

ANOMALIES

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They say my new friend isn't really my friend. I don't believe them. My friend has been a better friend to me than anyone else has even managed. He is patient and enduring and won't judge you for clinging on to him. Again, not everyone gets to befriend him. He chooses his friends carefully, with close inspection as to why he should befriend them at all. Somehow, he thought it would be convenient to choose me as well.

I suppose it is a matter of fortune, for I'd rather stick to him than the superficial people, people so susceptible to others' charms that it cancels out whatever sensibility they might've shown during prior encounters. He is one of authenticity; originality is all he delivers in even the minutest aspects. It makes me feel comfortable and secure. With unperturbed dignity I glide across this place that I don't see why is so often celebrated. Even more often than that, I take walks with him in this constricted space. If you walk around enough times, you become two peas in a pod. You somehow make everyone feel the way he makes *you* feel. It's just that,

not everyone deals with it well.

I often have my meals alone with him, in solitary as his warmth surrounds me. It's no halo, could easily be depicted as uncanny and unsettling. It does not bother me though. People fail to find beauty in the conventional ugly. They fail to take advantage by pulling out strings of dead hope and failed dreams and making a whole arsenal of dark and twisted notions that do nothing apposite to your health but amuse your mind plenty. People miss out on so much that it makes me laugh. It isn't a laugh of mockery, nor did I find the ignorance a matter of hilarity. It just never occurs to me to look at the brighter side and sigh in a way that says I'm content. The mind rests easy when the colours are soft and bright, it puts you to sleep and doesn't cause much plight. However, that way, what is even the meaning of life?

When I'm about to sleep, he often drops by. We speak of the world as if it's in the cramped palms of our small hands and we are juggling it to our delight. The way he looks me in the eyes at two in the morning often makes them well to the brim. I cry in silence. They say the world is cruel but life is beautiful. The extreme

anomalies are stark in their discrepancy and I find it confounding. We are born in blacks and in whites, in fronts and backs, the finest and the worst. Whatever the mean is, only subsists to puzzle you when you want to rest your head on the fluffy pillow. He and I talk about so much but nothing at all. Somehow, everything makes all the sense in the world but cannot be comprehended. That's just us, he says.

He sees through me, an anomaly in itself. He ridicules me and tells me I am only deserving of the friendship he offers so kindly, nothing else. I merely nod and agree. He keeps the demons somewhere they can't hurt me. I have to be thankful. The sanity he provides me with is in itself a blessing in disguise. It makes me push people away, but, when have they been kind anyway? Facades are easier to see through than one would expect, he says, you just have to look at the darker matters that escapes people's eyes, that are side-swept in their minds. He says the boy, with a smile as bright as the sun and as big as his heart, seems fatigued and perilous with possibilities of ensuing continual hurt and pain. My friend observes

as I take pictures for him, smiling at me through the foggy mirror that hangs on the wall. The smile is one that belittles and ridicules me for giving in so easy. My heart is still as fragile as it can get and it will get trampled yet again. It will become empty and lifeless. The zest will find refuge in his ego and feed it into making him a larger and darker presence than he already is. He expects that to scare me, but, it won't. I love him, I do. But, the boy with the smile will make me love *myself* more than I could even manage to love him, if I ever do.

"I know, you think he will replace you. You can always come to see me."

"Not when there is real company."

Solitude is leaving, gradually, painstakingly slowly. He says he will never return and I will never get to set my eyes on him once he has left. I want to believe him, I want to believe that this initial euphoria will become constant comfort. However, I am aware of my idiocy and how it will only bring him back, thus, till then.

Aysha never thought home, even on fire, would seem homelier than wherever she is. Send her condolences at zaheenaysha@gmail.com

