**Where I’m From**

**By Sana Mallam inspired by George Ella Lyon**

I am from the enchantment of snatched gems of the Taj Mahal, fragile ruins of ancient Damascus and the crown colony of Penang.

I am from the sizzle of aromatic curry and the frost of problematic Mcflurry.

From my father’s loving piggyback rides and my mother’s beautiful henna designs.

I’m from Monopoly nights, conker fights and tart plump blackberries of Epping Forest.

I’m from colourful sweet-scented roses transformed into dazzling jewellery.

From harsh metallic smelling whitening creams used to cover my brownness.

I’m from crispy crunchy jalebi and sticky, fluffy cotton candy.

From traumatic Bollywood and melodramatic Eastenders.

I’m from tangled silk saris and conforming shalwar kameez dipped in cockney accents.

I’m from crazy traditions and shady politicians.

I’m from scrubbed swollen henna hands of multicultural schools who don’t follow rules.

From homegrown potatoes and mint, cooked into spicy Bombay aloo and chutney.

I’m from ecstatic moments of free toys in cereals and grandfather’s great stories.

I’m from a proud rolling pin, perfecting moon rotis and from grandmother’s tea parties

From embarrassment of exotic packed lunches, never being English enough.

I’m from always being told girls can achieve anything but growing up to be limited.

I’m from clinking bangles and jingle bells.

From glossy dates, juicy olives and spiritual Ramadan.

I am from bacterial saliva of Islamophobia and alienation.

I am from a pulled hijab, fear of being pushed at the Underground.

From seeking comfort in the Holy Quran.

I am from a confused identity of a lost and found diary of 1996.

I’m now from Sophia Duleep Singh, privileged to be born in a land of opportunity. Spreading my wings, embracing my imperfections, values and customs.

I am on a journey to reject patriarchy and inspire others.