

## Dear Mr Hollywood

Dear Mr Hollywood,  
when I was young I wanted to be someone else.  
I wanted to be a whole different person - *every* single day,  
to live *different* lives and tell *different* stories  
because I thought that it'd be fun.  
Day in, day out, play pretend  
of course I'm down!  
I wanted to be a superhero.  
Trying to be just and to be all that's good and right.  
To struggle with what's right and wrong.      Life and death.  
I wanted to be a smart detective with a tragic backstory,  
solving murders and arresting criminals  
all while being haunted by his past.  
I wanted to be a serial killer.  
Charming and smart, both feared and admired by the audience.  
Characters with three dimensions,  
pentagonal prisms.  
A thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle.

And Now?  
Now I'm anything but that!  
Now, I'm in a box,  
a piece of dark chocolate amongst a sea of white morsels.  
I'm stuck at the bottom  
suppressed by the weight  
of all the carefully cut  
perfectly decorated  
factory-made  
white ones.  
Gasping for air I try to climb to the top.  
You take a bite of me and you spit it out  
"too intense!" you say  
and you let me rot in a bucket  
with dozens of other half-chewed dark ones.

We are suffocating in your toxic saliva.

Who do you think I am?

Never mind!

I'm the taxi driver,

here to take your favorite characters  
from one place to another.

I'm the heart surgeon

created to give the latest handsome face a heart transplant,  
just in time to save his worthless life.

What?

Are you tired of cutting out handsome  
straight white men from magazine covers?

Or else I'm the nerdy brown friend  
complemented by an awkward hair-do  
and a sweater vest.

The nerdy brown friend who's socially awkward  
can't speak a word of English.

Hilarious!

It's funny because I don't have a proper voice to express myself.

Wasn't it funny enough that I had less screen time  
than the leading man's crotch?

You shove me in front of the screen for a few seconds

I'm goddamn fishing bait,

here to catch over a billion eager sets of brown eyes  
wanting to see themselves in your movie screen.

But, once in a while you decide to give me a bit of extra time

I rejoice!

Finally, complex characters, people with a bit of depth!

Right?

Wrong!

*The Love Guru -*

An Indian spiritualist telling corny jokes  
in a thick subcontinental accent,  
played by a white actor in brown make-up

*The Party -*

An Indian film extra telling corny jokes  
in a thick subcontinental accent  
played by a white actor in brown make-up.

*Short Circuit one and two –*

An Indian scientist telling corny jokes  
in a thick subcontinental accent  
played by a white actor in brown make-up.

You paint your men with mud and shit  
dress them with an Indian accent  
and give them some mumbo-jumbo to speak.  
You've hit me with this degrading junk  
now I'm bruised,  
bleeding and choking  
in my own brown blood.

Mr Hollywood,  
I have no words to speak.  
No emotions to feel.  
No one to love or to be loved by.  
Mr Hollywood,  
I am but another small man in the background of your movie screen  
eclipsed by a bright white shadow.

Am I here to fulfil your diversity quota?  
to make you rich?  
Fodder to build your mansions  
and purchase custom Lamborghinis?  
Mr Hollywood,  
I'm a second class citizen in your ivory utopia  
asked to sit at the back of the bus,  
made to beg the streets for another job,  
forced to turn into a "welcome to Kwik-E-Mart" machine  
to make you laugh.  
You keep me at gunpoint and I do as you command.

You say:

“White chocolates thrown in mud  
still tastes better than the dark ones”

I object

I am sublime

woven with an intricate combination of ingredients  
mixed together

kept in the oven for far too long or not enough.

I may be burnt, I may be underdone

I might have a hint of extra cocoa  
or maybe I don't have enough.

It doesn't matter.

Taste it because that's who I am

I am *not* factory made.

You cannot label me and tell me who I am.

I will *not* be your taxi driver

I will *not* be your heart surgeon

I *will not* be *your* nerdy brown friend —

because I am so much more than that

I will not bow down to your narrow-minded perception of who I am.

Mr Hollywood,

It's about time you put *my syllabic name in lights*.