

Half of a Face

By Ayushman Khazanchi

In small bumps and craters
that fingertips dive into,
a rash, porous touch of expression
layered in dismembered membrane,
miniature hills spread uneven, casting
a shadow on dead—occasionally red—cells
stretching nowhere on the surface.

My thoughts permeate the air,
Who would dare make such ghastly art?

A step or two back and the hills
now recede in their reach,
shades of red stretch further beyond,
and more small craters camouflage
into other small craters, till all is one
revolting half of a face, a victim
to an acid attack, an art no more to me
but an ugly truth of our worlds.
The Why burdens our immediate atmosphere,
Chose to speak out against oppression.

The voice straining, demanding
to reveal an unbroken strength, a resolve
of thundering magnitude placed carefully
in the space between us, suspended
in the thought of half a face—
nature's art—rendered lifeless.

Monsters, I think.

Monsters, she says.