

Ride back home (diary of a loner)

[Business](#)



“Trinnggg” goes the school bell, longer than usual, or maybe I never got accustomed to this self-proclaiming unavoidable sound. Relief and joy run across the classroom, hand-in-hand, taking everyone from the teacher to the back benchers on board. They bid me farewell quicker than anyone else, and leave me stranded with dread. I muster up all my leftover energy and courage after the long day, and mount my bag on my slender shoulder.

I drag myself towards the staircase and woof! “I don’t want to go home anymore,” I plead myself. An ocean of heads fill up the staircase in their deep-blue and white uniforms. As we struggle down each step bumping, kicking, pushing into each other; we realise more streams fall into this sea as we cross each floor. Third, Second, First. Finally we’re down to the ground floor.

An air of freedom and renewal touches my pale cheeks as I walk out of the building into the scorching Karachi heat. I must have taken just five or six unwilling steps when a hot gust of polluted wind from my left almost sweeps me away. Regaining my balance, I turn around- Oh! It was only the gigantic generator and its usual smoke vomit. Fighting my way through the sand and pebbles I almost feel heroic and images of Bear Grylls crossing a dangerous desert fill my mind. With my eyes red and my hair (that I washed just this morning) all dusty, I finally reach the school gate. I take my usual seat in my compact school van.

Right next to the girl who would never let anyone sit on the window seat. I literally melt away waiting for the popular kids (who come later than everyone) to cramp the little van. Before the engine groans to life, the bass

in the car is turned to a maximum by “ Saad Bhai”, a tiny skinny kid in the 9th grade who all the other kids look up to. As the singer cries, “ Sun raha haina tu?” (Do you hear me?)- my heart sobs. I weep as virtually all the organs in my body pound due to the bass.

The music moves me, literally. The overwhelmingly palpable song gives me a headache- could this get any worse! And that is when the kids behind me start kicking and slapping each other. One by one, all the kids get off the van. I smile to myself for the 30 seconds of peace that I get. A sudden halt, rocking back and forth several times, the vibrating vehicle eventually comes to rest at my apartment’s gate.