Scanned

By Ahmed Hagi Gaadi (University of Bergen)

We are on the highway. I sit in the back of a van while the adults in the front speak in low, careful voices. I know they're talking to me, but their faces won't stay clear. It's like my mind keeps blurring them out. I get home from school. My bag hits the floor, and I walk into the kitchen. The door slams open behind me. My parent is holding my backpack and the letter I forgot to hide. The next minutes are blurry. The edge of the table. The sound of something breaking. Red on the tiles. The next day, a commercial interrupts the afternoon cartoons. A new safety tool. Children can scan a parent's face. The system identifies them instantly, sends their name to the right people. No calls. No explanations. Just one look. Later that night, I've had enough. In a quiet, calculating rage, I scan their face. A name appears, and I follow the procedures. I wake up to knocking on the door. My parent is taken away in slow motion as my world turns on its head. No one asks me anything. In the van, I notice something small on the ceiling. The red light nearly blinds me as it searches for a face to match. I wonder what will happen when it scans my face.