

# The Last Leaf

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# Description

The project captures a series of self portraits containing symbolism where I document my journey through denying, fighting and accepting my illness. It follows a coloring scheme from dark (Baroque) and grotesque to light and beautiful (Romanticism). There is a transition from black to dull white and grey to colorful and finally white which consists of all colors. My journey from denial to acceptance has been portrayed through the color transition. I've also written 3 poems reflecting over the three phases of the journey.

For the photo portraits, I've used various paintings and photographs for inspiration and reference :

- Death on Toilet by Francis Bacon
- The Vitruvian Man by Leonardo da Vinci
- The Scream by Edvard Munch
- The Plan by Jenny Saville
- The Morgue by Andres Serrano

The central vision of my project is to create awareness about fibroids and acknowledge the struggle that comes with it.

**DENIAL**

# The Deadbody

I have a deadbody  
attached to my leg.  
Wherever I go,  
She goes.  
She is heavier on  
Cloudy days.  
Lighter on  
Sunny ones.

I have a deadbody  
Attached to my leg.  
She is vivid  
When I'm alone.  
She almost disappears  
When I'm with my love.

I've a deadbody  
Attached to my leg.  
She carries my past  
In her heart.  
Her brain is but  
Just an empty swarm  
Of buzzing threats.  
She sings regret on dark nights.  
Her eyes see nothing  
But mistakes and death.

I have a deadbody  
Attached to my leg.  
I can see her growing  
stronger by the day.  
Expanding with every  
breath I take.

## Friday Night

Life doesn't stop for you. People expect you to be around despite your struggles. You learn to pretend, you stop acknowledging your pain. You slip into denial until it consumes you into its darkness.



## The Two Year Pregnancy

The fibroid kept growing everyday for two years, crushing me from inside. When people saw me, they told me I was fat. I was told I was inefficient everytime I went to the washroom. I tried my best to suck it all in, my anxiety and my belly. I exercised and made a joke of my problems for two years.





## The Monotony

A day has 22 hrs and 24 mins in it.

2 mins after every 30 mins. 48 times a day.  
96 mins a day.

1 hr and 36 mins less to carry my tasks.  
1 hr and 36 mins less everyday to live.



**SHOCK**

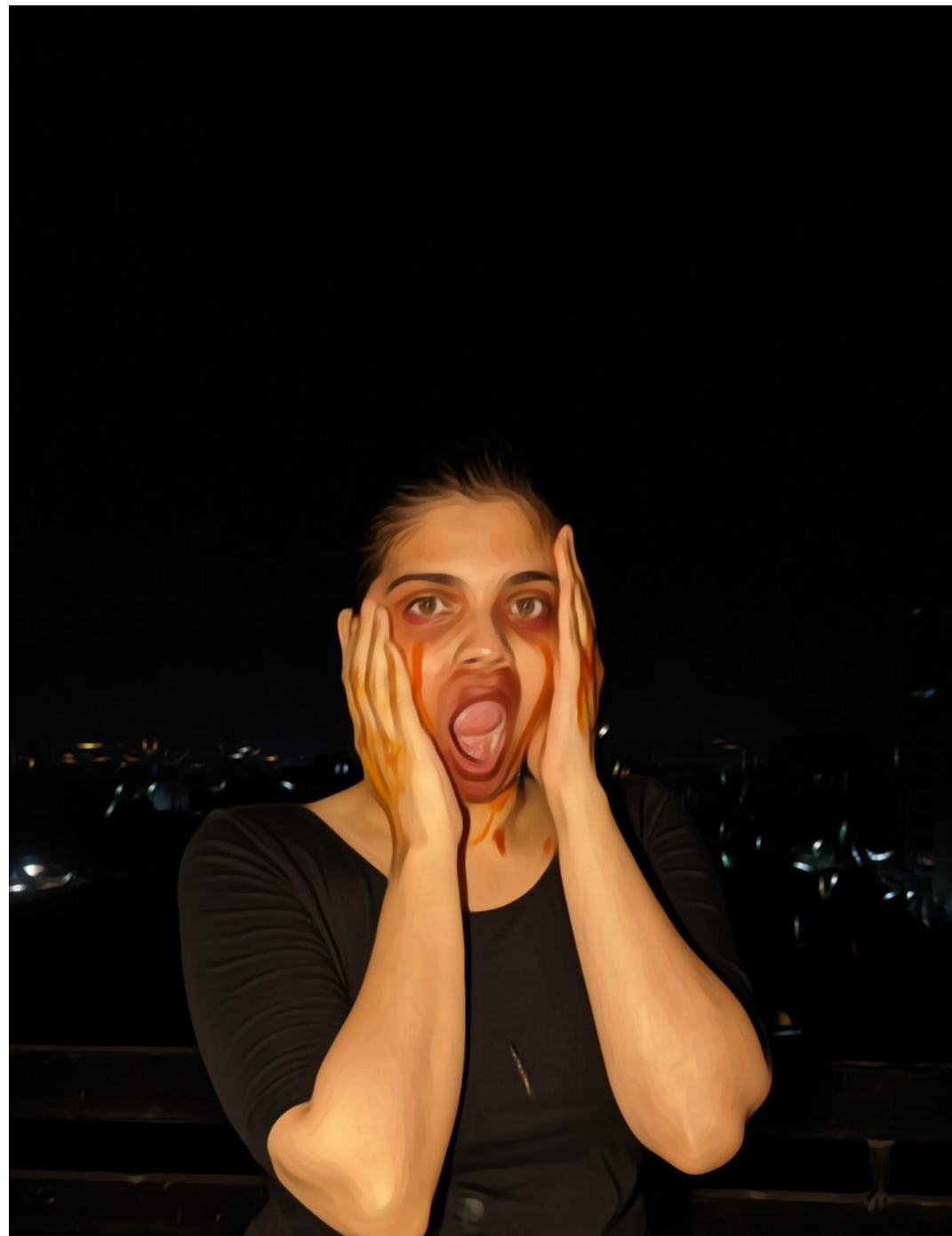


# Over Again

It's like I'm never present. Like walking around with a heart that beats with the frequency of every person I have in my life. Dragging a boulder through my sleep and waking up exhausted. Having so many expectations with myself and watching myself fail. Fail everyday while I stare into nothing, grasping for breath. Falling apart as the clock strikes 12 two times a day. Fidgeting for productivity, zoning out while trying. It's a relentless battle everyday, until tomorrow comes and I have to do it all over again. Living with anxiety is like living with a thousand Insects inside you, chewing you up little by little everyday. It's not that bad I tell myself, maybe tomorrow I'll start over again. Over again. Over again.

## Red Weeping Willow

The first time I heard that I will have to undergo surgery, the world around me stopped spinning. I wondered if it's for real. Did my heart really stop? Is there blood coming out of my eyes and ears? Did I hear it right?



## The War

The surgery was supposed to end in an hour and I was supposed to leave the hospital in two days. But when has a girl's life ever been so simple?

A war was unleashed instead. 6 hours of surgery followed by a week of hospital stay. A catheter was pushed up my urinary tract thrice while I was conscious to drain my bladder when I was unable to micturate. It felt like I was being violated and couldn't do anything about it but just lie in pain. I couldn't pee without it even if I wanted to. I survived on chemicals injected into me multiple times a day. I remember being trapped with strings and pipes around me.



## The Calm

A few hours of calmness I got after surgery was the only sound sleep I have had in two years. Who knew it was the calmness before a storm?



**ACCEPTANCE**

# Back and Forth

What an extravagant time of our  
lifetime,  
To introspect all that's fucked up  
And beautiful too.

What a wonderful feeling to swing  
Back and forth  
Back and forth  
Between doubt of loving and  
hating  
This riddle we call life.

We're walking on eggshells,  
So careful to find the balance  
between  
Self loathing and self love.

So careful to live in the present,  
Present that's made up of a controversial  
past and a future that's yet to form.

We might not confess it,  
But this time is a period of sweet and toxic  
addiction of self importance that comes  
from self sabotaging daily yard we spin.

Because as humans my love,  
We find meaning in pain more than  
happiness.  
And I think, it's okay.  
Okay as long as we embrace it.



## Why me?

As a young lady trapped in a conservative home, my dream was to dress the way I wanted once I left home. For some reason, I always wanted to wear a crop top. It was something small which was forbidden, something small I wanted to do anyway. But for the first time when I got to a city where I could dress my way, I had to undergo a surgery that scarred my belly.

I couldn't accept it. I couldn't believe I will never get a chance to wear the first crop top I bought and not be conscious about it. After recovering from physical pain, I mentally got lost into superficial concerns of life. I kept thinking over and over again, why me?





## Coming Back to Life

One might think that happiness comes from big achievements. However, I've realised, in reality, it's the little things that make you feel alive. While the world is struggling to accept the new normal, I am delirious to rediscover my new normal.

Everyday is a thrill as I slowly come back to life after 2 years. I am overjoyed that I can play again without having to rush to go to washroom again. Go out for an evening dinner a little far away. Take classes on zoom for longer periods of time. Sit for long without a back ache. Take a good night's sleep for hours without having to get up to pee. I got back the 1 hr and 36s mins of my day. I got back my will to live.



## The Crop Top

I have finally accepted my body the way it is, atleast to myself. I wore my first crop top and felt beautiful. I realised instead of hiding my scars, I should own it like scars of a veteran. I still cannot wear a crop top in public as my parents don't know but one day I will tell them about the story where their girl survived it all alone and came out stronger. And hopefully by then, they will be strong to accept the news too. And hopefully by then, they will not be concerned about my scars but help me fix my tiara too.



# It is NOT manageable

“About **20 percent to 80 percent of women** develop fibroids by the time they reach 50.”

Despite this fact, I did not know about it until my body screamed it out loud to me. My mother had it and her symptom was that she bled for months. My symptom was that I urinated 40 times a day and my stomach hurt all the time. My mom was told to wait till her menopause comes. I was told that my frequent dash to the washroom was because of my anxiety, and my protruding belly was my imperfection.

I managed for two years until I gave up and it turned out I needed a surgery. It was the size of a melon and was destroying my nearby organs. I took a call and decided to save myself.

I wonder how many women go through this silently. How many men tell them to wait it out or shame them into thinking that women just pee a lot. I wonder how many women suffer because they think it's normal. This project is a message from a silent sufferer in denial urging women to take charge.

This being common does not make it okay to suffer. This can be fixed, you can be fixed. Take charge and decide the amount of pain you suffer from. You don't need someone to save you, fix your tiara and save yourself.