

अफसाने

On a quest for unfamiliar faces among the familiar ones.



Editorial

After nearly 2 years of exile, the students of the University of Delhi finally returned to the campus to resume with the "old normal," albeit in a newfangled air. True to its name and history, *Afsaane* is here to chronicle the eruptions of creativity and emotions on this change and record the changed and evolving faces of Ramjas, its community, and the larger society it exists in. We thus present to you this edition, which not only marks our but *Afsaane's* homecoming too.

Faces That I Ignored

The faces that I ignored everyday
in front of my stall,
I noted them yesterday amidst the
sizzling fumes,
Some noble ones glancing at me,
so expectant,
With cloudy, burnt rat- eyes,
As if they would rain down
altogether,
Eventually resulting in the Earth's
demise.
Their shrinking lips were silently
shouting
out loud their gloomy stories,
Contemplating me to get them,
In their potential foreheads,
they'd a lot to say,
But yeah, very little to
understand.
Rest their once- round cheeks,
now so flattened,
That their jaw outlined on the
face, reasoned out:
The cause of their intense looks,
the quiet faces revealed the storm
they were drowning in,
And that they needed some
healthy cooks.

- Saloni Agrawal (Statistics, I)

चेहरे

ये हँसते, मुस्कुराते, खामोश - से चेहरे,
यूँ चाँद की चाँदनी में डूबे आगोश - से चेहरे।

किस पर किया जाए ऐतबार मिरे हमदम,
देखो तो सारे हैं, एहसान फ़रामोश - से चेहरे।

क्या काम इनको, दवा - दारू का यारों,
होश में भी दिखते ये बेहोश - से चेहरे।

मन में जिनके है निरर्थक विचार
हाए! कैसे है ये, शब्दकोश - से चेहरे।

क्या काम वतन को, इन डरे - सहमो का,
आओ तलाशे कुछ सरफ़रोश - से चेहरे।।

- मनीषा (हिंदी, I)



Artwork by Sristi Ray (History, II)

We Have Many Faces

"He has many faces,"
It is often said.
And I wonder,
Aren't they something that we all
have?
Many faces?
Isn't the person we know,
Not really the person we know,
But just one of his faces,
That we identify with.
And we get mad,
When we find
That he has other faces:
Faces – with a wide range,
Even mutually contrasting.
Faces – which he doesn't know
about.
Faces – all confusing and chaotic.
But we need to stick and dig,
To discover them all,
And,
To realize,
That the person we know,
Is a lot more,
Than just...
the person we know.

- Hrithik (Political Science, II)

Wall

The car came to a halt at that pathetic hour when not a soul can be called for succour nor sympathy. It was the perfect altitude to drink in the teeming contradictions in the epicentre of amassing riches—an altitude that stirs your composure by the sight it beseeches you to observe but eventually, dissolves it in a quiet, forlorn sigh, fused with indifference.

To the right of the flyover, built to obscure the people at the wrong end of the contradiction, stands an imposing affair of spotless glass, cleaned daily by a slum-dweller residing, nay, subsisting, on the left of the flyover, risking her life, verging on fainting under the weight of those dreams which summoned her from the country to the ruthless urban jungle. My eyes inevitably fall on a guffawing couple and their friends, their backs turned away from the ugly aberrations on the success story of their metropolis. Their riches are too far to admire closely, but I do hear the clinking martini glasses, tapping feet, and colliding billiard-balls; or is it all in my head?

As they toast heartily to an (evanescent?) economic miracle, unmindful of the residues of sorrow it has churned across the flyover, my gaze transfers to my left, thirsty for, and breaking into, a flood of irony. A toddler tugs at the end of her mother's sari—a fabric of patches and want—moaning for a morsel to appease the demon of hunger. Lying on what would have been a charpoy in its heyday is a man too young to die and too frail to live; a stray dog, weary at the misery afflicting the humanity around him, adjusts its head right under the arm of the person, stretched out in disease rather than affection. A low-hanging branch looms out of the fog, dropping in, and rushing out, of the pond at the far end of the slums. Its blue is turned into green by the bristling algal blooms and in places, black with the refuse of the urban sprawl; around it are neglected clothes, neglected gadgets, neglected food, and neglected people. The ailing youth is the latest victim to this pond's water; or is it all in my head?

As soon as these faces of the economic miracle—some tangible, some conjectured—enter the territory of disbelief, my car, as if out of sheer concern, capitulates to the attempts at restarting its engine, and begins obeying my orders. I speed off, leaving behind a merry-making group and their success story, conveniently developing in the shadow of the flyover—a wall to secure it from a disoriented dog, a famished toddler and her mother, a dying pond, and a dying youth.

- Parth Seth (Political Science, II)



Two-Faceted Tale

“Faces are expressive”

“Faces are deceptive”

Well, it depends on your perspective!

A hardworking, well settled and
satisfied gentleman

“It’s a dream life!”, say all the men.

They look at my lavish lifestyle and
wonder,

“What mistakes made their life a
blunder?”

A hustler: displeased and despaired
soul,

“I lost myself, chasing my goals.”

Only I know myself inside out,
And know the battles that I have
fought.

There’s a dark of everything,
They do not see the moments of self-
doubt and darkness that fame brings.

Sitting alone on a Saturday night,

I do wonder, “Were my life’s
decisions right?”

Faces hide emotions which can’t be
described,

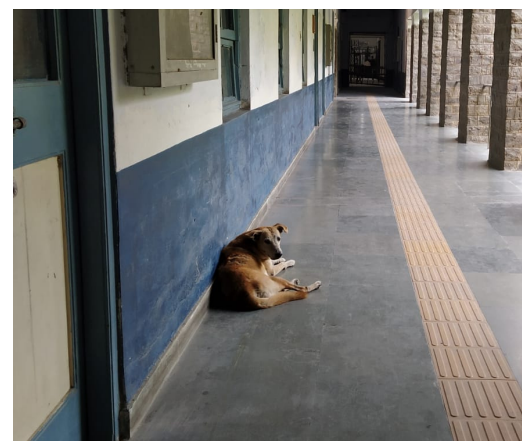
Faces hide pain behind the smile.
Faces do tell that you cried to sleep,
Faces do tell the truth if you pierce
deep.

“Faces are expressive”

“Faces are deceptive”

Well, it depends on your perspective!

- Shreya Kumari (Statistics, I)



Photographs by Aryan Vats (English, I)

Hunger

Beast residing
In the den of the stomach,
Hunger gnawing slowly
at the entrails
Of the skeletal child
Sucking at the dry breasts
Of his dead mother.

Epidemic. Pandemic.
Pandemonium..
A sea of humans
Crossing borders
Tumbling atop each other
In exhaustion and hunger
Like butchered meat basking
in the open
Sun, shining bright and gay
On a pile of corpses
Rotting beside the
crematoriums
The jackals feed off
The little flesh remaining on
the bones.
Insatiable hunger
Gnawing at the belly

Of the prostitute
Who sells herself everyday
For a bit of salt and sticky rice
Castaway like rotten leftovers
Of a rich daughter's wedding
To the man she slept with.

Hunger, bestial creature
With no mercy
Stripping off the cloth of
dignity
To expose the naked skin of
society and humanity
To reveal its savage face
From whence, there is no
escape.

- Sristi Ray (History, II)



Artwork by Pratiti Majumder (Zoology, III)

जन्म लेते वक्त एक चेहरा देखा था

जन्म लेते वक्त एक चेहरा देखा था
अब हर मोड़ पर कोई पहरा देता था
तब हर चेहरे में खूबसूरती तरासती थी
अब हर चेहरे का राज पूछती हूं
नए चेहरों से उल्लास मांगती थी
अब चेहरों की परतें ढूँढती हूं
काश चेहरे दिल की खूबसूरती को बता पाते,
काले-गोरे होने के फर्क को मिटा पाते,
काश हम मनचाहा चेहरा अपने चेहरे पर लगा पाते,
तब गिरगिट की तरह चेहरा बदलने की ना नौबत पाते,
चेहरे को पढ़ने की कला गर सबके पास होती,
प्रेम से भरी प्रेमियों की हर रात होती,
चेहरे जो दिल की बातों का बखान कर देते,
तब झूठ को संसार से बदनाम कर देते,
खैर; चेहरे हैं
नए आएंगे, पुराने जाएंगे
कोई बदलेगा, कोई संभलेगा
पर तुम इत्मीनान रख सकते हो
अपने चेहरे की असीमता को बरकरार रख सकते हो।

- आस्था दमेले (बी.ए. प्रोग्राम, II)



वो चेहरे

वो भीख मांगते बच्चे देखे हैं?
देखा है वो फुटपाथ पे सोता हुआ बूढ़ा?
वो कड़ी धूप में घर बनाता मजदूर देखा है?
देखा है क्या वो बेरोज़गारी से घिरा हुआ,
नौकरी मांगता इंसान?

देखें हैं इन सब के चेहरे?
समेटे हुए हैं कितना कुछ खुद में,
वो भीख मांगते बच्चों का चेहरा,
कितना मुरझाया सा, थोड़ा अलसाया सा,
उन आंखों में, कुछ मिल जाने की जिज्ञासा
और उस चेहरे पर शून्यता।

देखें हैं इन सब के चेहरे? समेटे हुए हैं
कितना कुछ खुद में, वो फुटपाथ पे सोता
बूढ़ा, सर्दी के मौसम की ठिठुरन झेलता,
और गर्मियों की लू,
न ओढ़ने को कुछ,
न बिछाने को ना आंखों में उम्मीद की
किरण, और उस चेहरे पर शून्यता।

देखें हैं इन सब के चेहरे? समेटे हुए हैं
कितना कुछ खुद में, वो कड़ी धूप में काम
करता मजदूर, सर पे उठाए ईंटों का बोझ,
और कंधो पर जिम्मेदारी का, आंखों में
लिए आशा और उस चेहरे पर लिए
शून्यता।

देखें हैं इन सब के चेहरे? समेटे हुए हैं
कितना कुछ खुद में वो, नौकरी ढूँढता हुआ
आदमी, बेरोज़गारी से घिरा हुआ, हर
इंटरव्यू के बाद आंखों में उम्मीद लिए और
उस चेहरे पर लिए शून्यता।

- भावना (हिंदी, I)



Photographs by Aryan Vats (English, I)

Six Hours of Detention

His face looked tense as he entered the facade,
Not knowing what was to follow—
Tense but determined, yet somewhat scared,
The interrogation only made things worse,
As his face became pale and tears welled up in his eyes.
What could one do other than let tears roll down the cheeks,
When faced with a false case and relentless xenophobic
abuse?
Pleadings and tears eventually freed this man for now,
From those wooden-faced impostors in khaki supposed to
uphold law.
Those six hours of detention would change things forever—
His carefree look was to never return.

- Arish Amber (History, II)

मैं राज बहुत गहरा हूँ, मैं चेहरा हूँ।

हूँ अमृत से लिपटा मैं, कहो या कुछ और कहो,
मैं ही विश का प्याला हूँ। कलयुग का केवल नाता हूँ।
पहचान मेरी तुम क्या पूछो, उसका भी था साथी मैं,
मैं रंग बदलने वाला हूँ। तेरा भी तो पहरा हूँ।
ये प्रेम है क्या ? न मुझसे पूछो, मैं राज बहुत गहरा हूँ,
छलना केवल आता है। मैं चेहरा हूँ, मैं चेहरा हूँ।

- दिव्यांश मिश्रा (भौतिकी, II)

کتنے چہرے (Kitne Chehre)

آتے جاتے دیکھتے رہتے ہیں مجھکو
کتنے انکے اپنے چہرے انمیں کتنے اپنے چہرے
ڈھونڈھتی رہتی ہوں اکثر
کتنے چہرے برف کی دیوار بنکر فخر سے۔
شاہکار بنکر
میری عظمت ناپتے ہیں
کتنے چہرے
میرے اپنے انکے دم سے کانپتے ہیں۔
گر کبھی ملتے ہم اور تم چہروں سے گریزاں کر کے دل کو شہر
سے
انسان کر کے کیا محفلیں سچیں بوتیں کیا ظلمت سے جہاں
ہوتا کیا امیدیں نئی بوتیں...

So many faces that, as they come and go, keep
looking at me. How many faces are their own? And
how many faces in theirs mine? I search for both
often.

So many faces becoming a wall of ice out of pride,
becoming masterpieces; measure the greatness of my
worth.

So many faces of my own tremble because of them.

If we ever met, you and I, avoiding the faces of the
world, our hearts made into a city of humanity, how
beautiful would our gatherings be! What would
become of the tyranny of the world What new hopes
would blossom among
US...

- Sara Batool (English, I)

Photographs by
Aryan Vats (English, I)





MEET THE TEAM

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Aman Gautam
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