

Your own realities.

We are a city full of people,
Diving into loneliness not leaving behind a ripple.
We are a city full of lonely people.

She doesn't like festivals. The sweat, the crowd, their happiness, loud laughter, the way they shout.
She doesn't like festivals or maybe she doesn't live festivals anymore.
She loves the regular days she spent in her little flat. She likes living stacked upon one another like dishes piled after a good wash. All organized and piled up.

Yet every night when all the lights of the building goes off I see her sitting by her window looking at the empty lonely streets. Does the echo of her emptiness not make her crave for the crowds during the festivals?
But she doesn't like festivals. They are loud, louder than her silence.
She hates the newly married couple living downstairs in her building, they remind her of regrets, they remind her of loneliness.

The eighteen year old newly married girl, I have never seen her on road. Her presence is as much veiled as her face is with the edge of her saree. Behind the veil a pair of innocent eyes peek, with dark bruise underneath them which speak.
She doesn't like festivals ever since her parents returned her to her abusive husband claiming daughters don't belong to their parents once bid farewell. On lonely nights she stands near the mirror as blood smears her face it reminds her of 'Uma' at Dashami after 'sindur- khela.'
Every night as she wipes off the blood from her body she wishes she was as independent and free as her neighbour upstairs. Yet she protects her 'sindur'.
To her 'Uma' is just a synonym of darkness.
She doesn't like festivals.

Rahman Kaka of my village doesn't like festivals. He is an office boy at a private firm. He gets a day off for every festival when he goes back to our village. I envy him.
But he still doesn't like festivals. He says festivals make him feel lonely amidst his family, festivals make him feel helpless when he returns home empty handed and see his children and wife's smile fade away. It brings regret to him as much as he brings regret to his family.
Seeing other's kids and wives dressed up in beautiful clothes it makes him feel timid and lonely in his strive.

Rahman Kaka envies me for I don't get a single day off during festivals.
But I still don't like festivals. I see people around dancing happily holding hands, families dining out, festivals let the loneliness in me come out loud. I don't like festivals they give me nightmares. Although sleepless nights are my occupation now and loneliness my company.
I am the night watchman of this multistorey flat where multiple stories live stacked upon one another, all lonely in their own way.

We are but a city full of lonely people.
Our stories are only ours to tell and our realities are not just the same tale.