



Faceless

SHADY AFRO LAMA

Yesterday I shaved my beard, some people noticed right away, others didn't...or maybe they just didn't care... I walk through crowds of people, and I can hear them minding their businesses, so why do I feel their gaze upon my back and why do I feel their judgment weighing on my neck?... but it was just my mind messing with me, I keep thinking about how weird I must look to them, I try to straighten up my back and fix my posture, head high up as I display a fake sense of confidence, I bring my hand up and let my fingers go through my dry weird-looking hair as an attempt at making it look a little bit better, If I keep thinking this way I might go insane, I need to move on as I start picking up the pace, running away to a safer place ...

I take a step onto the campus grounds, and I can already see many familiar faces, but can't recall any names, their features are starting to fade, I keep walking while making sure not to make any eye contact, "not too long before I reach the safe zone", that's what kept going through my mind as I was reaching the usual hangout area...

one of my friends sees me approaching and welcomes me with a smile, a small yet genuine gesture, that alone made feel welcomed, I was so excited to see their reaction and I was waiting to see who's gonna notice IT first, and it didn't take long before someone pointed it out "something feels off about your face" followed by "did you shave your beard ?" and "why would you do that ?", it didn't take long before it became the main focus of the conversation and jokes were being thrown

around by almost everyone...honestly, I didn't know how to reply so I laughed it off but the jokes didn't stop... I came here looking for counseling, seeking emotional support but all that it did was making my insecurities greater so I just backed away to the background and sat down next to them on the bench surrounded by my own thoughts ...

later that day, I went back home walked inside the empty house and into the bathroom, I put my hands on the sides of the sink, "why would you react that way" I said to myself "they're all your friends, and everyone gets made fun of, so why not you?...do you want them to start being fake around you? do you want them to stop liking you because you get offended at the smallest of things? it's not their fault that you feel homesick, it's not their fault

that you're still scared and confused as for what to do with your life, it's not their fault that you feel insecure about your relationship with your family, it's not their fault that you feel bad about lying to your mother telling her that everything is alright, when it's not...it's not their fault that you feel like your past is repeating itself...that's what it's all about, right? you still remember what happened before, right? you don't want to be all alone again...correct? well, you chose not to show your emotions when you were feeling down or insecure ...instead, you've decided to put on a smiling mask to cover up your faceless self, but you didn't realize that it was paper-thin, and literally, the smallest of jabs would tear it apart..."

flashbacks of my past keep crossing my mind, painting a picture of my daunting future as I slowly start to lift my head up...

In the mirror, I met a reflection...a reflection of someone whom I used to know, someone who's been through some harsh times but always smiled his way through it, someone who kept coming back to life after being shot dead, someone who kept looking for the good in people, even when they hurt him, he was someone who had to build his confidence and social skills from the ground up multiple times, someone that seems to have disappeared, for now, someone that I'm desperately yearning to be.