

ONLY DYING SPARKLES by Sascha Aurora Akhtar

Only Dying Sparkles

is an illuminated poetry object combining poetry and illustration as a deck of 44 tarot-style cards (and a 'wild card') produced by zimZalla art objects (a Manchester-based press you should definitely explore if you want to create literary objects of beauty). Poet Sascha Akhtar collaborated with transcendental artist John Alexander Arnold.

These Tarot-style journey poems can be used as a mental health tool. No formal tarot guidelines apply – you are at liberty to use and relate to the cards however you wish.

Virtually all the poems are meditations on death and dying. In this way the object belongs to the Vanitas genre – a tradition which flourished in the 16th & 17th century and focused on contemplation of the temporal nature of our existence. This poetry project also marks a progression in Sascha's style, as she tackles huge emotions in short and succinct poems.

The poetry deck's name comes from a poem by Paul Celan (1920 – 1970), translated by John Felstiner:

Finsternis (Darkness)

The urns of stillness are empty.

In branches

the swelter of speechless song

chokes black

Blunt hourposts

grope towards a strange time

A wing-beat whirls.

For the owls in the heart

death dawns

Treason falls into your eyes –

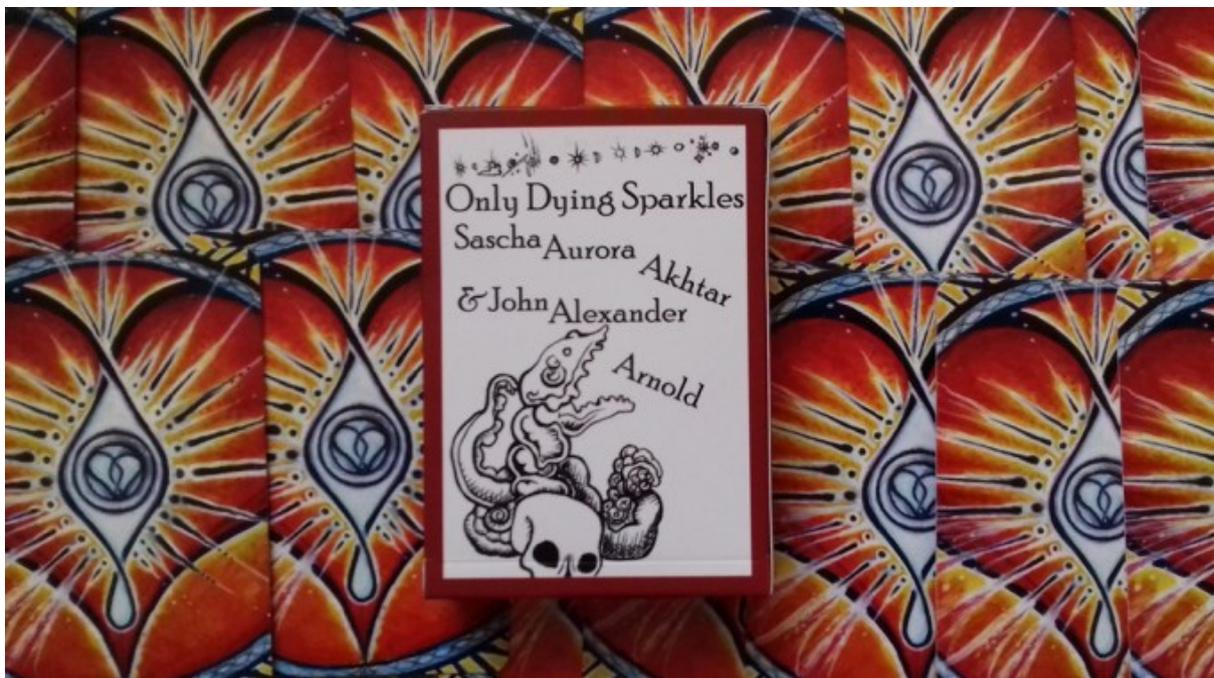
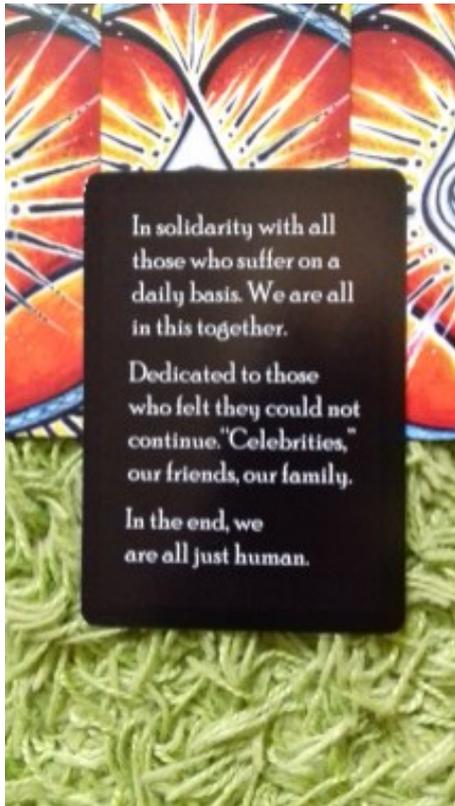
My shadow strives with your scream –

The east smokes after this night...



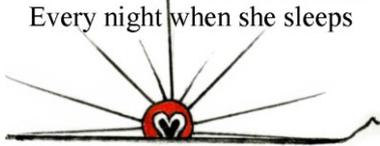
Only dying
sparkles.



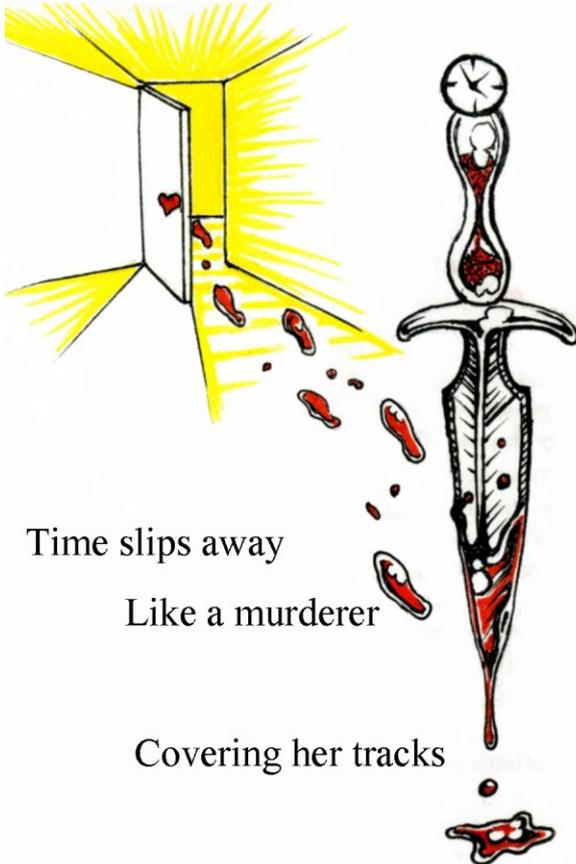




Every night when she sleeps

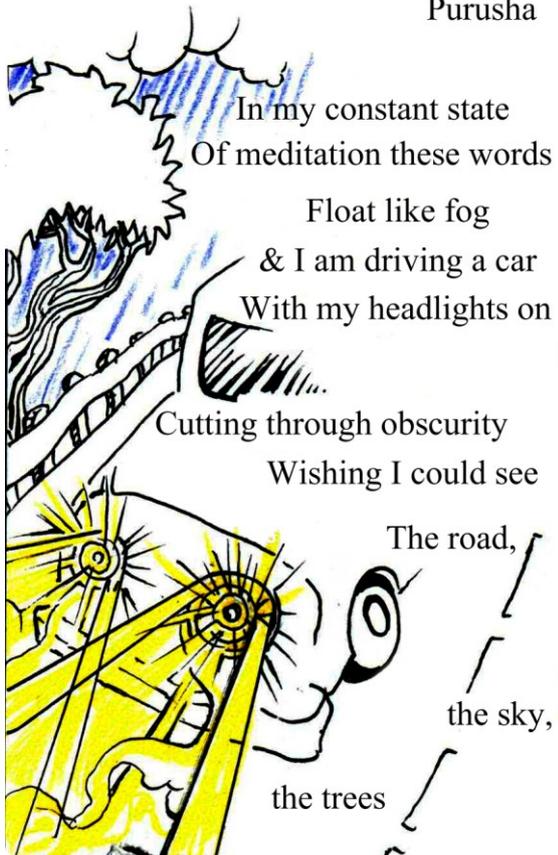


Red sun rising
in her head



Time slips away
Like a murderer
Covering her tracks

2
Purusha



Sweet heat
hell blossoms

rivet my



Deathshead smile

When u have death within u
I'm just going to come out & fucking
Say it, mate everything is meaningful

Not related to death within, in everything
is just so I want 2 say thank u w/out
the mEDz
's like a slicey, very gooey knife's



Edge



HOW
vetted these dayz &
nightz have CoME 2 paSs
in suRRenDer
to tHe caUSE of LoSS



LeT us nOw re-VaMP oUr pOSTuREs

& IEAvE oLD IOVeS beHiND

& fAsHIoN NeW bRIdGES

oN whIch to cROSS

ouR mANY, mAny

DEATH-CASCADES



Photo credit: Christa Holka

Sascha Aurora Akhtar Sascha Aurora Akhtar is a poet of the liminal — someone for whom all is magic|K|. She considers herself a 'Pakistani-British-American: something reflected in the linguistic registers in her work. Her six poetry collections have been published by Salt, Shearsman, Contraband, The Emma Press, Knives, Forks & Spoons Press and ZimZalla — all UK publishers. Her debut fiction, [Of Necessity And Wanting](#), was published by The 87 Press in October 2020, while Oxford University Press (India) will publish her first book of [Translations of the work of Hijab Imtiaz](#) in 2021. Sascha's *Poems For Eliot*, from the book #LoveLikeBlood, was named number one poem of the past five years by Poetry Wales in the summer of 2019.

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