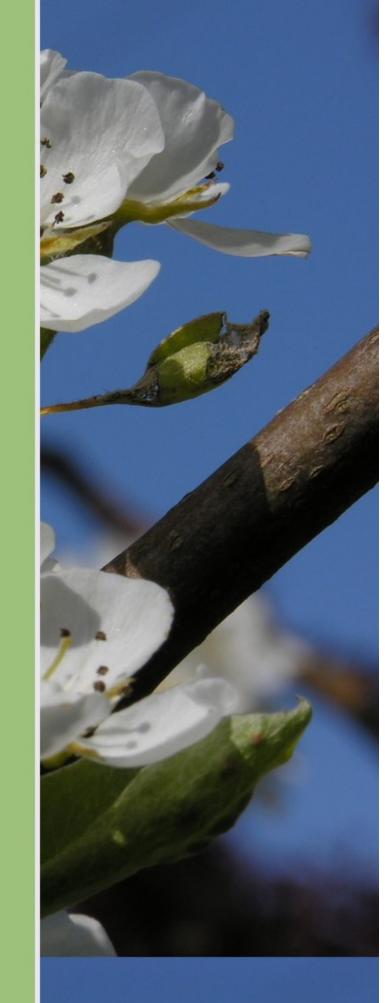
Read the last entry, In another lifetime, my love.

Burnt red taints this page, laying open on the cold apartment floor as she heads towards Esther in her other lifetime.



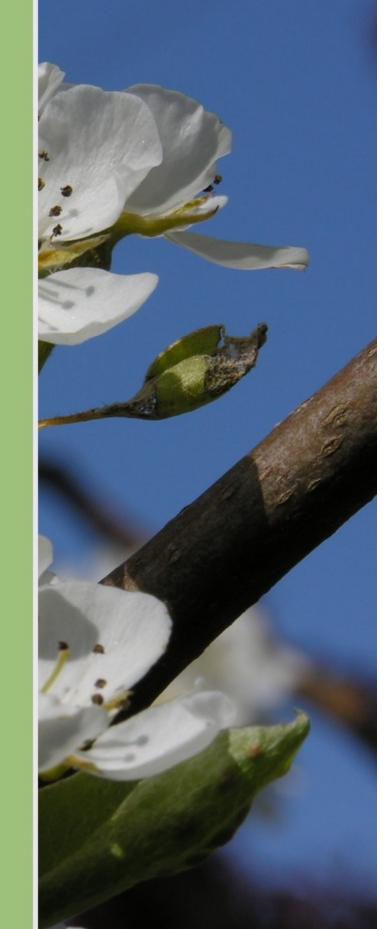








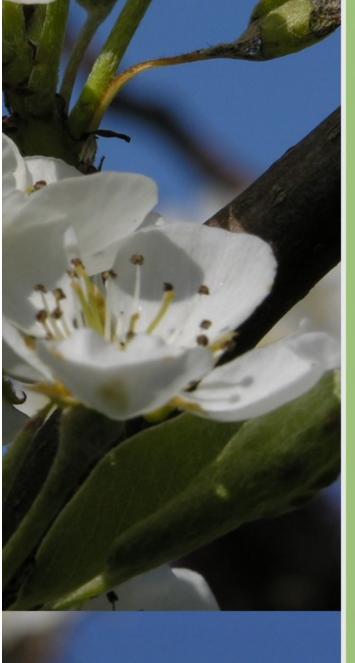






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		East Fork: A Journal of the Arts							
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		<b>On and Of Hyphens</b> By: Maira Faisal					Ε	Back	
		I follow the p how it arches my tongue-tie the skims and its careful foo The curve of like a vibrant	Like stomps on concrete, I follow the plunges and pushes of English, how it arches, pierces through words, my tongue-tied touch stammering the skims and hugs of Urdu, its careful footfalls on thawing dirt. The curve of consonants sour like a vibrant candy staling, potential left in a gleaming wrapper,				Why not tell Maira what you thought of their award-winning poem?! Be sure to put their name, your email, "On and Of Hyphens" in the subject, and your message so they can see your comment! Name: *	ning Of nd your	
		of my hybrid, In grapholog a crossed out is desire to cr distance betw	signature oss out one's life, veen names etween identities,				Email: * <ul> <li>Check here to receive en updates</li> </ul> Subject: *	nail	





it *means* something.

The uptick or downturn of Pakistani-American, what does that mean? Is the hyphen pointing to true north, an arrow on the compass of latitudes of the borders I claim as home? How can such a small space hold so much subconscious meaning? Or is this the overanalyzing of the non-native, non-tourist, forever foreigner, desperate cartographer mapping the intangibility of belonging?

If I mapped my own body, I feel I'd find a "Made in Pakistan" label sown onto an American soul.

I'm an emigrant and immigrant, export and import easily exhaled and inhaled, breathed into assimilation, into newness that never wears off. Dogeared novels and creased sneakers become dreams when your skin speaks stuttered syllables in one country, your tongue is washed white in the other.

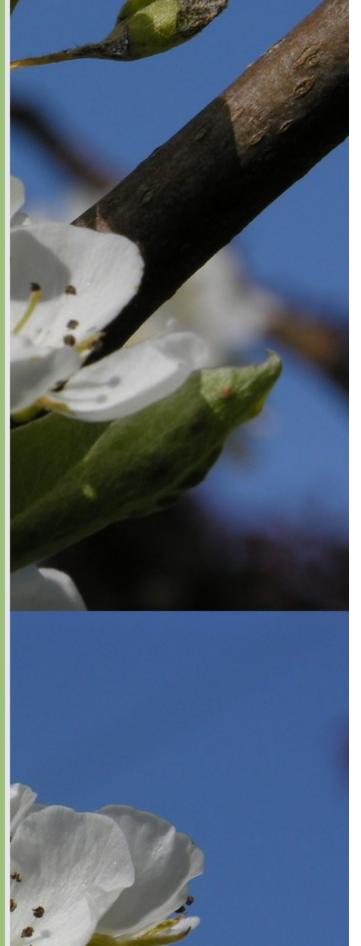
How many hyphens am I of, how many will come after? Fractions and dashes of beginnings, counted even in Spanish before the Urdu I can recall but twenty-two numbers of.

If you do ever count my starts, count them with the ends of dulled pencils and the ink drops of a pen homogenized into a stroke of diasporic intent.

And, for once, count me in.

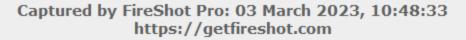
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# East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

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# Perceptions of Fame

Rachel Luhn

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The stage lights brightened and the surrounding room darkened, ushering a brief silence across the room. Two black chamois chairs showed themselves. One sat empty whilst the other was occupied by a short middle-aged man with a humorously large red bowtie. He sat straight up with his hands clenched tightly around a small stack of papers. He anxiously shuffled through them as he constantly shot glances between the people staring at him and off into an unseen space behind the curtains, expecting someone. A bead of sweat could be seen atop his brow. The hypnotizing hum of the bright lights was now as loud as ever. The quiet tension only continued to grow and so the crowd began to murmur, pondering and speculating about what was to unfold before them. Many had simply wandered into the theater as the sign outside had encouraged an audience free of charge. But there was no indication about what was to transpire here. Who were they going to see? Was it a famous celebrity? A world-renowned chef? The President? Several small whispers could be heard from the left...later to the right....to the center...and to the left again. Those who didn't speak were on the edges of their seats, waiting with bated breath. Nothing happened for several long moments.

And then the footsteps came. They were a thunderous click-clacking sound, reverberating off the hardwood and into the ears of the restless crowd, stealing away the whispers and murmurs. They were slow and with purpose, emerging from the unknowing darkness of the curtains-the exact place the man with the bowtie had been staring at prior. Emerging from the shadows was a very tall man whose suit was dyed a rich navy blue and dotted with gold buttons that gleamed in the spotlights. He had the shiniest of black hair that was slicked back at the top and delicately fell behind his ears. His face appeared freshly shaved, the tan skin glowing in the stage lights. The straight nose, narrow eyes, and straight mouth pulled into the slightest ounce of a smile harmoniously created what many would simply dream of: a work of art. He was what women praised and what men envied. A perfect, flawless human being that drew the attention of anyone who gazed at him without fail.

Are you fan of Rachel's work? Then let them know! Be sure to put their name, your email, title of their work in the subject, and your message so they can see your comment!

Name: \*

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# Email: \*

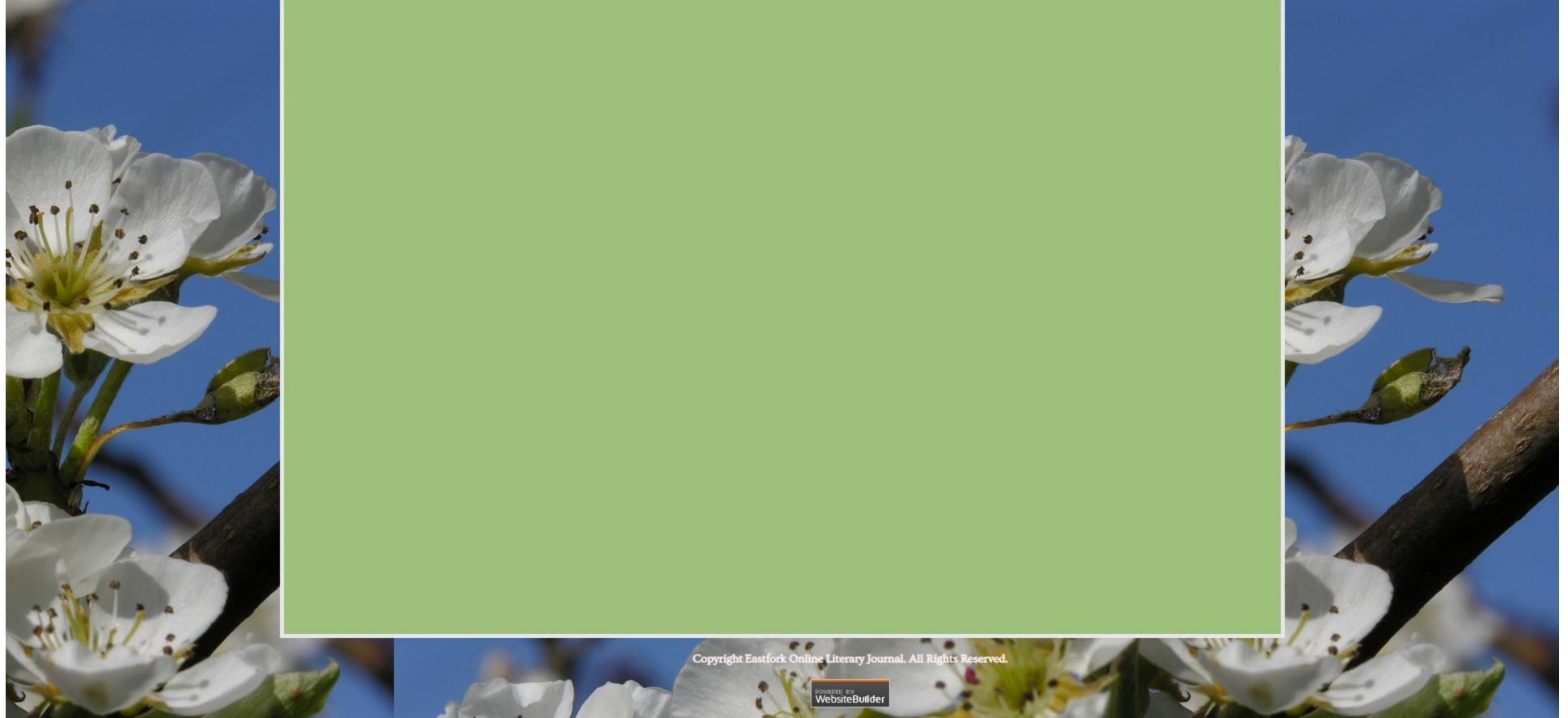
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Everyone watched as he glided over to the empty chair, his long limbs neatly folding together into a tentative position as he sat down. The man with the bowtie's voice squeaked as he introduced himself to be the host of tonight's showing. There was still no clear explanation for what they were about to view. He paused and cleared his throat as if expecting the audience to applaud. However, they were still entranced by the man in the navy blue suit, who suddenly turned his head to look upon them. With this, the audience erupted in whistles, shouts, and cheers. The man said nothing and continued to smile.

As the noise began to falter, he reached out for the pitcher of water placed between him and the host. Everyone watched in awe as he poured a glass and placed it to his lips. More outrageous cheers exploded. And silence again as he set the glass down. The host rubbed his hands together nervously, a wavering smile plastered on his face as he did so. After praising the man for his glory and receiving more cheers, the host asked him how he reached great success.

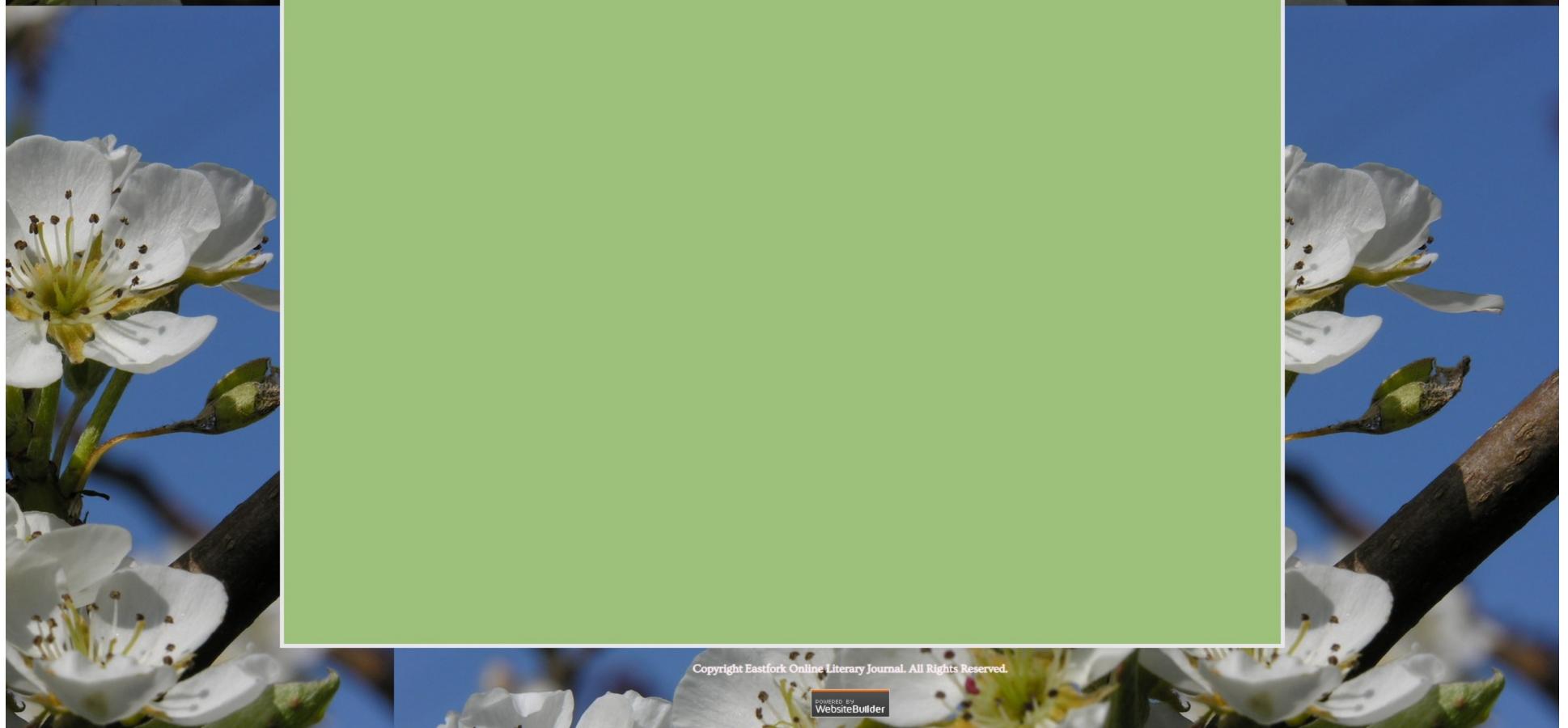
With this, the man suddenly stood up and stuck his arms out. The gold buttons on his suit were glowing now due to the direct beam of light from the stage. The audience's eyes shone with wonder. There were no words that followed. The host asked for no elaboration of this display and could only stare now as if he had lost all sense of self and could only devote every ounce of attention to this perfect man, who could win a thousand hearts just by breathing. His eyes flooded with tears of joy as he stared up at the man standing so tall and grand, with elegant shadows cast beneath his cheekbones and along his jaw and perfect arms that fit snugly inside his sleeves. He needed to know who he was. There was more roaring applause as the man sat back down and refolded his limbs together. The host then asked the man in a timorous voice the question they were all desperate to ask: who was he?

The entire theater went quiet once more. The people in their seats didn't shuffle or mutter at all. This driving question so desperately wanted to be answered that the weight of anticipation stood heavily on everyone's minds.

The man said nothing. Still smiling, he stood up once more. On instinct, they cheered again, but it didn't last as long, as with one swift motion the man ripped away the sleek navy-blue fabric from himself, tousled his black hair, and wiped the makeup off of his face. When all was taken away, everyone was staring now at an abnormally thin, unkempt man dressed in torn clothes that were graying with age. The host stopped writhing with anxiety and was still. The audience sat dumbfounded in their chairs, some open-mouthed in wonder, and others rising in anger. They had been fooled by a man who otherwise would have been given no thought or value. To them, he was nothing now.

Despite the dissatisfaction, the man flashed a toothless grin, gave a generous bow, leaped off the stage, and calmly vanished out into the night.





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