



# Effeminared:

Via Anwesh Sahoo



## Title:

Don't Call Me That

## Description:

This scene is from my comic *Effemined: Under the Lucky Star*, one of the fifteen stories published by Lever Press in Canada as part of the *Queer Compassion in 15 Comics* anthology. It portrays Anay, a character inspired by my younger self, at a breaking point, surrounded by fingers, stares, and words that sting. It captures the moment when being called *chakka* shattered something within me for the very first time. Before I ever reclaimed the word, it hurt. It pushed me into silence, shame, and a spiral that I didn't yet know how to escape.

The artwork uses bold hands and heavy outlines to show how many voices it takes to drown out one. But within that overwhelm lies a crucial truth, that even in brokenness, there is a story waiting to be rewritten. This piece doesn't just show pain, it documents a shift in identity, where compassion begins by first acknowledging how deeply we were wounded.



## **Title:**

# The Mirror and the Breaking Point

## **Description:**

This artwork captures one of the darkest moments from Anay's story and my own lived experience. It reflects a time when I had lost all hope, when suicidal thoughts became a haunting presence, and the bathroom mirror became a silent witness to unbearable pain. I would often stand in that space, staring at my reflection, thinking of drinking phenyl from beneath the sink. It was terrifying, isolating, and so heavy that even my own face felt like a stranger's.

The cracked mirror in this piece is more than just glass, it's the fracture between who I was and who I needed to become to survive. The tear rolling down his face, the pink shirt clinging to his body, and the dim lighting all speak of a quiet desperation. This is not just about sorrow, but about the truth of what many queer teens face in silence. It is a plea for compassion, and a reminder that even the most shattered reflections deserve love and light.



## **Title:** Tandav of Joy

## **Description:**

From my *Dancing Men Series*, this artwork is a fierce, joyful celebration of queer expression and body positivity. Set against a fiery red backdrop, the two men, one lean and muscular, the other curvaceous and radiant, move in complete sync, draped in classical jewellery and dhotis. Their energy is contagious, their presence unapologetic. This piece reclaims classical dance as a space where every body can belong, express, and shine.

*Tandav of Joy* is a reminder that grace knows no size, and that effeminacy, rhythm, and beauty exist across body types. With this piece, I wanted to show not only the power of dance, but also the power of being seen, of taking up space in a world that often tries to shrink you. It is both an offering and a rebellion, drenched in joy.



## Title: Thumri in Teal

### Description:

This artwork is a celebration of queer expression through classical Indian dance, reimagined with fluid masculinity and unapologetic grace. Inspired by the romanticism of *Thumri* and the iconic '*Maar Daala*' from the film *Devdas* (2002), the figure defies rigid binaries, his pose, attire, and gaze narrating a story of self-acceptance, tradition reclaimed, and joy expressed through movement.

*Thumri in Teal* honours queer voices that challenge expectations and find power in cultural heritage. The dancer's adorned body and swirling garments become a metaphor for embracing one's identity with pride, complexity, and rhythm. Each ghungroo, each gesture, speaks to the resilience of LGBT+ people who continue to make space for themselves, in art, in culture, and in the world.



## Title: You Do You

### Description:

This artwork is a vibrant visual tapestry that weaves together queer love, protest, creativity, and economic freedom. At its center, a rainbow-tipped pencil flows into a path of possibility, symbolising how self-expression and access to education and tech can spark revolution. The piece celebrates the everyday power of queer joy and visibility, with layered motifs like currency signs, raised hands in protest and pride, and blooming flowers that represent growth and resilience.

To the right stands a confident trans woman in a sari, holding a phone aloft, a nod to how technology has become a lifeline, a stage, and an equaliser for marginalised communities. *You Do You* speaks to a future where representation is real, where queer people have access not just to love but to livelihood, platforms, and power. It's a reminder that our stories, when told in full colour, are nothing short of revolutionary.



## **Title:**

I Am My Own Gender

## **Description:**

This artwork was born during a deeply personal phase of questioning, when I was navigating the dualities within me and the pressures of conforming to what society says it means to be a man or a woman. Split right down the middle, the portrait shows both a bearded masculine side and a feminine side adorned with long hair and red lips, surrounded by blooming lotuses that represent growth, rebirth, and inner clarity.

It isn't a statement of confusion, but of becoming. This piece helped me realise that I don't have to pick one side or fit into a binary. I am not just a man or a woman, I am my own gender. The journey to embrace that truth gave me the space to define masculinity on my own terms and to belong more wholly to myself.

## **Effeminare: Under the Lucky Star** ✨

By Anwesh Sahoo

This artwork is a deeply personal visual journey, a constellation of Anwesh in many forms, spanning time, memory, and emotion. At its heart, *Effeminare: Under the Lucky Star* is a love letter to the boy he once was and the person he's still becoming.

From the joy of wearing his sister's frocks in childhood, to the quiet heartbreak of hiding his truth while crying in school corridors, to the moment of radiant self-acceptance, it all unfolds here like a dream painted in stardust. The many versions of Anwesh float in layered harmony, each captured in distinct gestures and expressions, mapping the terrain of queer becoming: messy, magical, and ultimately transcendent.

Exhibited in Australia at the The Inside Out Art Project, *Effeminare: Under the Lucky Star* doesn't just tell a story. It becomes one, a moving reminder that every version of us deserves to be seen under our own lucky sky.

Made with love, light and rainbow

**FIN.**