

contents

Author's Note, 1

wildflower, 4

Porcelain Bull, 4

I have two hands, 5

Decades Past, 7

By 40 you should, 10

Imposter Syndrome, 12

Affirmation Litany for my Children, 13

Gray Days, 14

Dreamscape, 14

How you'll know, 15

Misty Love, 16

Wonder-Full, 18

Someone's Singing My Lord..., 20

A Praying Mother, 20

Manu's All-Natural Facial Recipe, 22

Our Mothers are Dying, 24

Forever Thirteen, 25

Joy, Stillborn, 26

Sinking, 28

(De)attachment, 30

Lyrical, 31

Manchild (Muhammad Al-Hasan's Lullaby v2.0), 34

From Mamncane, 35

Why she will not be coming with us, 38

Kings of Nothing, 39

Void, 41

Just as beautiful, 41

But Never Enough, 42

On preparing the rose bushes for spring, 43

Note to Self: Read When Old, 44

Scribbles, 46

About the Author, 48



author's note



Dear Reader,

I see the pieces in this book as scattered wildflowers by the side of the road that one might view from the fast-moving car that is life. Wildflowers that bring some joy and color to the journey. And maybe some lessons too.

If my first book was my manifesto, this one is scribbles on a postcard: short, a bit impressionistic, but still holding the entirety of my heart. In the time between publishing them, I've turned 40. I like to think that it shows.

Unexpectedly, 40 turned out to be a very creatively productive year for me. Some of these pieces were written in the five years since I published my first book, but most have spilled out of me in the past 12 months (my 40th year). I've carried this book as a small seed deep in my heart for some time, but in the last year, it has insisted that it was ready to bloom, and I felt pushed to complete and release it.

Deep thanks to all who've contributed to the making of this book and to the making of this life.

With great joy and gratitude, I share with you WILDFLOWER—plucked at last from the depths of a heart that is somehow four decades old, newly born, ancient, and ageless, all at once.

I pray that you will stop a while, gather a few of these fleeting words, and put them in a jar of water by your bedside. And that they bring you some freshness and sweetness. Perhaps a bit of wistfulness. Some pathos for sure. And, I hope, some beauty too...even if only for a little while.

~Ruqayyah



wildflower

Come close...closer...closer still...

Can you hear me? Can you see?

Come close enough to look into my eyes, and I will tell you a secret...

Gray Days

When my mother was a little girl, she went to school one cloudy, wet day feeling gloomy due to the weather. When she got to school, her teacher looked out the window and remarked: "What a beautiful gray day." That simple statement stayed with Mommie all day and throughout her life. It was a complete perspective shift—a reminder to see beauty in unlikely places and to be grateful for the good that is present in all seasons, even those that may seem melancholic. I'm so grateful for the rain we've been getting in Joburg lately (after a long dry spell), for the life lessons from my mother that come back to me on days like this, and for the opportunity to marvel with my own children at these beautiful gray days.

Closer still...



Dreamscape

I would live in your dreams if I could

You weave them so beautiful, so delicate, so soft

I could sink into them, pull them all around me

Listening to you, as gorgeous dreamscapes come to life under your expert and confident hand

I could almost
believe

wildflower

Misty Love

There is an African saying I heard once
And it has lingered with me like your ittar on our bedsheets

"Let your love be like the misty rain, coming soft but flooding the river"

Your love, so gentle, so constant, so steady

It fills me up again and again

I am not overwhelmed,
not stopped in my tracks,
not forced to seek shelter

It doesn't cancel my plans,
or announce itself loudly on the roofing,
or wash away the roads,

But, still, my shores are somehow drenched by your steady streams

Your love is a misty rain, My Love

And I overflow