

1 My traditional grandparents enter the room, and so I slip into a bright piece of fabric, swirling  
2 designs dancing across the front and a dot proudly on display on my forehead  
3 Heading out into this world, beyond my bubble of Little India means stepping into a pair of  
4 well worn jeans, strategically filled with stylish tears  
5 “why you need to buy jeans with the holes? in India, only beggars wear those”  
6 I nod my head and pretend to understand when my parents lecture about old traditions,  
7 but to me  
8 they have lost their meaning  
9 I smile and laugh when my friends talk about relationships and social lives and career  
10 choices outside of “doctor lawyer engineer”  
11 but inside I know  
12 my culture make such things a fantasy  
13 here are two countries within me, but I can’t find an  
14 in between  
15 a mediator  
16 a referee  
17 I hide my American accent behind an Indian one around my relatives  
18 I hide my Bharatanatyam dancing, Tamil speaking self behind a facade around my friends  
19 For who will understand this constant battle, this raging war inside me, to keep my culture  
20 but fit in with this American world?  
21 Somedays, the war has reached a standstill, an agreement  
22 Other days, I worry for the future. Will I remember these traditions my parents want me to  
23 carry on?  
24 Will my family disown me for forgetting my culture?  
25 Those days, I feel as if I’m Sisyphus, constantly rolling that boulder up the mountain  
26 only to see it come down again, again, again.  
27 But then I come to a realization, as if someone wiped the the dirt off the glass that I’d been  
28 looking through all my life

29 there are others who live like this.  
30 for Some, it is like a simple tug of war  
31 for Others, it is like an unceasing battle filled with bloodshed  
32 these are the People with whom i align myself  
33 these are the People who understand living up to the expectation of our immigrant parents  
34 the parents who sacrificed everything for the sliver of a hope that their children will lead  
35 better lives; the people who it aches *so. much.* to disappoint  
36 these are the People who understand the pressure of fitting into this society  
37 these are *my* People  
38 I don’t feel so alone in my battles.

