

That place we call home

Thulasi Wigneswaran

The car, it reeks of Western Sydney

- The *Pillayar* from the Sevo shop is hanging on for dear life by blue tack, under the careful watch of the speedometer
- The instructions chit from the saree shop of ‘how to get to our North Parramatta location’, is heedlessly discarded in the space beneath the dashboard
- The sticker on the windscreen from my *mama*’s workshop in Pendo is supposed to serve as a prompt of the next car service
- The crumpled brown paper bag in the door compartment that once carried the promise of hot salty fish cutlets from Toonie but is now home to used tissues
- The Woolies Wenty receipt that has taken shelter in the glove compartment, from the time we had a jam shortage when preparing my cousins Sri Lankan wedding cake
- The dirt that found home on, and in, the car from that last trip through Blacktown up to the Blue Mountains
- The tissue box sitting for all to see in the rear-view window, so you know I’m ethnic, without shame.
- The packet of face masks that occupies the drink console - a souvenir from *amma*’s last rendezvous with the immunology ward at Westmead hospital
- My *miridingam* rolling around loudly, and carelessly in the boot after being retrieved from the family home in Kellyville, where it sat collecting dust for over a year.
- The Granville parking ticket – from the time I switched out tahini for chilli garlic sauce on my falafel wrap – part on the windscreen, part sliding into the abyss beneath the screen, where many before it shared the same fate.

I’ll empty the car; I’ll clean it.

But it will only be
a matter of time.