



# Faces

RASHEED KHAN

Billions of faces I see,  
Billions of lives, breathe,  
The sound of all their souls drifting through.

Countless, countless, countless,  
So many more laid to rest.  
The things whispering tales, away they flew.

Billions of secrets you don't know,  
Billions of faces, away they drone,  
So many things locked up precariously inside.

We've got nothing, nothing, nothing,  
So to others, so we sing.  
Oh, so many tales we've lost and lose to time...

And it all seemed so simple,  
When we looked at their smile;  
And it all seemed up front,  
It was real, for so long a while.  
It's easy to forget all nights  
In the comforting light of day;  
And in the end you realise  
We all have so many things to say.



MAISHA NAZIFA KAMAL

The sky was a sleeping shade of air-brushed grey. Ashen, pastel, grey. But soon it woke up as dark, furious clouds tempered its mood, evading its tranquillity and the sky, slowly turning deeper, duly started its tantrum.

I had started walking when the sky was a resolute expansion of concrete-grey. But when its fat droplets fell like an absurd dance, I was halfway down the road with no hint of an umbrella to shield me from it. So here I am walking aimlessly, soaked like the scrawny stray cat that sniffed the air like an old lady and scurried off when it noticed me looking.

The sky is now an unyielding copper till a brilliant flash of light turns the nebulous expansion into a mysterious hue of purple followed by the thunderous sound. And on this duo goes.

Human emotions are like a roller-coaster: it goes all the way up, and then it goes all the way down. For me, this roller-coaster was in the depth of a pit, down it was, and low was my mood. I had kept walking regardless of having no definite destination or purpose. Maybe I had a gnawing sense of ennui but I felt like my life was abandoned somewhere unknown, somewhere I couldn't reach. Home was far, no friend's place seemed comforting and the prosaic office hours went by. My long windblown hair was plastered flat across my cold face, my drenched bag looked like a sack. And to top it off, somehow the continuous roar of the thunder felt annoying to me.

I didn't dislike the lightning as it blended the sky into gradients of colors. The abundance of lightning that one by one split the sky seemed like the first jagged strokes a child makes with a crayon. But the thunder was something else; the sound itself crashed the ground beneath me. I don't want to hear it anymore, I kept saying that to myself insipidly from the moment it started.

A sigh escapes my mouth as I look up yet again.

Only to greet the most scintillating beam of light falling right above me.

I don't know if it's something reminiscent or some lucid dream my brain crafts for me in these last fleeting seconds. All I know is that throughout this whole evening I had been perfunctorily stupid.

The faces of the people whom I loved and who loved me back irrevocably blurs in front of me. The blur apparently disintegrates into my small but cosy apartment, the neon city-lights that had always amazed me, a table laid with the most appetising dishes which I know that my mother always cooks for me, trinkets in an old, battered shoe-box under the floorboards, the sand stretching onto the crashing waves, a small thatched house amidst the peaceful summer-green trees — where my grandmother waits, and so many more smudged images that blurs past too fast for me to catch.

I was wrong about home being far, that I had no place to go, that my life was deserted somewhere. Because suddenly I can see that I had a lot of places to go, a lot of people to bid farewell, a lot of errands to be run, a lot of promises to keep. I recall that the lightning had come but the thunder had still not.

In these seemingly infinite seconds I wait for the thunder; desperately strain my ears to listen to it in this closing silence, wish for that high sound to pierce my numb body and pull me out of the obscure oblivion that slowly envelopes me. Because if it does, it will mean that I will have a flicker of hope of letting go of those regrets, a beginning of a beacon of light that will cleanse me, a breath-taking chance of redemption.

But it never does.

*The writer is a class 11 student of Birshreshtha Noor Mohammad Public College*

# Hope in a Tea Cup

SADIA TASNIM TUBA

How I was writhing in pain!  
You used to observe me in silence,  
From the other side of my agony.  
And, here at this side, always remained amassed huff.

Sometimes tried to find excuses to escape from my biased memories.  
And, used to return to the starting point.  
Counted my every steps while walking alone on the black pitch.

At home, when it was always 4 o'clock at noon,  
I don't know why, the pale sky liked to be carpeted with grey.  
I heard my toxic breath, digested my sighs!  
Closed my tearful eyes!

Suddenly, sunlight streamed through my tea cup;  
Appraised me of a hope,  
Hiding behind those seven layers,  
You revived me again!

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