

# YOU SMILE

SABRINA SAMREEN

Yes, you. The guy on the corner seat, second row, left side. The one beside the curly haired girl who laughs hysterically at the silliest joke in class. In front of the deep voiced, mustached guy who wears shirt buttoned up all the way. You, do you smile? I've only been fortunate to catch a glimpse of your smile thrice. Maybe twice. The white perfectly aligned teeth you bared very slightly on those occasions and I have been fortunate to see the flickering shimmer of those warm black eyes of yours. Yeah, I get very good view of you from where I sit and the fact that I do throw furtive glances your way, let it remain a secret till this class, this semester ends. Till this chance encounter is nothing but history.

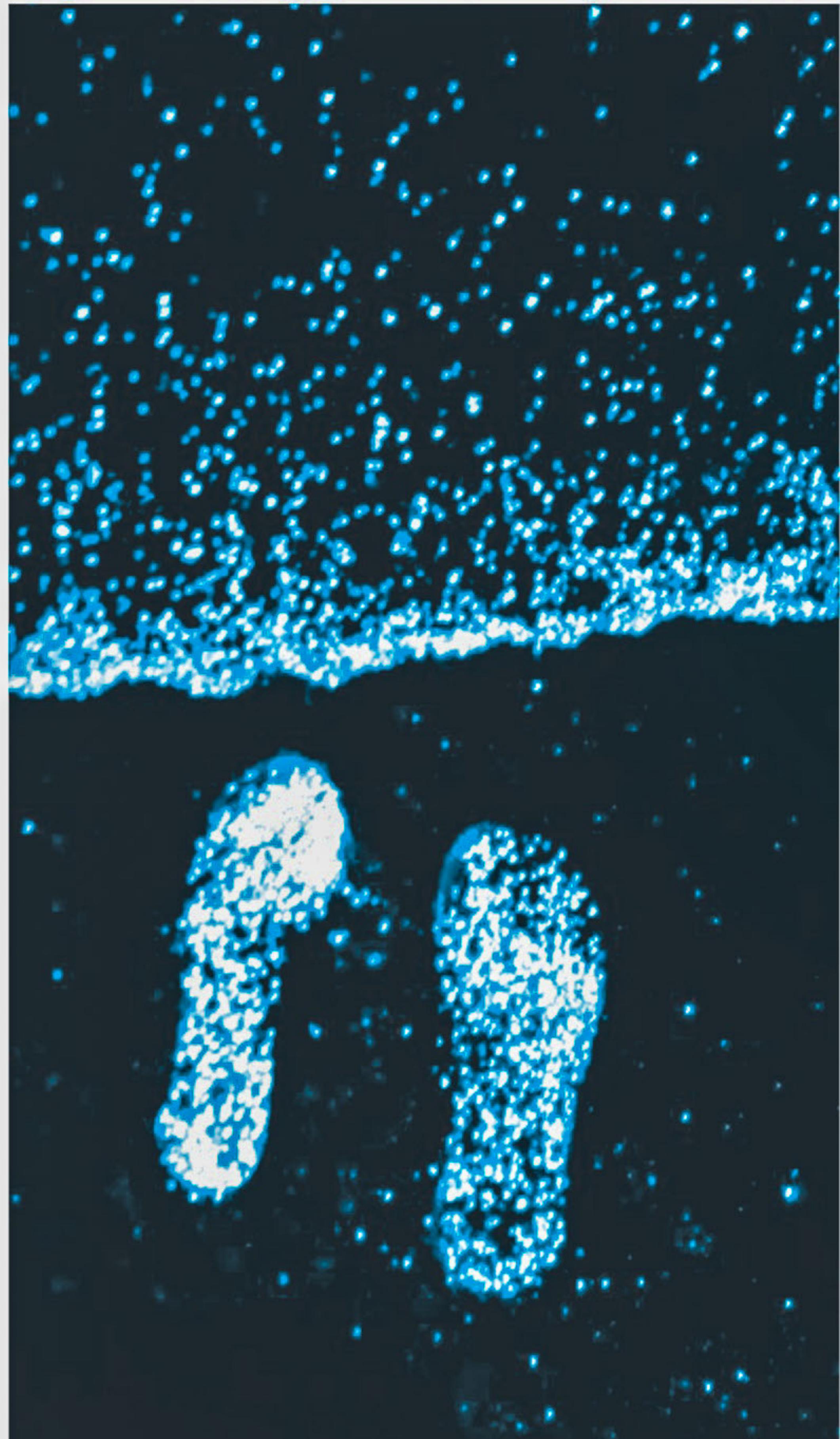
I wonder if I would ever meet you, off campus, some alley or anywhere else? Would you still hold my attention? You most probably wouldn't recognize me, and I won't too. Strangers that we are, strangers that we are meant to be out of the myriad of possibilities. Strangers for a long time, meeting, then strangers for infinity again. We share just one identity: this course, POL101 that I very randomly chose to pursue; nothing before, and definitely nothing beyond. I don't dote upon you, perfect stranger and neither do I harbor any sort of affection or affinity. I have a boyfriend; I do not, bear in mind, I really do not intend to cheat. As a matter of fact, I did mention you once to my boyfriend, on the passing. He had merely shrugged, and laughed it off; the idea and its absurdity not arousing in him the slightest suspicion. But I do not deny mild attraction to the beautiful being that you are. The average minds cannot fathom what I think or feel about you. "Infatuation" is too harsh a term for it, "fascination" wouldn't do justice, maybe something more subtle?



I see your eyes light up when the professor talks about sovereignty, the distribution of power and legitimacy: the subject must fascinate you. My eyes light up too, and hey this is one more identity we share. Why did you choose political science? I might care to listen to your thoughts one day, when you are not bound by time and when I don't have any particular needs to attend after the three hour long exhausting Thursday classes. My eyes do not fixate on you—they just hover for a while. You, however, never stare at me do you? I must confess that your careless shrug, the indifference plastered on your face, traces of some rebellion going on some dark corner of your mind: they fascinate me, urge me to look your direction. I can't ever comprehend what your face portrays: sheer boredom, or ultimate obedience to the faculty in question.

Are you Greek or are of Irish origins? And when you do smile, it amuses me. Your features soften, your rigid cheek bones flex very mildly and you smiling reinforces the fact that you're only human. You do not bottle up your emotions in those instances. Amusing really. Tell me, nameless stranger, the thoughts that surface upon your mind. Spare me the details. I could hear you speak once, but mostly I'd stare, unabashedly, with your due consent and knowledge. I do not know your name though I had once tried to assign you one out of thirty unfamiliar names and so hilarious was the idea, that I aborted it in its infancy. I'd like to see your pensive visage, your serene taciturn somber face break into a smile more beautiful than your silence and gravity. You smile, and I'd smile too, triumphantly. Like some forlorn battle gloriously vanquished.

*The writer is a student of North South University.*



## Star-crossed

MALIHA TANJIM

She awoke from her cavernous thoughts as the waves hit the shore. The sky was grey over the horizon, with the turquoise sea beneath. In her eyes that were the color of the sea itself, a touch of contentment existed. Yet to an outsider, she might have appeared dowdy and crestfallen. For her eyes lost contentment every now and then, and the dejection would take its place—the dejection before which she had always relinquished. Shaking her head, she got up and headed for the shore, humming softly. On reaching the shore, she came to a halt and stopped humming. Kneeling down with quivering lips and stinging eyes, she felt tears streaming down her cheeks at the thought of her degenerating immunity. How the people whom she had always been there for, were now neglecting her when she needed them the most.

Looking up at the mighty waves, she whispered, "You're just another witness of my storm that I conceal within me. The irony is that nobody likes the storm but admires the rainbow that comes after it. I wish I could alter their way of thinking. I wish I could tell them that every cloud has a silver lining."

*The writer is an AS level student.*