

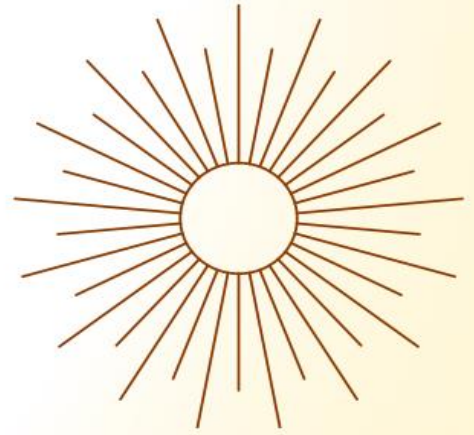
Faded

by Tanvi Nagar

The warm yellow sunshine-
fire from the golden medallion
it's orange-red fiery fangs
reaching out towards the earth
pouring in through slits of the horizon
where the clouds don't cover the lands
and the mountain tops don't reach,
kissed my forehead and tanned my hands
and then bounced off the photograph
that was held in the clasp of my sweaty palms.
Its brownish coffee-coloured edges
tested by the toughest times
and the yellowness set into the frame
made the faces in the picture seem more alive.

The two girls-hand in hand
their soft faces lit up by stunning smiles
looked directly into the camera
as if staring straight into my eyes.
Maybe it was a mirror, one its kind-
for I was able to look into my eyes
from so many years ago
yet, not fully recognise the little girl
I saw in the faded photo.
Amid the smudged background
and the shoreline of the beach
I could make out my father's figure-
admiring his two daughters by the beach.

My mother behind the lens
captured this moment into a frame
yet was missing from the shot
like some of the fleeting passerbys' hands
who were somehow silhouettes in my past
and yet, nothing more than that.
Sitting on the same spot at the beach
looking at the sun fall into the horizon
as if simply sliding by into another world
carrying away the day's secrets,
and the clouds breaking and crumbling-
colouring the sky with varied hues,
all whilst my hands held the course grains of the sand
and I paced into the past and ran back as fast
into the present world of mine.



The gentle wind touched my forehead
and the water splashed onto my feet
What if these were the same droplets of water
that were captured in the photograph?
Maybe, I held the same sand in my hands too.
But the people in the frame-
they couldn't ever remain preserved in that time.
They were simply remnants of my past and
just like the photograph in my hands,
they were blurred, faded and damaged,
yet alive-
inside the chambers of my mind.

