

What made you choose this piece for pulp MAG?

I guess I felt it was a poem that could speak to the experience of young people with a uterus, who perhaps have to take hormonal therapy. I chose to submit it to Pulp Mag knowing this could reach people who maybe have been through wait lists for surgeries or have taken hormone therapy before to combat a disease, because it's more common in young people than people realize.

Is there anything in particular that you're proud of about this piece, or that you learned while creating it?

To be honest, I learnt that I can write poetry even when I'm in severe pain! I wrote this poem in excruciating pain without a diagnosis. So, I'm really proud of that. I wrote it on my Notes App on my phone, because I couldn't even write in a notebook, properly, while sitting. Poetry has always been my outlet for expressing myself, and it seemed to be there even throughout a very scary experience.

Where did your inspiration for this piece come from? What is the piece's "story"?

In the last two years, I have received a few diagnoses and have had to deal with chronic pain. I was finally diagnosed with endometriosis in February via surgery, after I slowly became debilitated from excruciating abdominal pain. The story of this poem is about waiting for a diagnosis, but also grappling with the knowledge that I'm on medication the rest of my life. It's a story about grief and what I thought my life would look like in my late twenties. It's the story of a disease that affects 10% of people assigned female at birth, who all have varying levels of pain and spread of the disease as a result.

What messages/themes do you want viewers to pull from this piece?

I'd like for people to read the piece and then remember how health research for women is decades behind what it should be, despite a lot of the diseases affecting people assigned female at birth being quite common. I would like for people to know what chronic pain does to a person. I also would want people with chronic pain to know that they are not alone; that their reaction to the pain is a human response.

"Waiting for People" has a running metaphor of darkness vs. light and night vs. day. What is the thematic significance of these symbols? Anything you'd like to comment on?

Recently, in my work, I've been playing a lot with the metaphor of the night. It stems from my name, actually. My middle name means "Belonging to Night," and I didn't actually know how I would incorporate that into my work, but I thought, okay, one day I will. And then chronic daily

pain happened to me and I thought, oh no... there's my impulse to write about the night because this feels like perpetual night sky. I'm actually trying to put together a collection of poems and see what I can do with it.

What does your creative process or practice usually look like?

Usually, I free-write every weekday. My ideal way of writing is in my notebook and then transferring that to my laptop, but sometimes it ends up being either directly on my computer or my Notes App depending on if I'm experience a painful flare-up. My process is not straightforward, I think it really depends what project I'm working on. I usually give myself a theme to stay within, as of recently. I love writing about the seasons, as well, which is why I will make seasonal poetry, too. So, I'll usually map out in the morning, okay, what am I going to focus on today? Is it my collection of poems or seasonal poetry? Sometimes I pull up visual prompts, and other times I have something off the top of my head. And then I go from there. I'm not going to lie, I still need to vamp up my editing process, more!

What sorts of things inspire you?

Nature is a major inspiration for me. When I first was diagnosed with vestibular migraine, natural settings and going outside really helped me when I couldn't look at a screen for long. That's when I started really getting into writing about the seasons. I try to use imagery from nature a lot in my poetry, as much as I can.

Have you ever been published before? Where can we find your work?

Yes! So, I was actually published in Pulp Magazine's 2022 Issue with my poem Betel Leaf. I have a number of others under a pen name I used to have called Rozina Jessa. My recent poetry can be found in The Literary Review of Canada, Dark Winter Literary Magazine's website and the New York Quarterly! There's a couple more as well: PRISM International & Carousel magazine.

How long have you been creative?

I have been creative ever since I was a toddler running around collecting chestnuts in the autumn and stuffing them in a bathroom drawer with the hair combs. So, maybe, my whole life. I am also an actress who performs on stage and in short films!

Do you plan on continuing your creative pursuits into the future? If so, what does the next project look like for you?

Yes, I do. I'm not sure how it will come to fruition but I'm hoping to work more on the collection that I have going about chronic illness. And I'm hoping to return to the stage, when I'm well, again.