



**Brampton Arts
Organization**



THE BRAMPTON POETRY PROJECT

November 2024

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Brampton Arts Organization (BAO) believes in the transformative power of words to inspire and enrich our daily experiences. In 2024 BAO began The Brampton Poetry Project which places poetry in unexpected places across the city.

For the inaugural Brampton Poetry Project, running from September to November 2024, BAO placed the work of 15 local poets up on bus shelters across the city.

Alongside these poets, we hope to bring moments of literary beauty and contemplation into everyday life in Brampton while spotlighting local talent.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

- Aadhya Rawat - Facebook: Inder Rawat
- Akilah Walcott - @its_akilah
- Amreen Kullar - @amreenk
- Desiree Mckenzie - @desireemckenzie
- Emily Rachpaul - @mily.x.r
- Gulzar - @p0olsideconvo00
- Janine Wong - @flourpunk
- Mel Thompson - @prosebymel
- Nicole Russell - @nldsr
- Pardis Aliakbarkhani - @pardisalia
- Regina Adaora Agokei - @80_ada.ora_08
- Rosie Arulanandam - @rosie.arul
- Shruti Mistry - @wordsbymystery
- Yousef - @yu_niqu
- Zara Garcia-Alvarez - @zara.lovesart

Cover photo is of Emily Rachpaul with her poetry displayed on a bus stop.



ABOUT THE BRAMPTON ARTS ORGANIZATION (BAO)

The Brampton Arts Organization is a registered non-profit that champions Brampton's diverse arts, culture and creative industries and advocates for the #BramptonArtist. We work to build a thriving, confident, valued, and empowered creative scene by offering a range of programs, services and resources. In this, BAO is a key partner in fulfilling the City of Brampton's strategic vision and Culture Master Plan.

Throughout the year, we offer free in-person and virtual programming for all creative disciplines. These programs focus on helping artists build and professionalize their practices. We also create opportunities for artists to show their work through regular calls. In addition to these programs for individual creatives, we offer programs for Brampton-based creative businesses and arts and culture organizations.

Sun Shine

by Aadhya Rawat



Aadhya Rawat is a Grade 4 Student at Northwood public school. She enjoys writing stories, poems and songs. She also enjoys vocal practice and learning the piano.

Sun Shine

It all began, in the summer Sun, where we all had, so much fun.
The Sun shines, oh so bright, makes my heart filled with the
utmost delight.

I can play and I can slay, in the sunshine ray.

Its so nice to be in the sun, so come join me, it will be more fun.

Shadow

by Akilah Walcott



Akilah Walcott is a Black-Guyanese woman, writer, and artist with a passion for storytelling. She was the volume lead and editor of two collaborative novels that make up The Door of Return Series, which explores African and Caribbean mythology. Her essays and poems, addressing topics like identity, creativity, and healing, have been published in Pitch Magazine, IAM Jayu Poetry Zine, and Trad Magazine.

In addition to her creative pursuits, Akilah completed a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and has specialized in Paediatrics. She continues her storytelling through music, influenced by contemporary R&B and sound healing, and is proud to centre the art of creation in all aspects of her life.

Shadow

Everyday I learn from the wisdom of my shadow.

Crawl when you cannot stand.

Be boldest in the light.

Even if all you are now is an outline of yourself.

Show the ground that you cannot be buried.

The Matchbox

by Amreen Kullar



Amreen Kullar is a freelance filmmaker and writer—primarily driven by the will to change preconceived notions and create political awareness. Within independent film, they're specialized in cinematography and editing, while their written work focuses on poetic prose and media critique. Most of their time off set is spent at the cinema, reading in the park, sipping on an iced chai, or planning their next adventure.

The Matchbox

endless freedom of the starling girl's twirl,
catharsis in her spinning dress.

a reminder to trust in patience, in people, in youth.

a reminder I still need — that we'll make it back
and unveil the systems that fail us.

Grow with Me

by Desiree Mckenzie



Desiree Mckenzie is an award-winning multidisciplinary artist, poet, arts educator, and national poetry slam champion. Her poetry and voice have been featured in works for CBC's Poetic License, Clearco Financial, The Rose Theatre, Button Poetry, Kids Help Phone, and Home Depot. She facilitates community poetry programming for organizations like VIBE Arts, Unity Charity and the Toronto Public Library. In December 2022, she opened for Rupi Kaur on her world tour stop at Massey Hall.

Grow with Me

The city got big with us;

Its backdrop is a mouthful for me.

Swells every memory with colour, texture and sound.

I return, from however far, and my feet always touch the ground.

We grew together,

And we will know more about each other as we remember.

Untitled

by Emily Rachpaul



Emily Rachpaul is a writer of Guyanese descent from Brampton, Ontario. She explores the intricacies of emotion and addresses themes that are often overlooked, including the realities of trust, love, death, anger, and what it means to belong.

Through her poems she aim to provoke new ideas, healing, and understanding, but most importantly, to create change in society.

Untitled

Never forget the places that brighten your soul.

Travel from far and wide, carry all from within, burdens to bear.

In this new land we call home, a smile pierces the soul.

Now you're not so alone.

Bridging always and forever, into interleaving unions.

Your life carries into a beautiful unknown.

Under our Umbrella

by Gulzar



Gulzar (they/them) is an emerging writer, director and educator with a BFA in Film Studies from Toronto Metropolitan University. Through a diasporic and queer lens, they routinely explore and document their South Asian identity, transness and spirituality. Gulzar places care for racialized and gender diverse youth at the forefront of all their storytelling and educational related efforts--with hopes that their work exudes a celebration of life, living, and people!

Under our Umbrella

We used to live a five minute walk away from the Golden Gate Plaza,

And temperamental weather never stopped my Nana from getting his errands done.

I'd accompany him to the Asian Food Centre.

Familiar homegrown okras for him and a mango kulfi for me—

Opened and eaten at the register,

So the rain outside couldn't finish it first.

Home

by Janine Wong



Janine Wong is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, photographer, and designer from Brampton. Their work explores themes of subjectivity, nature, and home. Her writing, photographs, and illustrations have appeared in The Globe & Mail, Incite Magazine, Occasional Dispatch, Aesthetic Magazine, and The Silhouette.

Home

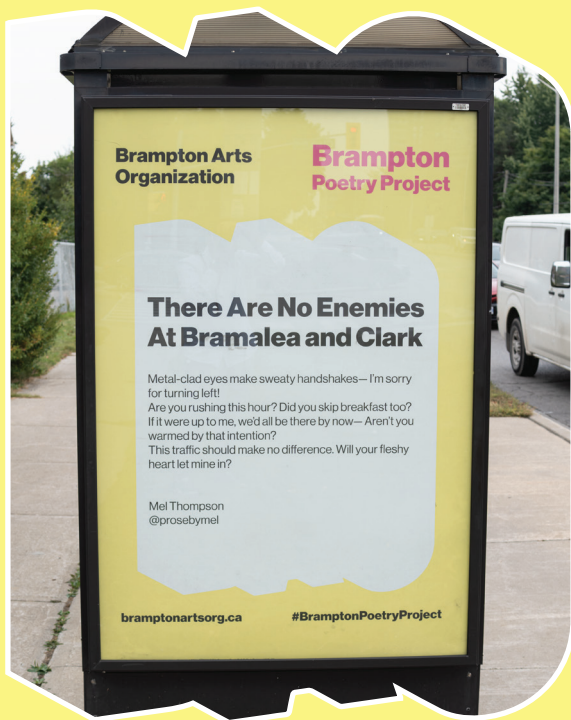
The lines in the palm of my hand
Tell the story of our migration

I carry my ancestors in every breath
From countless generations

Each fluttering beat of my heart
Returns me home

There Are No Enemies At Bramalea and Clark

by Mel Thompson



Mel Thompson is a GTA-based poet and theatre creator. Sometimes they write things. Sometimes they perform them.

There Are No Enemies At Bramalea and Clark

Metal-clad eyes make sweaty handshakes— I'm sorry for turning left!

Are you rushing this hour? Did you skip breakfast too?

If it were up to me, we'd all be there by now— Aren't you warmed by that intention?

This traffic should make no difference. Will your fleshy heart let mine in?

Community, A Feast

by Nicole Russell



Nicole Russell grew up Brampton and continues to call the city home, along with her husband, two children and at least one rescue cat at any given time. Never one to consistently keep a journal, Nicole instead uses poetry as a form of expression and reflection on the little moments and big emotions that make up a meaningful life.

Community, A Feast

A rainbow river of women in saris bobs and flows along the sidewalk

the scent of fresh cut grass mingles with multinational home cooked meals

children's laughter careens towards you from the park

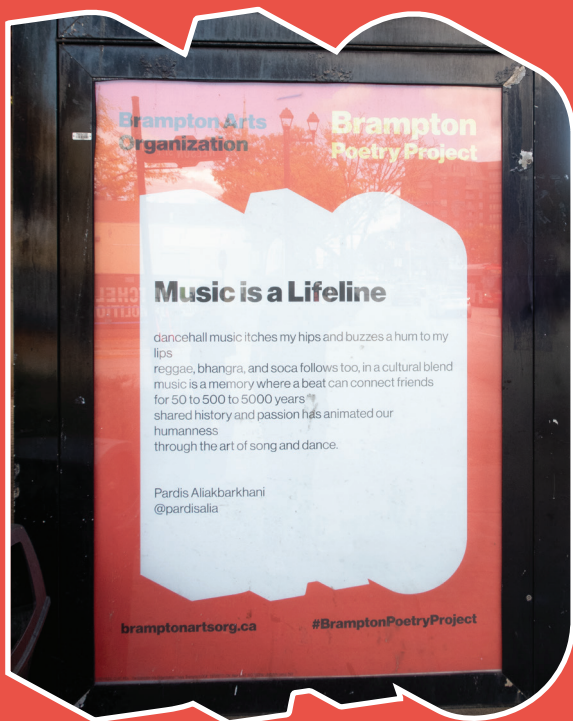
the food truck vendor smiles as your tastebuds tingle in time with the music

your neighbour's warm hand clasps yours in joyful greeting

Community is a feast for the senses. Community is a feeling.

Music is a Lifeline

by Pardis Aliakbarkhani



Pardis Aliakbarkhani (she/they) BA Hons., is a contemporary artist and writer of the Iranian diaspora living in Brampton, Canada. Her writing is playful, curious, and gripping; often focusing on the ebb and flow of human emotion, trauma, survival, the human spirit and its plasticity, the way we feel culture, perceive ourselves, the divine, and the natural world. Aliakbarkhani's writing is simplistic and lyrical, often composed in lower case with limited punctuation to enhance its softness and fluidity.

Music is a Lifeline

dancehall music itches my hips and buzzes a hum to my lips
reggae, bhangra, and soca follows too, in a cultural blend
music is a memory where a beat can connect friends
for 50 to 500 to 5000 years
shared history and passion has animated our humanness
through the art of song and dance.

All My Mothers

by Regina Adaora Agokei



Regina Adaora Agokei lives and works in Brampton. Her online store, Chicory Avenue, showcases her original art printed on various pieces. Through her art, she considers human relationships and the wonders of the mundane.

All My Mothers

I have my mother's heart, imperfect as it is.

I let it beat strong within my chest and wear it on my sleeve.

I will keep it for her when she leaves and gift it to my daughter.

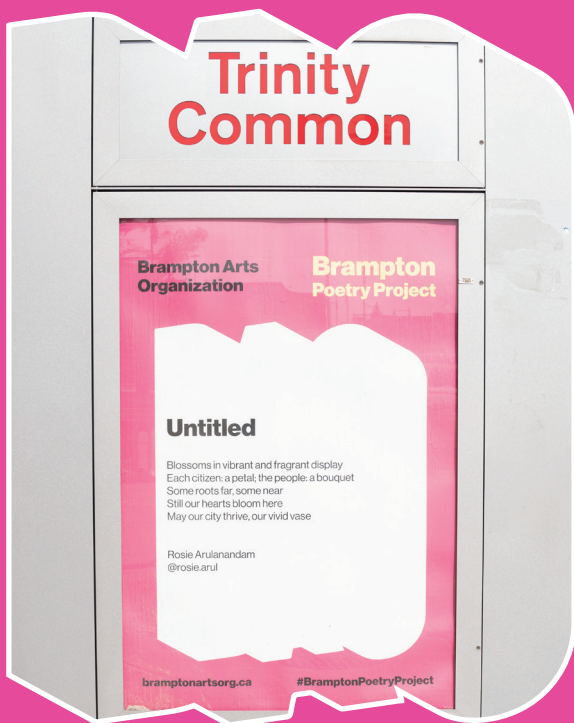
My mother's heart was her mother's,

And her mother's heart was her mother's,

And there were many mothers before her.

Untitled

by Rosie Arulanandam



Rosie Arulanandam is a Tamil-Canadian artist and writer whose works focus on the feelings of home, longing for connection and understanding one's emotions. She feels that art is not only a source of self-expression but also healing. She loves art, animals, music and fashion.

Untitled

Blossoms in vibrant and fragrant display
Each citizen: a petal; the people: a bouquet
Some roots far, some near
Still our hearts bloom here
May our city thrive, our vivid vase

“Meet Me at Brampton-Marikina Friendship Park” by Shruti Mistry



Shruti Mistry is an Indo-Canadian writer and spoken word artist based out of what is colonially known as Brampton and Ottawa. Finding solace in the craft of poetry, Shruti soon discovered empowerment, connection, and healing in the vulnerability of creative storytelling. They now explore the radical intersections of identity and culture through performance poetry.

Shruti has featured and placed on stages with their work both locally and nationally, including Voices of Today, Urban Legends Poetry Collective, Ottawa Grassroots Festival, and the Canadian Individual Poetry Slam.

“Meet Me at Brampton-Marikina Friendship Park”

becomes a question instead of a command.

Conversation ceasing over text instead of a landline.

A box of wood chips : a time capsule of giggles.

You see? Even the swing set smiles upon our return!

At dusk, I wonder for the first time, if

“I’ll see you here again, tomorrow.”

Untitled

by Yousef



Yousef Muhammed is a 16-year-old emerging poet. He takes inspiration from Randell Adjei, Prince Ea, and Kendrick Lamar. Their stories, tones, and poetry have been guiding his writing. He would also like to thank his English teacher Mr. Vidulin, who pushed him to take on this journey. At the end of the day, he hopes his words can reach more people and brighten their day even by a tiny bit.

Untitled

The county growing abundant roses
Has amounted to a city, cue the show biz
Cultures combine, sprout divine art
Chinguacousy's pine trees were a good start
Like a beaver, we worked hard building communities
Flower City, greatness is guaranteed

I'm Half a Century

by Zara Garcia-Alvarez



Zara Garcia-Alvarez graduated from York University with a BA in Creative Writing and English Literature. She also holds a High Honours Diploma in Social Service Work from Sheridan Institute of Technology. She loves Canadian literary fiction, poetry, photography, paint, and collage. She's an active member of the writing and art community and has been a resident of Brampton since 1983. She lives with and pursues artistic initiatives with her husband and two children.

I'm Half a Century

Of course, I've potholes like burst pimples
and a Heritage Theatre that bloomed to a Rose.

But before I was a city, I was a town;
a small village with a smaller county jail.

As you pile on the red Zum buses or curse the 410—
remember I was here in the beginning. I was here first.

PHOTO GALLERY

The poems featured in this booklet were installed in bus shelter locations across Brampton in September and November 2024. Below is a collection of images of the artists with their poems.

Akilah Walcott



Amreen Kullar



Clarkway Drive & The Gore Road

Bramalea Road and Sandalwood Parkway East

Desiree Mckenzie



Gulzar



Bramalea City Centre Terminal Platform, West of Central Park Drive

Sandalwood Parkway & Conestoga Drive

Janine Wong



Sandalwood Parkway & Conestoga Drive

Mel Thompson



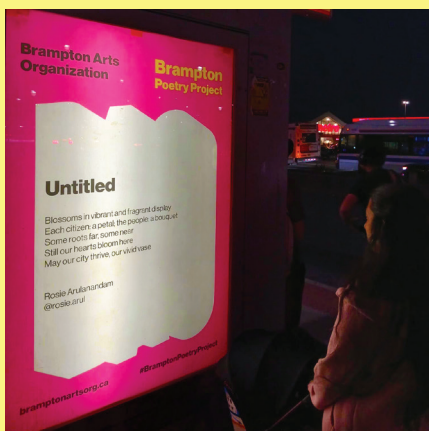
Bramalea Road & Clark Boulevard

Pardis Aliakbarkhani



Main Street & Theatre Lane

Rosie Arulanandam



Trinity Common Mall near
Montana's third ZUM Station
bus shelter

Shruti Mistry



Torbram Road & Father Tobin Road

Yousef



Chinguacousy Road between Sterritt Drive & Queen Street

Zara Garcia - Alvarez



Vodden Street & Main Street North



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