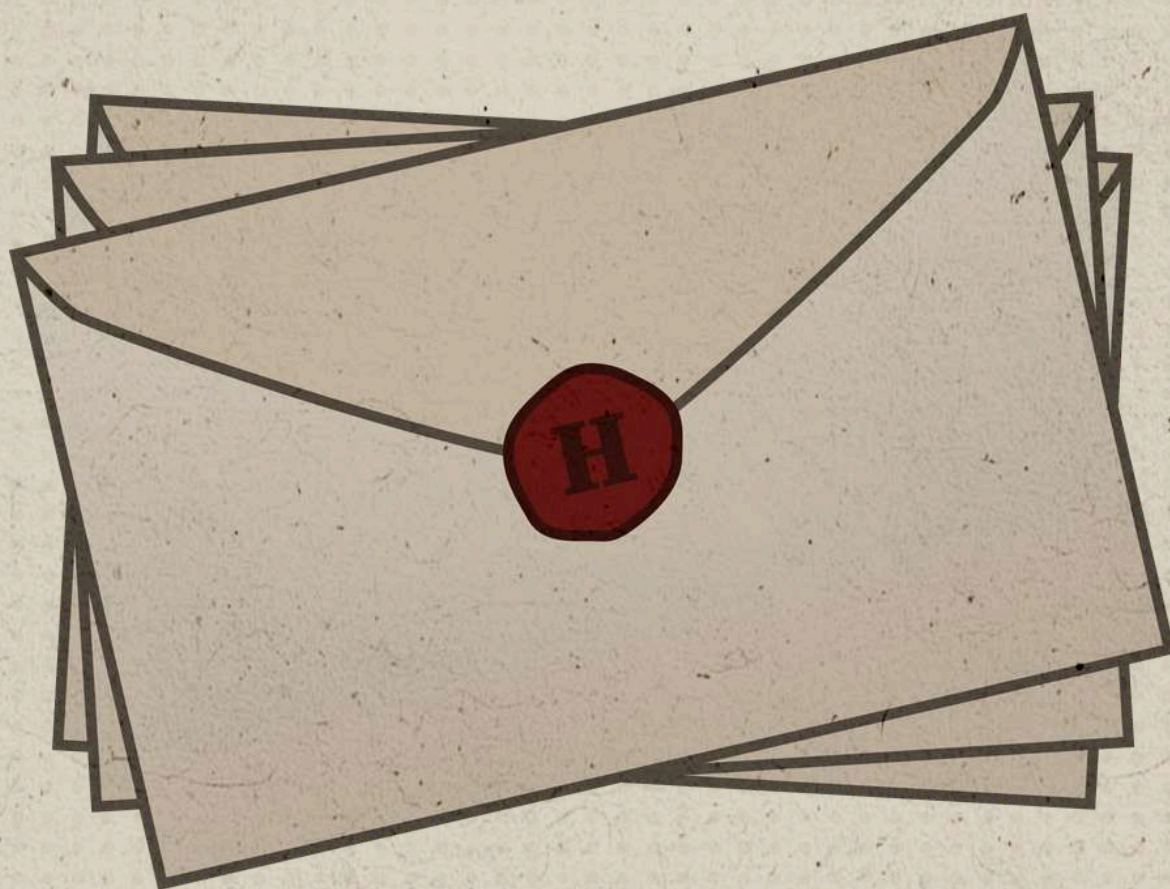


THE HORIZONS

TO THOSE WHO MAKE



MAY 2025



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Editor's Note

This month's theme hit a little differently.

We set out to spotlight “those who make”, builders of worlds, of mornings, of change, of us, and somewhere along the way, we found ourselves unearthing a deeper truth: that making is not always glamorous, rarely easy, and almost always invisible. Whether it's a scientific breakthrough giving a baby a chance at life, the hand that delivers your coffee before sunrise, or the teacher who shows up even when no one's listening, making takes effort, care, and grit.

This edition is a patchwork of stories that recognize that effort. Some pieces honor the quiet labor that holds our daily lives together. Others zoom in on the people we take for granted. And a few, like Azmah's brutally funny article, remind us that not everyone feels made for making, and that's okay too.

So here's to the makers: the visible and invisible, the celebrated and the tired, the ones who create something from nothing, even when the world isn't watching. **May** we start watching a little more.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH,

Editor-In-Chief, Saanjh Balpande

Managing Editor, Fadumo Omar



The Logic of Legacy: Why Math is the Ultimate Troll

By Shreya Maharaj Chettiar

Let's be real: math class sometimes feels like a centuries-old prank. You're sitting there, staring at a quadratic equation, wondering, "Who even invented this? And why do I need it?"

Math isn't just a subject; it's a living legacy, a centuries-old prank that continues to challenge and inspire us. Imagine sitting in class, staring at a quadratic equation, and wondering why you're wrestling with the ghosts of ancient geniuses. This seemingly insidious puzzle is actually a testament to human creativity and intellect, crafted by minds like Euclid, Aryabhata, and Ada Lovelace, who dared to dream beyond their time.

From the foundational concepts of geometry to the digital age's binary code, math is the ultimate legacy troll, weaving a narrative that connects past discoveries to present-day innovations. As we navigate through the chaos of calculations and the absurdity of algebra, we are not just students; we are heirs to a rich tradition of inquiry and exploration.

The OG Math Trolls: From Euclid to Aryabhata

First up: Euclid (300 BCE), the guy who looked at a sandbox and said, "You know what would be fun? Making kids prove triangle congruence for eternity." His book, *Elements*, wasn't just geometry—it was the world's first homework assignment, and we're still doing it.



Meanwhile, in ancient India, Aryabhata (5th century CE) was busy inventing the zero (yes, the number we all take for granted when we sleep through math class). He also calculated pi (π) before it was cool and figured out Earth's rotation—basically doing astrophysics while the rest of the world still thought the sun revolved around them.

Then there's Al-Khwarizmi (9th century), who basically invented algebra and thought, "Let's call the unknown 'x'—that won't confuse anyone." Thanks to him, we now have algorithms—which, ironically, control everything from TikTok recommendations to your mom's targeted ads.



Newton & Leibniz: The Calculus Beef

Ah, calculus. The math that makes physics possible—and students miserable. Isaac Newton and Gottfried Leibniz both "invented" calculus at the same time, leading to history's nerdiest feud.

Newton: "I discovered it first!"

Leibniz: "Nah, I published first!"

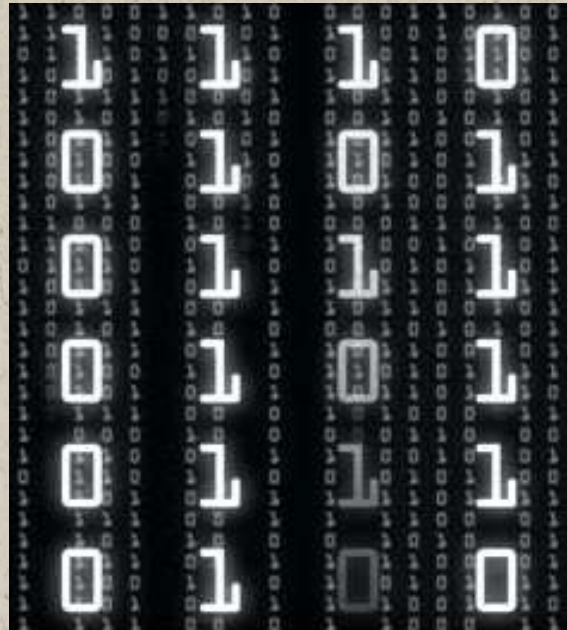
Math teachers today: "Now derive this function in under 30 seconds."

The real joke? Calculus is everywhere—rocket science, medicine, even predicting how fast your WiFi crashes during a test.

Binary Code: Leibniz's Secret Meme

Leibniz wasn't done. He saw the I Ching (an ancient Chinese divination system) and went, "What if we made a whole number system out of just 1s and 0s?"

Fast forward to today: every computer runs on binary. That means Leibniz accidentally created the foundation for Fortnite, ChatGPT, and your group chat drama.



Ada Lovelace: The First Programmer (And Chaos Agent)

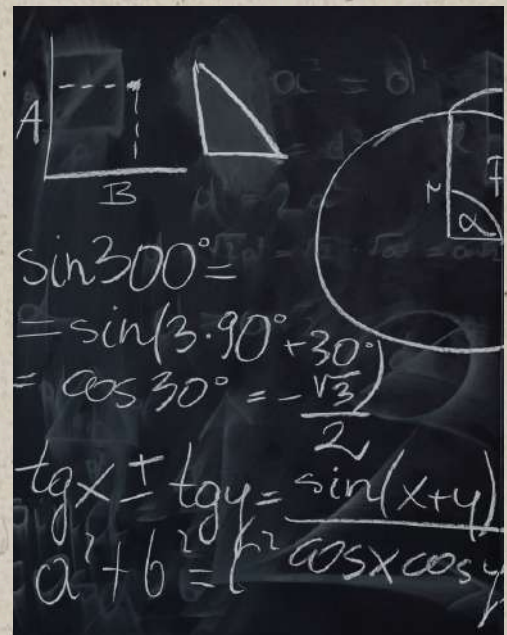
Then there's Ada Lovelace, who looked at an early mechanical computer (the "Analytical Engine") and said, "You know what this needs? Instructions." She wrote the first computer program—for a machine that didn't even exist yet.

Her legacy? Every glitchy update, every autocorrect fail, every time your laptop freezes—you can thank Ada.

Why Should You Care?

Because math isn't just about memorizing formulas—it's about inheriting a prank played across centuries.

- Pythagoras didn't know his theorem would help build iPhones.
- Aryabhata didn't realize his zero would enable everything from NASA to your online shopping addiction.
- Einstein didn't realize his equations would lead to GPS (and Uber drivers taking weird shortcuts).
- Alan Turing cracked Nazi codes, then accidentally invented modern computing.



So next time you're stuck on a math problem, remember: you're not just solving for x —you're continuing a legacy of genius trolls.

Conclusion

In the grand tapestry of human knowledge, math stands out as a playful legacy—one woven by brilliant minds who dared to question, explore, and innovate. Each equation we tackle and every theorem we unravel connects us not just to the past, but to future possibilities.

So, the next time you find yourself grappling with a complex problem, remember: you are part of an extraordinary continuum, inheriting the playful spirit of those ancient trolls. Embrace the challenge with humor and curiosity, for you are not just solving for x ; you are engaging with centuries of ingenuity.

Math is more than mere numbers; it is a testament to human creativity and resilience. Let this legacy inspire you to push boundaries, think critically, and, above all, find joy in the chaos. Now go forth and calculate. The legacy demands.

Recent Gene Editing Breakthrough Provides Hope for Rare Genetic Disorders

by Ceana Marianu

During the month of May this year, a groundbreaking medical achievement unfolded in the United States; it marked a significant milestone in the field of gene therapy. Doctors were able to successfully treat an infant that was diagnosed with a life-threatening genetic disorder. They did so using a customized gene editing therapy, showing the world the profound impact of scientific innovation on human health.

Precise Medicine

The infant, KJ, was diagnosed with severe carbamoyl phosphate synthetase 1 (CPS1) deficiency: a rare metabolic condition affecting approximately only one in 1.3 million. This disorder impairs the body's ability to convert ammonia into urea, which leads to the toxic accumulation of ammonia in the bloodstream. Traditionally, treatment options are limited, with liver transplantation being the primary treatment.

In a collaborative effort between the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania, researchers were able to develop a personalized gene editing therapy by utilizing a technique known as base editing. This method allows for the precise correction of genetic mutations without causing double-stranded breaks in DNA, which reduces potential risks associated with traditional gene editing approaches.

KJ received three doses of the therapy beginning in February 2025. Remarkably, the treatment corrected the faulty DNA responsible for his condition.

As of May 2025, KJ is reportedly thriving, though he will require lifelong monitoring to assess the long-term success and safety of the therapy.

The Broader Scope of Genetic Disorders



KJ's success represents a significant advancement in the treatment of rare genetic diseases. The ability to tailor gene editing therapies to individual patients opens new avenues for addressing conditions that were previously deemed untreatable. Furthermore, the use of base editing minimizes unintended genetic alterations, making it seem that the treatments are safe.

Experts suggest that this approach could be adapted to treat a variety of monogenic disorders and potentially transform how science currently views genetic medicine. However, further research and clinical trials are necessary to completely validate the effectiveness and safety of base editing across different conditions and patients.

Ethical and Regulatory Considerations

Although the promise of gene editing therapies proves immense, it also raises important ethical and regulatory questions. Ensuring that there is equitable access to such treatments, addressing potential long term effects, and establishing comprehensive regulatory frameworks are critical steps that must be taken to ensure the responsible and safe advancement of this technology.

The case of KJ highlights the importance of continued investment in genetic research and the development of policies that balance innovation with ethical considerations.

As gene editing technologies develop and evolve, there should be discussions amongst scientists, ethicists, policymakers, as well as the public, so that we as the world can navigate the complex landscape of genetic medicine.

Conclusion

The successful treatment of KJ with customized gene editing therapy is a great example of the transformative potential of precision medicine. This achievement not only offers hope to individuals affected by rare genetic disorders but also



shows the critical role that scientific innovation plays in improving human health. As we continue to explore the possibilities of gene editing, collaborative efforts and thoughtful deliberation will be key to realizing its full potential.



The Labor Behind Your Morning

by Amreen Kaur Maan

Before you even open your eyes, someone else's day has already begun. The bread is baked. The buses are fueled. The street outside your window has been swept, and the water running through your faucet has passed through hands and machines, through wires and pipes maintained by workers you'll never meet. Your morning, quiet, groggy, ordinary, is a patchwork of invisible labor stitched together before you even woke.

We don't notice it. Not out of cruelty, but because the systems around us are designed for invisibility. The more seamless the world becomes, the easier it is to forget the people who make that smoothness possible. The easier it is to confuse convenience with magic. But behind every sip of coffee, behind every light switch flipped and breakfast served, there are people. There are hands. There are tired feet, worn uniforms, unpaid overtime, small acts of care, and entire lives built around making yours easier.

Take that morning cup of coffee.

Before it ever reached your mug, someone planted a seed. Somewhere, years ago, a farmer, perhaps in Colombia or Ethiopia or Vietnam, bent their back to the soil, tended that plant through sun and storm, through political unrest or uncertain wages. Later, someone else harvested it, often by hand, in long rows under brutal heat. Then came the truck drivers, the port workers, the roasters, the packagers, the shelf stockers, the cashier or barista who handed it to you.

That cup of coffee is not simple. It is a chain of labor stretching across continents. A map of sacrifice. And yet, how often do we drink it without a thought?

Think of the person who cleaned your office before you arrived. The one who scrubbed coffee rings off your desk, emptied trash cans, and wiped down bathroom stalls. Who likely started their shift just as you ended yours. Maybe you've never seen their face. Maybe they pass by like a shadow in a hallway, a presence only noticed when something's "not right."

Or the early-morning delivery driver. The person who woke up at 4:00 a.m. to begin their route. Who climbed staircases, found curb space on crowded streets, and rang doorbells with weathered fingers. Sometimes, they're running late not because they're careless, but because they're doing too many jobs to keep their rent paid. Maybe you opened the door and grabbed the bag without making eye contact. Maybe you meant to say thank you, but were already checking your phone.

Behind your pressed shirt is someone who sewed in a poorly lit garment factory. Behind your cereal is a production line worker who stands all day beside churning machines. Behind your working faucet is a technician who braved a winter night to fix a broken line. Behind your child's quiet classroom is a teacher who showed up early with lesson plans in one hand and unpaid bills in the other.

All of it, your morning routine, is held up by people whose labor is often erased by routine itself. And many of them do it not because they dream of it, but because they must. Because someone has to fill the shelves, sweep the floors, and warm the ovens. They do it to pay for groceries, to put gas in the car, to cover hospital bills. For their families. For survival. And still, many of them take pride in doing it well.

We tend to reserve the term labor for what's visible, profitable, and professionalized. Doctors, lawyers, office workers, and CEOs. But what about the cafeteria worker who memorizes your lunch order? The sanitation worker who never misses a route? The nurse aide who sings to a patient while cleaning up messes no one else wants to see?

We don't see them, because we're not asked to. But what if, for one morning, they all stopped?

What if every cleaner, driver, baker, packer, barista, and mechanic pressed pause? The silence would be immediate. Not just the absence of sound, but the absence of motion. The stillness of systems grinding to a halt. You'd notice. You'd notice right away.

The Labor Behind Your Morning by Amreen Kaur Maan

Unseen labor is still labor. Uncelebrated labor is still labor. It is not glamorous. It is often thankless. But it is the kind of labor that makes everything else possible.

So, what do we do with that knowledge?

We honor it, not with guilt, but with awareness. With a policy that pays fair wages. With benefits. With dignity. We can begin by noticing. By thanking. By naming. By remembering that no morning is built alone.

Tomorrow, when you wake up and move through your routine, when you brew the coffee, pack the lunch, drop your child at school, pause. Just for a moment.

Think of the farmer. The sorter. The teacher. The janitor. The delivery driver. The trucker. The night-shift nurse. The security guard finished their post. The factory worker. The bakery assistant. The transit operator. The barista with aching feet. The school custodian unlocked doors before sunrise. The single parent is working the cash register. The stranger who made your morning happen, without ever asking for your applause.

Their work is invisible by design. But it doesn't have to be.

See them.

Because your morning is not just yours.

It is co-authored.



To Those Who Make (Me Uncomfortable)

by Azmah Alomari

Mothers. Mentors. Workers. Creators. Builders. Carers. Givers. People who do things, make things, sacrifice for others. How touching. How noble. How deeply... inconvenient.

You see, I would love to properly celebrate "those who make" if I could, even begin to understand how they manage to make anything at all. I, personally, can barely make it to my first-period class on time, much less make a contribution to society. I have attempted to make my bed before, but was overcome by existential dread halfway through and ended up lying down again, contemplating the structural inequalities of the world from within the folds of my half-made comforter. (Yes, the irony.)

Mothers are the prime example. They do everything like making dinner. Make sense out of toddler tantrums, algebra homework, and that one relative who always starts political arguments at Thanksgiving. And what do they get? Flowers once a year. Maybe a poorly written Hallmark card. Meanwhile, I got a participation trophy once for standing next to a team that won something.

Laborers, too. There's a guy who fixes the pothole in front of my building every month like clockwork. It reappears every two weeks, like it's been summoned back by some ancient asphalt demon. And yet, there he is again, unbothered. Fixing. Rebuilding. Making. I passed him once and said "thank you." He said, "For what?" I said, "For making the street not kill me." He laughed. I don't think he realized I was dead serious.

And what about teachers? Mentors? Creators? The people who pour out effort every day just for someone like me to raise my hand and ask, "Will this be on the test?" These are the people who hold the world together. They don't get articles in Forbes. They don't make it into PowerPoint presentations at corporate retreats. They don't have LinkedIn influencers writing threads about how their "5 AM discipline hustle grindset" was inspired by their third-grade teacher.

To Those Who Make (Me Uncomfortable)

by Azmah Alomari

I think of my own mother, whose greatest achievement is raising me a task comparable to herding caffeinated raccoons through an obstacle course made of AP classes, college applications, and moral crises. She made me who I am, which is... something. A person. A work-in-progress. A walking contradiction. A passionate advocate for human rights who also stress-eats Flamin' Hot Cheetos while doomscrolling Twitter. But still. A person.

"To Those Who Make." It sounds lovely, doesn't it? But when you really sit with it, when you really think about how much of the world is built by people who will never be celebrated, it makes you uncomfortable. It should. It should make you squirm a little in your seat, looking around and realizing that the chair you're in was made by someone, the words you're reading were typed by someone, the food in your fridge was grown, picked, shipped, stocked, and sold by someone.

And yet we forget. We forget to notice. We forget to thank. We forget to help.

So here's a small attempt at remembering. A thank-you, hidden inside layers of sarcasm and social commentary. A reminder that not everyone is a CEO, but someone made the chair the CEO sits in. Someone built the school. Someone taught the child. Someone raised the activist. Someone carried, cleaned, cooked, cried, and kept going.

To those who make who make things, make meaning, thank you. You made me uncomfortable.

And that's how I know you're doing something right.



Why We Don't Notice Care Until It's Missing

by Amreen Kaur Maan

Care is easy to overlook, until it's gone.

It's the hot meal that shows up just as you sit down, the clean laundry folded neatly in your drawer, the gentle check-in text you don't think to answer until hours later.

And somehow, all of it fades into the background. Until it stops.

That's when the silence rushes in. The sink piles up. The house is a mess. You realize no one reminded you to take your meds, asked if you ate, or noticed that something felt off. It's only then that you understand how much of your life was cushioned by unseen care. How often were you held without knowing it?

Because care, real, sustaining, everyday care, is invisible by design.

It's not flashy or loud. It doesn't seek credit. It often hides itself in patience, in repetition, in acts so small they're easy to dismiss. And we live in a world that's been taught to measure value by visibility, productivity, and profit. By that logic, care doesn't count. It doesn't scale. It doesn't sell. But ask anyone who's gone without it, and they'll tell you: care is the infrastructure of survival. Look at who does the caring. Mothers. Fathers. Grandparents. Nurses. Teachers. Domestic workers. Social workers. Volunteers. Often underpaid or not paid at all. Their work is vital, but it's often described as "help" instead of labor. Love instead of skill. Natural instead of trained. And that language matters.

When we treat care as instinct instead of effort, we set the stage for its erasure. We start to believe that care just "happens," that it doesn't cost energy or time or emotional bandwidth. We think the mom who remembers every school form and meal isn't working because she's at home.

Why We Don't Notice Care Until It's Missing

by Amreen Kaur Maan

We call the teacher "selfless" instead of advocating for smaller classes and better pay. We expect nurses to smile through burnout. We say "thank you" without changing the conditions.

And so, care stays quiet. Until it can't anymore.

Until the teacher burns out and quits mid-year. Until the mom stops picking up the pieces and suddenly no one knows where anything is. Until the friend who always checked in just... doesn't. Until the person who never said "I'm tired" disappears from the group chat. Until the nurse gets sick. Until the cleaner doesn't come. Until the dinner isn't made. Until the glue holding everything together cracks

Only then do we realize it was glue at all.

Care is not endless. It's not automatic. It is work. Often beautiful, meaningful work, but work nonetheless. And when we forget that, we end up building families, communities, and economies on the backs of people who are exhausted and unseen. What would it mean to see care in real time, not just in its absence? It might look like paying domestic workers fair wages. It might look like giving teachers decision-making power. It might look like pausing mid-meal to say, "I see the work that went into this." It might look like building policies that support caregivers, not just with applause, but with actual support.

It also means we must widen our idea of what counts as care. It's not just washing dishes or bandaging wounds. It's emotional labor. It's listening. It's remembering birthdays. It's setting boundaries. It's sending the job link. It's picking up the phone when someone's spiraling. It's holding space. And that labor, deeply human, often invisible, is what allows people to feel safe, connected, and whole.

Care is not soft. It is not weak. It is not extra. It is the foundation.

And yet, it's the one thing most of us are taught not to ask for, not to center, not to name. We're taught to glorify independence. To work through illness. To be "low maintenance." To "not be a burden." But nobody gets through life alone. And when we pretend we can, it's not strength, it's denial.

Why We Don't Notice Care Until It's Missing by Amreen Kaur Maan

The truth is, we notice care when it's missing because it was always there. We just didn't see it.

So here's a quiet suggestion: notice it now. While it's happening. Say thank you with your actions, not just your words. Give people rest before they break. Share the load before someone disappears under it. Honor care while it's still being offered, not just when it's withheld. Because care shouldn't have to disappear for us to finally realize how much it mattered.



To Those Who Make

by Keziah Nyakoker

To the teens who are trying to build something real out of the life they were given, this is for you.

To the ones working long hours after school to help their families. To those pushing past fear, doubt, and exhaustion just to prove that they can be the first. The first to graduate. The first to heal. The first to break a cycle no one thought could be broken.

To those who were told they wouldn't make it. And kept going anyway.

You take risks that no one sees. You say yes to growth even when it scares you. You leave your comfort zone not because it's easy, but because you know you were made for more than what you were handed.

You show up. You try again. You dream with your feet on the ground and your eyes wide open.

Maybe you're not celebrated for it. Maybe you're rarely asked how you're doing. But that doesn't make your effort any less powerful.

What you are building matters.

You are creating a future where there wasn't one. A path where none existed. Hope in a place that needed it. Every step you take is a quiet act of rebellion against every limit placed on you.

You might not hear this enough, but we see you.

You are not just surviving. You are shaping something better for yourself, for your family, for the ones coming after you.

Even if no one says it out loud, even if the spotlight never lands on you,
what you're doing counts.

And you are not invisible here.

Thank you for making something out of the pieces. Thank you for
choosing growth. Thank you for proving that even when the odds are
heavy, you are heavier.

You are the difference.



Creative Labor Is Still Labor

by Amreen Kaur Maan

We tend to separate creativity from labor. We talk about artists as dreamers, writers as hobbyists, teachers as nurturers, and designers as “naturally gifted,” but rarely as workers. The word labor evokes sweat, uniformed shifts, and visible exertion. We picture people in fields, factories, and offices. But labor comes in many forms, and creative labor, though quieter, messier, and often solitary, is labor all the same.

The truth is: there is no art without effort. No music without repetition. No lesson plan without planning. No novel, logo, performance, or painting that came into the world without hours, sometimes years, of invisible work. But because creative labor doesn't always leave a physical trace, or isn't measured in traditional economic ways, it is often diminished or dismissed. Creative labor is frequently treated as something optional or indulgent. A luxury, not a necessity. The musician is expected to play “for exposure.” The artist is asked to donate their work “for the cause.” The teacher is praised for their “passion” while being underpaid and overworked. Emotional and intellectual effort is mistaken for ease simply because it's not manual.

But let's call it what it is: work.

Creative labor is hours spent learning a craft, failing, and starting again. It's revising a poem ten times before it says what you feel. It's a dancer perfecting a movement the audience will see for ten seconds. It's a teacher adjusting lessons to reach a child who's falling behind, not just academically, but emotionally. It's a designer staying up late to finish something that communicates exactly what it needs to, knowing no one will understand how long it took to make it look “simple.”

This labor is often unpaid, underpaid, or insecure. Many creatives patch together a livelihood through part-time gigs, freelance work, and personal sacrifices. There are no benefits, no HR departments, no union protections for much of this labor.

And yet it continues, because someone must make meaning in the world, must reflect back beauty, complexity, truth.

The pandemic put this into sharper relief. As theaters, schools, libraries, and art spaces shut down, many artists and educators lost work overnight. Yet, during lockdown, what did people turn to for comfort? Books. Movies. Music. Virtual exhibits. Online workshops. The very labor we undervalued became our collective survival kit.

Still, this didn't translate to sustained recognition. Artists were asked to perform for free online. Teachers were expected to adapt overnight, often without additional support. The idea persisted that creative and emotional labor comes from a bottomless well of passion, that if you love it, you shouldn't need compensation.

But love for one's work doesn't make it any less laborious. In fact, the more heart you put into something, the more invisible the toll can be. Creative labor requires vulnerability, emotional risk, and long periods of internal work that others may never see.

This also applies to emotional labor, work rooted in care, empathy, and relationship-building. Teachers, social workers, therapists, and community organizers do work that is deeply creative and deeply exhausting. They adapt, communicate, and mediate. They carry stories that don't leave them when they clock out, because often, there is no clocking out.

This kind of labor doesn't show up in economic metrics like GDP, but it shows up in the health of a society. It shows up in a child who feels safe at school, a poem that makes someone feel less alone, a mural that honors lost lives, and a play that sparks a difficult conversation.

Recognizing creative labor as labor means widening our definition of work. It means understanding that value isn't always measured in output or income. It's measured in impact. In connection. In culture.

It also means a policy change. It means funding the arts, paying educators and creators fairly, building protections for freelance and gig workers, and supporting mental health for those in emotionally taxing fields. It means disrupting the myth of the “starving artist” or the “teacher who does it for love,” as a way to justify underpayment.

It means cultural change too. Learning to ask, “How long did this take you?” instead of “Can you just whip something up?” Learning to credit creators. To pay them. To thank them. To stop expecting labor for free under the guise of passion.

Because labor shaped by love is still labor.

And without creative labor, we lose our capacity for vision. For healing. For imagining better futures.

So the next time a child sings at a school recital, a friend sends you a handmade card, a writer moves you to tears, a teacher sees a part of your child that others miss, remember: that moment is built on hours, days, and years of work.

Work you may not see. But work, all the same.

Let's honor it accordingly.



Legacy of Resilience: How Indentured Indians contributed to South Africa

By Shreya Maharaj Chettiar

When the SS Truro arrived in Durban in 1860, it carried more than just human cargo; it brought the shattered dreams of my ancestors. As the ship's hold opened, the stench of despair mixed with the salty air. Those who stepped onto the shores were not just laborers; they were mothers, fathers, and children, each with a story etched into their weary faces. They left behind everything—families, traditions, and the comforting embrace of their villages.

I can only imagine the fear that gripped them as they boarded that ship, knowing they were sailing into the unknown. Punjabi mothers clutched their children tightly, singing lullabies that echoed their homes, while Bhojpuri men held onto fading memories of their villages. Telugu children, wide-eyed and terrified, faced a world that promised nothing but hardship. Coming from places like Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab, they carried the weight of their cultures, and in that moment, they became a collective of hope and resilience.

The Violence That Forged the Indentured Laborers

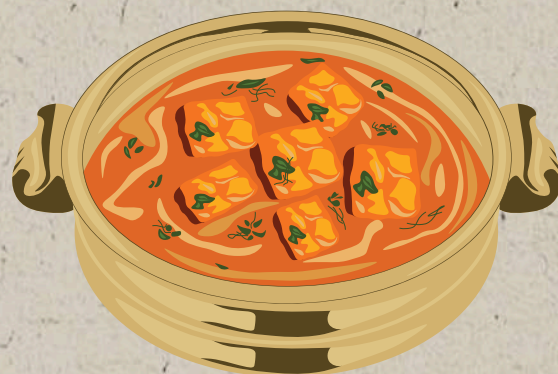
The journey on the SS Truro was a brutal awakening. The overseers' lashes were merciless, leaving scars on bodies and souls alike. My heart aches when I think of my ancestors, swinging a hoe under the relentless Natal sun, bearing the burdens of their families while fighting off the advances of the British supervisors. The British treated my ancestors as mere tools for their economic gain, stripping away their dignity and humanity. They were often forced to work long hours without proper food or rest, their worth measured only by their ability to produce profits.

In the barracks, they faced inhumane conditions—crowded, unsanitary, and devoid of warmth. Their languages were mocked, their traditions belittled. The British tried to erase their identities, imposing a foreign culture while banning the very languages that tied them to their heritage. Yet, at night, in the flicker of stolen candlelight, the Ramayana and Bhagavad Gita were whispered, a lifeline connecting them to their roots and their fight for survival.

The Food That Emerged

With no ghee, no proper rice, or spices only meal and scraps, they created culinary miracles. Dosa was made with cake flour instead of the traditional rice flour which they had no access to, and I cherish my ancestors' stories of biryani adapted to local spices. It was in these humble kitchens that ingenuity flourished, leading to creations like the legendary bunny chow—a hollowed-out loaf of bread filled with flavorful sabji, a testament to resourcefulness and the blending of cultures. In their unification, they were forced to adapt traditional dishes and village customs, forging a unique South African Indian culture that blended British, African, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Urdu influences.

This new culture thrived, developing a distinct accent and language while remaining deeply rooted in our Indian traditions. The Zulu women introduced amadumbe (taro root), leading to the mixed curry that I love. Although the British labeled our food "bastardized," we called it survival. The familiar scent of Durban curry that fills our homes? It's the legacy of my ancestors, who fought fiercely to keep their identities alive, one flavorful dish at a time.



Economic Contributions and Resilience

The contributions of Indian South Africans to the economy are vast and enduring. From the early days of backbreaking labor on sugarcane fields and railway lines, where both men and women toiled tirelessly, to the emergence of vibrant marketplaces, my ancestors laid a robust foundation. Pioneering women like Mrs. R.D. Naidu established early trading stalls, demonstrating entrepreneurial spirit against immense odds. Notable figures like Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and A. I. A. Ebrahim were instrumental in the struggle for political and economic justice, their leadership shaping the nation's future.

In the business sector, individuals such as the visionary Ashok S. S. S. J. Sadia and the astute late Dr. N. S. Pillay built successful enterprises spanning manufacturing, retail, and finance, creating employment and contributing significantly to the national wealth. Today, Indian South African women like Dr. Devi Rajab have made invaluable contributions to academia and ethical leadership in business, while men such as Vivian Reddy have excelled in infrastructure development and energy sectors. Our community's footprint extends across agriculture, with many families becoming successful farmers, to the cutting edge of technology, where young innovators are making their mark. The bustling shops and diverse businesses that line our streets, from family-run corner stores to large corporations, stand as proud monuments to the hard work, perseverance, and ingenuity of those who came before us, transforming adversity into remarkable success.

In medicine, trailblazers like Dr. Monty Naicker dedicated their lives to providing healthcare to underserved communities, often at great personal risk during the apartheid era. Following in their footsteps, countless Indian South African doctors, both male and female, now serve in hospitals and clinics across the country, contributing to the health and well-being of all South Africans. The establishment of pharmacies and healthcare businesses further underscores this vital contribution to the nation's infrastructure.

The Fire They Lit in Freedom's Struggle

When Gandhi formed the Natal Indian Congress in 1894, it wasn't just lawyers who joined; it was my ancestors, the very laborers and market vendors, who brought their inherent strength and unwavering resilience to the movement. The spirit of Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, who began his pivotal work against discrimination in South Africa, profoundly influenced the local struggle, instilling principles of passive resistance and non-violent defiance.

I often reflect on the profound sacrifices made during the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign, where their grandchildren, both young men and women, bravely filled the prisons, demanding equality. When the ANC launched the Defiance Campaign, our people marched shoulder to shoulder, united in the unwavering fight for justice and the restoration of human dignity. This struggle saw pivotal figures like Ahmed Kathrada, an Indian South African anti-apartheid activist, dedicate his entire life to the cause. From his early involvement in the Passive Resistance Campaign to his arrest at Liliesleaf Farm and subsequent life imprisonment as a Rivonia Trialist alongside Nelson Mandela, Kathrada's unwavering commitment to a non-racial, democratic South Africa was a beacon of hope and an embodiment of selfless sacrifice. After his release in 1989, he continued to serve as a Member of Parliament and a moral compass for the nation, famously establishing the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation to further promote non-racialism and human rights.



The legacy of Indian South African leadership extends powerfully into the labor movement. Visionaries like Jay Naidoo, a key figure in the formation and leadership of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), played an indispensable role in uniting workers across racial lines against apartheid. His relentless advocacy for fair wages, safe working conditions, and the rights of all laborers, regardless of their background, significantly weakened the apartheid regime and laid the groundwork for a more equitable economy. Many other Indian South African men and women, often unheralded, built powerful trade unions in industries ranging from textiles to transport, fighting for the dignity of working people and contributing directly to the eventual dismantling of oppressive systems.

The apartheid regime's cruel Group Areas Act attempted to fracture our communities, forcibly relocating Indian families into designated areas. Yet, this hateful legislation could not extinguish the vibrant cultural tapestry we had woven, nor could it erase the Zulu traditions that became part of our Hindi lexicon or silence the Tamil hymns resonating in temples. Our shared experiences of struggle forged an unbreakable bond, a testament to our collective humanity.

A Legacy of Strength

The journey of Indian South Africans is far from over. It is a journey of continued resilience, cultural evolution, and unwavering spirit. As inheritors of such a powerful legacy, we are the active architects of a brighter, more inclusive future for all. With every step taken, every innovation created, and every act of compassion extended, the sacrifices of those who bravely came before are honored.

Despite the geographical distance and the passage of generations, the core of Indian culture remains vibrant. The food, language, and customs may have adapted to the South African landscape—a delicious Durban curry is distinct from one in Delhi, and the colloquialisms of South African English pepper our conversations. Yet, this evolution doesn't diminish our Indian identity. It enriches it. We continue to follow Vedic traditions, observe customs like removing shoes indoors, and celebrate festivals that connect us to our roots. Even now, as I personally embark on the journey of learning the language of Indian heritage, I feel a deeper connection to the linguistic heritage that was once suppressed but never truly lost.

Legacy of Resilience: How Indentured Indians contributed to South Africa

By Shreya Maharaj Chettiar

We rise, not as victims of history, but as a testament to the enduring human spirit. This rich tapestry, woven from diverse threads and forged in the crucible of adversity, stands as a powerful reminder for the world: that from the depths of hardship, humanity can always cultivate a legacy of triumph and build a future rooted in unity and respect.



The Poet's Silence

by Fatima Nihal

They say the poet's mind is an endless stream,
A fountain of words, a boundless dream.
But tell me, can ink touch the page so freefreelyen the heart wrestles with
what must be?

The words do not spill without a fight,
They rise from shadows, not just light.
Each verse is a wound, each silence a flame,
A whispered truth, too wild to name.

Creation seeks the heart laid bare,
A fragile courage few can wear.
For the muse is not bound by time or will,
It comes like rain, or leaves you still.

Writing is not a task of ease,
It is the heart's surrender, the soul's pleas.
The pen trembles with the weight it holds,
Carrying secrets that silence unfolds.

So do not think a poet's craft is flight,
It's the dark turned gold in the heart's own night.



The House That Wasn't There

by Abdulla Kharrat

I woke up in a kitchen that didn't belong to me.

The light was soft — too soft — like memory trying to remember itself. The tile floor was cracked in the corner, just like the one in our childhood home, the one my mother covered with a rug instead of fixing, whispering “it's just a line in the earth.”

There was a smell in the air. Eggs? No. Soap. The sharp, citrus kind that clings to hands and lingers in your cuticles. My hands were raw. My nails chipped. I looked down and saw they weren't mine.

They were hers.

She used to wake up before the world did.

4:30 a.m. sharp. Boil water. Pack lunches. Iron shirts. Fold corners into neat, invisible squares.

Not once did I hear her complain.

But I remember the way her ankles swelled.

I remember her falling asleep at the table, fork still in hand. She never built buildings. She built time.

He enters next. Not my father. A man I've seen on buses. On rooftops. In silence.

Hands like tree bark.

Knees that grind like old machines.

Boots stained with dust and oil and something that won't come out.

He doesn't speak.

He never needed to.

His silence screams of 10-hour shifts, of wages stretched thin, of backs bent in service of dreams they'll never sleep long enough to enjoy.



◆ The House That Wasn't There
by Abdulla Kharrat ◆

They made this world.
But not the one you see.
The one underneath.
The world that wakes before yours.
That feeds yours.
That holds yours when it's too tired to go on.

I blink.

The kitchen is gone.
My phone is in my hand.
A thousand messages. A meeting in ten minutes.
But I still feel the soap. The boots. The silence.
I still hear her voice in the rug:
"It's just a line in the earth."

Maybe it was.

Or maybe it was the crack she kept from splitting the house apart.

To those who build, bend, clean, cook, raise, repair, rise, and return —
We see you.
We remember.
Even if the world forgets, we carry the house you made inside us.
Forever.



El arte que se viste : La moda

by Maria Karla Cedeño Betancourt

Art is everywhere: on gallery walls, on a theater stage, or even in caves that are over 100,000 years old. But there's also a kind of art that walks, wrinkles, folds, and gets washed. The kind of art you wear. Behind every garment, every runway, and every personal style, someone is creating. We're talking about fashion.

When we think about "creating art," we usually picture someone painting, molding clay, or carving wood. But creating can also mean choosing a fabric, cutting a pattern, imagining a shape, sewing an idea together. It's about mixing colors, textures, and silhouettes. Fashion isn't just clothing; it's a way of saying who we are without saying a word. That's creating, too.

Fashion and culture are deeply connected. As Eicher and Sumner (1995) explain, clothing is one of the oldest forms of cultural expression. Through the way we dress, we show where we come from, what we believe, and how we think. The way we dress is also a way of saying, "This is who I am, and this is what I want to show the world."

But behind every piece of clothing that sends a message, there's someone who imagined it, designed it, and brought it to life. Fashion doesn't appear out of nowhere. It's the result of a lot of people working together: designers, seamstresses, embroiderers, pattern makers, tailors, illustrators... People who turn thread into identity and sketches into reality. From those working in big fashion houses to those sewing late at night at home, fashion is, above all, a team effort—full of creativity, technique, and a lot of patience.

And even though all that work often goes unnoticed, there are moments when the whole world watches. One of those is the Met Gala. That night, fashion becomes a show, a conversation, living culture. Every year, a new theme pushes designers to go all out. And they do. It's not just about looking good—it's about telling a story, making people feel something. Behind every outfit are weeks—sometimes months—of work. Hands, cutting, stitching, gluing, testing, adjusting... and hearts putting everything into making that piece speak for itself. These aren't just red carpet looks—they're ideas, emotions, and messages made into fabric.

In the end, fashion isn't just what we see in magazines or store windows. It's the result of people who imagine, who work, who make, who create.



She Holds the Light in Her Arms

by Yasmen Mhanna

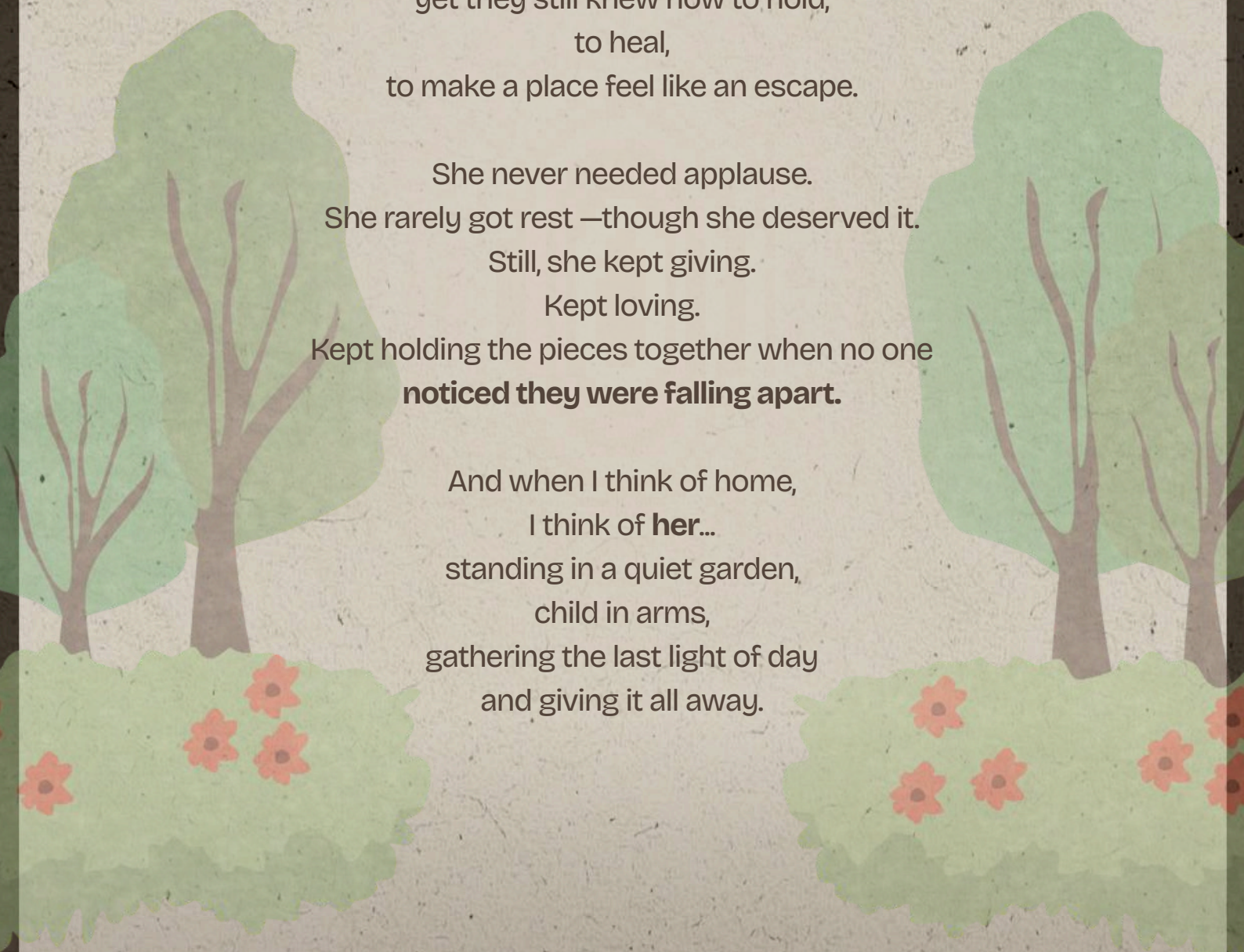
I don't remember the first time she held me,
but the way the sun rests on her now,
I think it remembers.

She moved through the world feebly.
like someone who'd known pain
but chose love anyway.

Her hands were tired. Always.
yet they still knew how to hold,
to heal,
to make a place feel like an escape.

She never needed applause.
She rarely got rest —though she deserved it.
Still, she kept giving.
Kept loving.
Kept holding the pieces together when no one
noticed they were falling apart.

And when I think of home,
I think of **her**...
standing in a quiet garden,
child in arms,
gathering the last light of day
and giving it all away.



THE HORIZONS
TO THOSE WHO MAKE



Artwork by: Yasmen Mhanna

Thank You For Reading!
See You In The Next Edition!