

NOWHERE

SYEDA ERUM NOOR

You walk a star-covered path leading you nowhere,
You think you're no closer but you're nearly there.

Be as it will, the stars glow for you.
Broken and picked right out of the blue.
No breath left to spare, yet they still breathe for you.

The end of the path is where nowhere resides
Stories of her fill the dark coloured skies.

A witch who resides in a gingerbread house
With an old woman's soul and a pink, satin blouse.

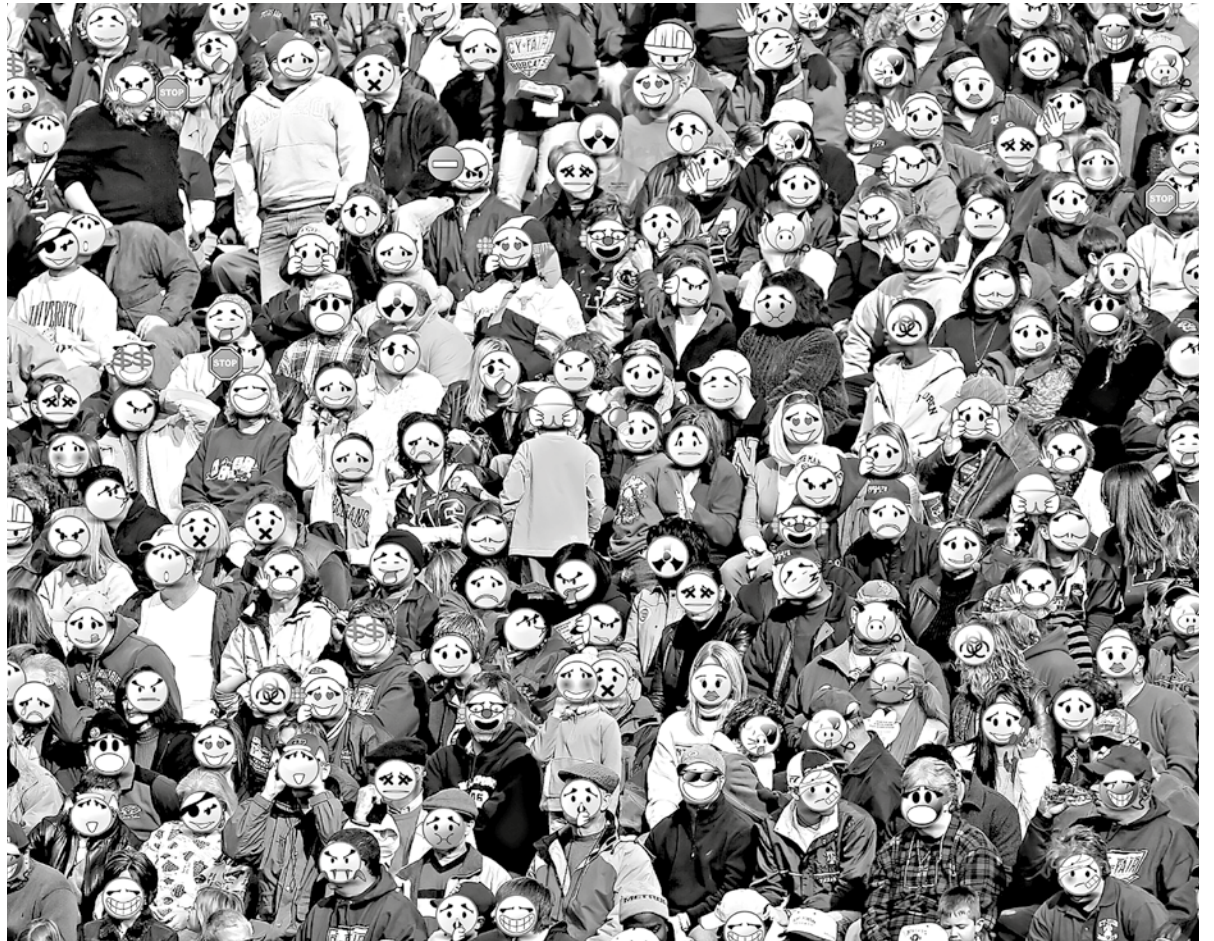
She lives in a space where time falls apart
She thinks that she knows where you really are
No nearer the end and no nearer the start.

Yet you carry on, on your slow morning walk
All while singing to the stars as they talk.

Of the nowhere they speak, and the nothing she bares,
Not knowing that nowhere is who put them there.

That they were the stories that she'd picked apart
Of the something and the somewhere that lives in her heart.

Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious and has no sense of time. Send help at erum.noor1998@gmail.com



Harmonies and Haphazards

MALIHA TRIBHU

The overcrowded footpaths teem with unfamiliar faces, thousands of footsteps crushing over one another, rushing for home. Beggars hustle on one feet, barely reaching up to the next person before they intentionally walk away faster than usual, refusing to give out a change of cash crumbled inside of their back pockets.

Street vendors whirl across their neatly kept plastic wrapped pickles, ridding them of flies and moths, covering them from unforeseen dust-storms, awaiting their customers but no one arrives. Cotton candies lose their fluff in the force of air, gas balloons behaving wildlike in the wind. A teeming group of children dashing round the park asking their fathers to buy them this or that only to be forced away from the hawkers, empty handed.

All of this occurs at the same time, at a place same as mine. While I quietly sit and watch amid untimely afternoons, quietly giving in to an overcast sky. Till rainstorms wash off the very existence of roadside mobs. I observe every flinch of a child, tripping on their toes, every traffic signal turning red to yellow to green – directions and instructions that no one seems to follow. They don't mind, they don't have the time to.

I see them – interlocking a gaze, passing out judgments, spitting facts and gulping disappointments over a generation of frustrated vagabonds; unaware of where their troubles come from or how to favourably

solve any of them. I slowly walk away from all of it, vanishing amid the crowd unnoticeably. That's the beauty of it. When you are right in the middle of a crowd, jostling your way out, pacing back and forth, faster than the ones in front of you but slower than the ones behind, you are stuck in the middle of it all. You forget to rest. Eyes watch you, judge you, mock you even when they don't, but you do.

You are unseen yet exposed like wildfire, you are unnamed yet labelled strictly onto their memories, you forget to breathe and swirl out of the crowd, fast enough to be forgotten.

You follow their footsteps even when they don't lead you where you are supposed to be going. Following blindly as lines of ants do in hunt for food. For them, though, it is a hunt for a place.

Somewhere to belong to, to be meant something to someone, to be loved.

Some name it an escape. Some call it a home.

The writer is a student of Marketing at the University of Dhaka.

